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Introduction

Djuna Barnes and Problems of Textual Interpretation

How can we best speak of what is extraordinary? We can, first, reduce it to a normal or abnormal model, so that it can be explained, in a simple or more complex fashion, given a profile, a name, a handle: the key word here is 'reduce', and the unique may well escape us. Or then, we can celebrate it without trying to understand it, give it the name of genius or genius neuroticus (thus justified): this is surely not reductive nor is it risky - on the other hand, it is not trying anything at all. Or then again, with more difficulty, and at more risk, we can both salute it and attempt, however modestly and incompletely, to understand it, depict it, and appreciate it as and in itself, and as is self represented: this calls upon whatever resources we might have, and may call - more urgently still - for developing some we did not know we had.¹

So wrote Mary Anne Caws when endeavouring to describe the 'braided' lives of Carrington, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell. Her analysis is complex and, it seems to me, embodies those problems which also confront any scholar who wishes to study the life and works of Djuna Barnes. When I began this thesis, my aims appeared to be straightforward. I wished to consider Barnes’s biography and to reveal how concepts concerning the writer’s 'expatriate' years had clouded subsequent interpretations of her texts. In this manner I intended to re-evaluate both the texts themselves and the sources which Barnes used to create them. However this approach proved problematic from the outset, as it was difficult to discover a critical strategy which successfully encompassed the diversity of Barnes’s texts. A critical framework should in my opinion, provide a useful theoretical basis for a reading of a text. Yet Barnes’s texts, it might be argued, deliberately elude definition. The works defy categorization, as they avoid critical strategies. Most critics who have dealt with her work,

from traditionalists such as James B. Scott, to feminists such as Karla Jay, Susan Snaider Lanser and Mary Lynne Broe, have acknowledged this difficulty. Working as a feminist literary historian myself, I became increasingly aware of this elusive quality and the way in which the works continually challenged the strategies which I was employing. Thus those initial aims have changed significantly, as has the framework of the thesis itself.

I hope that this critical introduction goes some way to explain these changes. A brief synopsis of Barnes’s life which complements it can be found in Appendix A. The introduction begins with an explanation of Barnes’s sources, followed by an analysis of the critical approaches which have been applied to Barnes’s career thus far and concludes with an exploration of why I have chosen particular literary and cultural strategies with which to approach her work.

Barnes’s Sources and the Fluidity of the Text

During the course of this thesis I began to realise that Barnes’s texts rely upon a series of historical sources. In tracing these sources I have had to constantly re-think my own critical position regarding her work. For example, as the project progressed it became obvious that whilst critics such as Julie L. Abraham, Cheryl Plumb and Louise De Salvo have discussed Barnes’s use of historical sources (such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, which provided one of the many sources for *The Antiphon* [1958]), no single critic appears to have analysed the breadth and depth of her deployment of source material from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, or noted how several of those sources were used throughout Barnes’s long career. Not only this, but the subversive nature of many seventeenth-century sources,
documented here in the chapters on poetry, *Ladies Almanack* (1928), *Ryder* (1928), and *The Antiphon*, do not appear to have been linked to Barnes's own aesthetic which might be regarded as equally subversive. In this thesis, sources used by Barnes to inform her texts are analysed using a blend of strategies from Anglo-American feminist theorists, such as Elaine Showalter and Marjorie Garber, who use literary theory, ideas on gender construction, and historical context to inform their works. As with Sara Mills, whose work on women travel writers is constructed using a blend of theoretical techniques (Mills uses ideas from writers as diverse as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak) this thesis uses a historically based construction which draws on works by critics as separated by time and technique as Walter Benjamin and Mary Lynne Broe. The final section of this introduction looks at why I selected certain theorists over others, why, on the whole, I avoided French feminist techniques, and what I feel my choice of critical strategy to have achieved. It also outlines ideas on 'modernism' and my interpretation of the term, and where I have placed Barnes in the history of American letters.

My original concept of a thesis in two strands, interweaving both the author's life and work, proved to be inadequate. Such an analysis would have avoided a discussion of Barnes's sources, and a close textual reading of her works which was not based on biography. This, of course, created further problems, as it would be almost impossible to discuss Barnes's work as totally separate from her life. Thus, biographical information vital to my critical argument (such as the life of Natalie Barney on which Barnes based the life of Dame Musset) is contained within the text, whilst a brief analysis of Barnes's life as a whole is provided in Appendix A. In the text, biographical sections are used to challenge existing ideas on Barnes's work. For example, the section on *Nightwood* which deals with how Barnes used the life of

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4 Barnes, Djuna, *Ladies Almanack* (Dijon: Darrantiere, 1928); *Ryder* (New York: Liveright, 1928); also Barnes, 1962.
her friend Dan Mahoney as a basis for the character of Matthew O'Connor, challenges previous ideas about the creation of O'Connor. Whilst critics such as Andrew Field and Broe regard Mahoney as the sole inspiration behind O'Connor, I suggest that O'Connor represents a pastiche of many people known to Barnes. Such biographical revisions allow a textual reading to occur which differs from previous analysis.

Because Barnes's output was so vast, it is impossible to analyse all of it within the confines of the thesis format. Thus, journalistic pieces by Barnes exploring themes which informed later works are mentioned throughout the sections referring to her short fiction, poetry, novels and plays. Likewise, Barnes's old age and years as a recluse are explored in relation to the creations of her old age, in poetry such as 'Walking Mort' and 'Quarry', both published in *The New Yorker* in the 1970s, in *The Antiphon* and in her bestiary *Creatures in an Alphabet* (1982). I have, wherever possible, attempted to highlight biographical depictions of Barnes's work where the text is obscured by myths arising from the biographies, memoirs and letters. This reveals how anecdotal accounts of Barnes's life have clouded textual readings. The following sections outline past interpretations of Barnes's work, demonstrating previous critical strategies.

**The Critical Maze**

Barnes's fictional and theatrical style has always possessed the ability to infuriate, baffle, disquiet and defamiliarize. As Plumb notes, early plays such as *The Dove* (1923) and *Kurzy of the Sea* (1920) irritated reviewers, with their seeming obscurity. Writing in 1919, Alexander Woolcott wrote of the plays:

> It is really interesting to see how absorbing and essentially dramatic a play can be

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7. See the section in this thesis on *Nightwood*.
without the audience ever knowing what, if anything, the author is driving at.10

A New York Sun report in 1926 saw Barnes's plays as being essentially fin-de-siècle pieces, an idea which late twentieth-century critics such as Lilian Faderman have also adopted.11 Thus, throughout the century, Barnes's work has been portrayed as mimicking the tone and the techniques of The Yellow Book.

Between 1936 and 1970, critics highlighted the 'darkness' of Barnes's vision and the 'Jacobean quality' stressed but not identified in T.S. Eliot's introduction to Nightwood.12 For example, Barnes's Selected Works (1962) were discussed by many reviewers, all of whom seemed to share the sense articulated by the Bulletin From Virginia Kirkus Service that Barnes was an 'exponent of the surrealistic-nihilistic school'.13 Also, many agreed with Ken Comahen who remarked that Barnes was a great stylist.14 Yet, critics throughout the century continue to mark the sense of doom which Eliot chose to highlight in his critique of Nightwood. In this sense, reviews from 1919 to the emergence of the Selected Works in 1962 change very little. Although the critical focus changes from Woolcott's bewilderment to Eliot's pessimism, critics continue to describe Barnes's work in negative terms. Post-1936, critics were influenced by Eliot and Edwin Muir who both regarded Barnes as a tragedian.15 So influential was Eliot's criticism that G.L. Wakem was able to represent Eliot (in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle) as Barnes's patron: 'Mr Eliot Presents Miss Barnes' being his title.16 So pervasive was Eliot's interpretation of Barnes's work that Wakem saw Nightwood as a companion piece to The Waste land, and Holmes-Coleman's role in getting the work published was ignored. What reviewers in each decade chose to focus upon may have altered slightly as

14 Ibid.
fashions in criticism changed, but one message seems to remain, that Barnes was original, gloomy, gothic, and surreal. In my opinion these critics all imply that her work was difficult to encapsulate and thus appears to present those problems of interpretation which Mary Anne Caws describes in her work on Carrington, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell.

Non-feminist critics describe Barnes’s work using the criteria of Jacobean gloom set by Eliot in 1936. For example, Kenneth Burke, writing in 1962, argued for the essential pessimism of Barnes’s vision. As explorations of different critical approaches to Barnes occur throughout the thesis, I only mention them here to outline a continuous critical view of Barnes’s work which remained essentially negative. Whilst Burke saw Nightwood as a formal tragedy about 'inversion', 'conversion' and 'perversion', Charles Baxter, writing in 1974, regarded the novel as embodying a crisis in modernist writing and painted a bleak portrait of the writer and her work. Baxter’s vision is similar to that of Recardo Demetillo, who in 1955 wrote an ‘explication’ of Nightwood which, once more, drew upon its ‘darker’ vision.

It is significant that most criticism prior to 1978, despite articles such as Susan Ferguson’s 1969 article on Barnes’s short fictions, concentrated upon Nightwood. This might be due to the dwindling list of Barnes’s printed works over a significant time-period: Ladies Almanack was reprinted in 1972 by Harper and Row, but at the time I began my research in 1989 it was out of print, it has since been reprinted (1992); Ryder was out of print by the 1970s and has not been reprinted; and The Book of Repulsive Women was pirated in 1948 but copies of it remain scarce. In my opinion, this scarcity of printed volumes is only one reason why Nightwood remained the focus of critics. It might be argued that Nightwood remains the most

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17 See Burke, Kenneth, ‘Version, Con’ Per’ and In’ (Thoughts on Djuna Barnes’s Novel Nightwood), in Southern Review (April 1966), pp.329-64.
21 Barnes deplored the reprinting of her early works.
easily categorizable of Barnes's texts. It has a conventional format, as it is a novel divided into chapters and has an easily identifiable plot structure. This is not to argue that *Nightwood* is a simple text, but implies that it is perhaps more accessible than a work such as *Ladies Almanack*. *Ladies Almanack* breaks conventional concepts of textual form as it is a fragmentary work which relies upon illustration and ballad as much as it does plot and character. Also, *Ladies Almanack* celebrates the lesbian circle of Natalie Clifford Barney and thus could be interpreted as Barnes's celebration of her own sexuality. This goes against a dominant patriarchal view that most lesbian relationships are unhappy and unfulfilling. Thus *Nightwood*, which depicts a destructive relationship between a lesbian couple, fits easily into the myth of the unhappy lesbian preferred by early twentieth-century sexology and described in novels such as *The Well of Loneliness*. On the other hand, *Ladies Almanack* presents a positive view of lesbian sexuality which challenges sexological stereotypes. Likewise, both *Ryder* and *The Antiphon* form critiques of the power of the father. They are difficult texts to categorize and *Ryder*, unlike *Nightwood* which ends with a woman's howl of despair, ends with the Father's cry. Thus it is possible to regard the critical focus on *Nightwood* as limiting the view of Barnes's work as a whole. After all, is it possible to regard the creator of *Ryder* and *Ladies Almanack* as the prophet of doom described in most criticism of *Nightwood*?

It is worth noting that on Barnes's death, the view of the author as a tragic figure began to gain momentum. From 1945 until her death in 1982 Barnes had lived alone, and had become increasingly reclusive. Susan Daley's obituary in *The New York Times* sums up the way in which obituaries regarded Barnes. The descriptive headline, 'Djuna Barnes Dies, Poet and Novelist: *Avant Garde* Work *Nightwood* - Her Most Famous Book - Member of Paris Circle',

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22 See the section on the *Ladies Almanack*.
23 As Lanser and others have pointed out.
encapsulates how Bames came to be perceived.\textsuperscript{26} The photograph chosen to illustrate the piece shows Barnes as an old woman and is one of a series taken by Jack Manning for the \textit{New York Times} in 1971.\textsuperscript{27} It appears significant that, in the text, Barnes is identified firstly as a recluse, and then as an author from the twenties and thirties.\textsuperscript{28} Also, the young Barnes is described in terms of her friendships with Joyce and Stein, while the old Barnes was described as a recluse in 'failing health'.\textsuperscript{29} Again, \textit{Nightwood} is identified firstly by its complexity and secondly by its introduction, therefore it is judged using Eliot's criteria.\textsuperscript{30} At one juncture, Barnes's work is described as 'forbiddingly complex', a description echoed in Andrew Field's book title \textit{Djuna: The Formidable Miss Barnes}.\textsuperscript{31} Thus, in Barnes's most prominent obituary a set of myths can be discovered which upheld Eliot's sense of her aesthetic. These myths still exist but are being questioned, most notably by feminist critics such as Kate Fullbrook, Mary Lynne Broe, Susan Snaider Lanser and Karla Jay.\textsuperscript{32} I wish to briefly outline some recent criticism, before looking briefly at concepts of 'modernism' and then outlining the strategy employed by this thesis.

Obviously, as this thesis reaches completion, new essays and works on Barnes and her circle are being published. A series, begun in 1992 and edited by Karla Jay for the New York University Press, presents 'The Cutting Edge of Lesbian Life and Literature' by providing newly edited editions of past works by lesbian authors.\textsuperscript{33} It is significant that the first volume of the series was the \textit{Ladies Almanack}, edited with an introductory essay by Susan Snaider Lanser. Here Lanser remarks:

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p.32.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Field, 1985.
\textsuperscript{32} See Fullbrook, Kate, \textit{Free Women: Ethics and Aesthetics in 20th Century Women's Fiction} (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1990), pp.113-40; Broe, 1991 and Jay in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ladies Almanack} is reprinted in this series.
Djuna Barnes's ambivalences about *Ladies Almanack*, about the lesbian culture it parodies and celebrates, about the reputation of her writings and the public's image of her 'very, very private' self, begin to reveal the complexity of this significant American writer who was virtually the last of the Paris expatriate modernists when she died just after her ninetieth birthday in 1982.44

Yet, despite Barnes's reservations about her 'outspoken' lesbian text, which grew as she neared old-age, Lanser regards the text as crucial to understandings of Barnes's work as a whole and to reclaimations of both lesbian history and the lesbian text:

> With this new edition, then, one of Djuna Barnes's finest, most original creations takes a firm place both in her own extraordinary *oeuvre* and in the growing body of new and recovered lesbian literature.35

Many feminists have regarded this recovery as being complicated by Barnes's pronouncements against feminists and lesbians in old age, her denial of the lesbianism which she had celebrated and her refusal to speak about her early feminist opinions. Yet, this thesis agrees with Lanser's sense that a re-evaluation of Barnes's texts is crucial both to considerations of Barnes's career and to the history of lesbian letters. The most recent full work of criticism on Barnes is Mary Lynne Broe's 1991 collection *Silence and Power*, an anthology of essays by authors as diverse as Broe, Nancy J. Levine, Anne Larbee, Lanser, Jay and Jane Marcus.36 The diversity of the critical essays in this volume reveals the richness of the material which they analyse. While Louise De Salvo and Broe both discuss the abuse which Barnes suffered as a child and the impact of this on her work, Marcus regards *Nightwood* as prefiguring the holocaust of the Second World War, and Julie L. Abraham looks at Barnes's view of history.37 The volume is mainly representative of work by

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34 Lanser, 1992, p.xvi.
academics at American colleges and universities. Many of the essays in it make valuable links between the texts and Barnes’s biography. Likewise, earlier essays by Broe also make these connections.38

What is interesting is that Broe’s texts recover many of Barnes’s lesser-known writings and also re-evaluate her career as an artist. Much current research on Barnes is being undertaken in America, but there have been significant European essays on her work, most notably by Kate Fullbrook and Mariead Hanrahon and both of these essays are discussed further in the section of the thesis which deals with Nightwood.39

Elyse Blankley’s doctoral thesis, which looks at Barnes, Renée Vivien and Gertrude Stein, analyses their views of the city, and provides new insight into Barnes’s vision of urbanism.40 Likewise, volumes by Shari Benstock, and Virginia L. Smyers and Gillian Hanscombe, consider Barnes and her contemporaries with relation to place.41 Karla Jay has developed these interpretations further, analysing the lesbianism of Barnes and Natalie Clifford Barney, and studying their lives in Paris.42 Recently, she has edited Barney’s volume of memoirs, Adventures of the Mind, using this critical framework.43

What these diverse volumes appear to have in common is an eclectic revisionism and a desire both to uncover Barnes’s relationships with other women and to restore lost works.

41 Hanscombe and Smyers, 1987; Benstock, 1987.
Many of them blend textual revision with biography, suggesting links between Barnes's life and her works which often contradict the portraits of her written between 1930 and 1985. They all acknowledge the fact that Barnes's works are difficult and diverse but assert that this benefits critical readings. A forthcoming biography of Barnes, told in letters, is at present being created by Broe and Fran McCulloch. Whilst recognizing the importance of biography, I now wish to outline other methods of interpretation, as yet in infancy, and to highlight those critical texts which have informed my interpretation of her work.

The Strategies of The Thesis

As I have pointed out in this introduction, I do not wish to provide a totally biographical reading of Barnes's work. Thus, although using some biographical sources, the thesis concentrates upon interpretations of the texts themselves. As was previously stated, I believe that this is the first theoretical work to highlight in detail the historical sources used by Barnes, and is thus one of the only texts to consider why Barnes repeatedly created a pastiche using past forms such as the almanac, chap-book and ballad. Yet before a strategy could be developed through which to analyse this technique, I had to consider where Barnes was positioned both in relation to the term 'modernism' and in the history of American letters.

It might be argued that Barnes's position as both American writer and as a 'modernist' author places her work at the margins of traditional critical perceptions. As a 'modernist', she joined none of the groups or 'isms' (vorticism, imagism, dadaism, surrealism) for which early twentieth-century writers have come to be famous. As an American she owed more to the writings of Baudelaire or the early European chap-book tradition, than to Thoreau, Poe or Whitman. She knew writers like Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway, but did not emulate them; indeed her closest literary relationships were with longtime expatriates such as Natalie Barney and James Joyce. As this thesis aims to demonstrate, Barnes was a maverick, who regarded emulation (even of those like Joyce whose work she admired) as representing self

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44 Such as the view, which I explained earlier, that Barnes was anti-feminist.
45 The aforementioned Cold Comfort.
As Bonnie Kime Scott notes, the term 'modernism' is a difficult one, as it can be used to blur issues of gender, class, and race. For example, how does the term 'modernist' apply to authors as diverse as D.H. Lawrence, Barnes, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen? In this text, the term 'modernism' is placed in inverted commas to indicate that it refers to a chronological term for early twentieth-century writing, but that this does not imply that all authors writing during the 'modernist' period possessed a similar aesthetic. In Scott's definition, modernism represents a 'tangled mesh' of authors, who were in the past 'unconsciously gendered masculine'. If one places gender at the centre of an analysis of 'modernism', Scott argues that the debate then becomes 'polyphonic, mobile, interactive and sexually charged'. Because questions of gender are central to my analysis of by Barnes, I also regard gender as allowing a mobile discussion of works by an author who is defined as 'modernist' to take place. Scott's volume points out that the late twentieth-century did not create the concept of gender. What increasingly interests me about Barnes is her depiction of gender roles and the effects of gender stereotyping. If one looks at Barnes (as I first intended to) purely in terms of expatriation (as an American exiled abroad) then the point which her fiction constantly makes about her exile is lost. In most of her fictions people are depicted as being 'exiled' within gender stereotypes. Thus the question of gender which is raised is not a geographical one (who is the stranger in a strange land?), but a sociological one (what happens when society imposes a series of gender roles which individuals find to be confining?). Increasingly, the questions raised by Barnes's work appear to be those of exile within gender constructions as opposed to exile abroad.

Images and themes recur throughout Barnes's long career which cannot be interpreted using either a wholly biographical framework or one which relied on ideas concerning

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48 Ibid, p.4.
49 Ibid, p.15.
'modernism'. As my interest in the way in which Barnes worked to create pastiche developed, I became aware that the sources which influenced the pastiche were important. For example, sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources used by her were often forms which were themselves subverted by women writers (see the chapter on the Ladies Almanack) during the period in which they were created. These sources include chap-books, almanacs and ballads, and were deployed by Barnes to create a pastiche which blended the secular with the religious, the popular with the elite, the aristocratic with the plebian, mass and individual modes of production, and the heterosexual with the homosexual.

At first, I considered discussing these using theoretical techniques developed by 'French feminist' psychoanalytic authors, such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. Yet the more of Barnes's work I read the less appropriate such techniques appeared. Barnes's texts, from her early journalism to The Antiphon, depict what happens when women refuse to be silenced. This runs counter to Cixous' notion of women's loose speech being uncontrolled, as with Barnes's female characters (for example Miranda in The Antiphon) it is their control which society fears. Likewise, Kristeva's view of woman's time, whilst providing a useful addition to my depiction of Barnes's poem 'Walking Mort', failed to address the poem's use of historical terminology. Post-Lacanian concepts of 'femininity' often appeared to be reductive, condemning all of Barnes's imagery to be discussed in terms of sexuality (in phallic terms, or as depicting reproductive parts of the female body). Thus, after careful consideration, I came to reject these techniques as they failed to address the historical questions which I was interested in. Increasingly I wished to discover why Barnes used certain obscure historical references in both her poetry and her prose. I identify important themes in her work as being border crossing (between high and low art forms, gendered roles, popular and elitist texts, secularity and religion, personal and public spaces), the construction of 'lesbianism' (and asking what Barnes identifies 'being lesbian' as meaning), the collision between past and present (often described using images of clothing, objects and rooms) and her use of historical

See the chapter on The Antiphon.
sources. In the thesis I discuss these themes as they occur in individual pieces.

The feminist texts which I use to create my theoretical position are by Anglo-American critics. Most of these, such as works by Elaine Showalter, Julie Wheelwright and Maggie Humm, ask the historical questions which I felt that French psychoanalytic feminism ignores. For example, Maggie Humm's volume, *Border Traffic*, argues that many texts by women in the twentieth-century effect 'border crossings', crossing boundaries which blur notions of gender, class, religious and textual difference. Humm's argument appeared to provide an obvious key to the fluidity of Barnes's texts, thus her approach has greatly influenced my own research. The more critical articles that I read (see the previous section) the more I became convinced that fitting Barnes's works into single categories was problematic.

Humm's concept of 'border crossing', where texts by women cross textual and genre borders, creating, in Humm's terms 'border traffic', can easily be applied to works by Barnes. If one combines this concept with the others listed below then a fluid critical position is created which does not place Barnes's work in a single category. What Humm terms 'border traffic' or 'border crossing', I decided to constantly refer to as 'border crossing', as this is precisely what I believe Barnes's texts to effect. As a feminist literary historian, I agree with Humm that:

Feminist criticism locates the relation of women's literary experience to her life experience in a place of struggle; on the border between literary constructions and the turn towards transformation.

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52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid, p.viii.
She speaks of the need for critics to adopt 'new reading practices', which recognize that such 'crossings' are complex and diverse. It is such a practice which I intend to apply to Barnes. Humm also cites the 'shifting positionality' of women's identity and also the shifting constructs which attempt to explain gender difference. Barnes's texts seem suited to this type of scrutiny, as Barnes herself recognized that the position of 'femininity' in Western society existed in a constant state of flux. As is also quoted in the section on *Ladies Almanack*, Barnes described 'femininity' in the following terms:

> The very Condition of Woman is so subject to Hazard, so Complex, and so grievous, that to place her at one Moment is but to displace her at the next.

Thus a shifting critical position complements Barnes's fluid technique. Also, Barnes's texts which describe 'the condition' of woman, are woman-centred. Humm's theory defines how texts 'cross' boundaries between genres and themes. I wished to create a technique derived from this combined with a theoretical position which outlined concepts of gender transgression. In Barnes's texts, characters frequently question gender roles, and transgress either visually (by cross-dressing) or verbally (by highlighting 'gender trouble'). Powerful images of the female body likewise fill the works and are complemented by equally evocative images of clothing and dress.

In order to explore these, I have taken ideas from texts on gender, dress and transgression including Epstein and Straub's *Body Guards* (1991), Marbery Garber's *Vested Interests* (1992) and Elizabeth Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body* (1991). I have also used texts on artistic representations of the female form, such as Grizelda Pollock's *Vision and Difference* (1988), and Emmanuel Cooper's exploration of homosexuality in art, *The Sexual Perspective* (1986). Garber, who writes of the power of transvestism to displace and subvert, begins her

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57 Barnes, 1928, p.55.
58 See Epstein, Julie, with Kristina Straub, editors, *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of*
argument from a historical perspective:

It is not surprising ... to find that anxiety about cross-dressing is manifested by authoritarian structures (the academy, the army, the absolute monarch, the local school-board) as a sign and symptom of the dissolution of boundaries, and of the arbitrariness of social law and custom.®

Garber then goes on to state that gender transgression confuses category, and that it is this function which is so threatening to social norms.® Barnes's texts often deploy a similar transgressive function and, as such, dissolve fixed gender boundaries and subvert concepts of social custom. Just as Garber discusses sixteenth and seventeenth-century cross-dressing (fashion as 'the enemy of patriotism as well as of social order and legibility') so Barnes uses images of historical cross-dressing to create textual transgressions.® For example, Dr O'Connor, in *Nightwood*, displaces ideas of gender roles by wearing both male and female clothing.® Likewise, Garber describes cross-dressing in the sixteenth-century as: an index of destabilization, displeasing to the monarch as to the sermonizer, as it renders the Englishman illegible, incapable of inscription.®

As Barnes's work constantly uses sixteenth-century archetypes, phrases and images, this definition can be applied to her texts, which possess a destabilizing function. It is precisely this aspect of Barnes's work and its use of dress codes, the refusal to be read under conventional gender criteria, which has both annoyed and disquieted critics from 1913 onwards. Just as Garber notes the reactions of 'fantasy and fear' which follow the cross-
dresser in history, I have endeavoured to highlight a similar response to Barnes's texts.\textsuperscript{64}

Garber also describes the concept of 'transvestite theatre', where the cross-dresser signifies a confusion of category. Such theatre destabilizes the audience, as it represents both 'fetishism' and the audience's hidden desires.\textsuperscript{65} As many of Barnes's texts deal with both visual transvestism (O'Connor's evening dress, or the mixed dress from both past and present worn by Robin Vote, or the 'court' dress of the impostor Felix Volkbien in \textit{Nightwood}) and verbal transvestism (the speech modes used by both O'Connor and Felix are, to some extent, 'feminised'), Garber's commentary on theatre can also be used in relation to them. If, as Garber suggests, the role of the actor has been, from the Renaissance to the present, that of a 'changeling', then Barnes's characters (who define themselves as actors), likewise fulfil this function. If O'Connor represents both private theatre (the transvestite dress worn privately), and public performance (his tales which are full of images of gender transgression), then he creates the sense of displacement and the crisis of category outlined by Garber.

I have combined Garber's ideas on transgression and displacement with other texts dealing with cultural anxieties over gender. These include the collection of essays edited by Kristina Epstein and Julie Straub who outline the gendered body as the 'subject of culture' and who comment upon the 'unsettling boundaries between biological sex, gender identity and erotic practice'.\textsuperscript{66} Taking these views as a starting point I apply concepts of the body to texts such as \textit{Ladies Almanack} and to Barnes's painting and poetry.\textsuperscript{67} The concept of the 'cultural politics of the body', described by Epstein and Straub, is central to Barnes's writing, as this thesis hopes to demonstrate.\textsuperscript{68} Both Epstein and Straub, and Garber outline the cultural politics of the body, and discuss what it means to suggest that gender categories can be displaced by

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Straub and Epstein, 1991, p.2.
\textsuperscript{67} See the relevant chapters in this thesis.
\textsuperscript{68} Straub and Epstein, 1991, p.4.
subverting dress codes and speech modes. In this context, the personal becomes the political, and vice versa. Traditionally, Barnes has been regarded as an apolitical writer, whose work is perceived as being only concerned with the idea of the individual. Indeed, if one takes this view to its extreme, then characters such as Felix Volkbien can be perceived as representing anti-semitic creations born from the politics of negativity. Jane Marcus regards Barnes’s creation in quite the opposite way, indicating that the exiles who fill *Nightwood* (homosexuals, Jews, lesbians and ethnic minorities) are precisely those people who would perish under fascism. Like Marcus, I regard Barnes as being a political writer, while not categorizing her as ‘party political’. Her concern with subverting patriarchal norms makes it impossible for me to regard her otherwise. As Humm recalls, a new reading strategy is necessary in order to study texts where gender-transgressions effect types of border crossing.

In this thesis, the strategy includes outlining the sources used by Barnes to create such crossings. As with Garber, Straub and Epstein, I locate crisis in gender through use of historical sources, and use essays in their anthology which range from late antiquity, through Renaissance Europe, to the Chevalier d’Eon and gender in bohemian Montmartre. These essays enabled me to highlight some of Barnes’s sources: for example, one essay in their collection, by Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, quotes a section from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (trans. 1632) which, in telling the tale of Tiresias, is strikingly similar to Barnes’s imagery in *Ladies Almanack*, which itself might be said to subvert the moral and cultural messages of texts such as Ovid’s:

The spring (is) called Masculine, because the growth of things are then inclosed in the solid bud; ... he is turned into a Woman; that is, in the flourishing

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69 Marcus also refers to this in her research. See Broe, 1991, pp.221-50.
70 Ibid, pp.221-25.
71 Ibid.
72 Also see the concluding chapter of this thesis.
Summer, defigured by his name: which Season is said to be Feminine, for that then the trees doe display their leaves and produce their conceptions ... Winter, which deprives the Earth of her beauty, shuts up her wombe, and in that barren in it selfe is said to be Masculine.\textsuperscript{75}

\textit{Ladies Almanack}, which adopts similar rhythms, linguistic devices and emblems to the passage above, embodies all the seasons as female.\textsuperscript{76} In other words, in trying to locate the crisis of gender category described in Barnes's texts, it is necessary to consider not only the texts themselves but the sources for them. Like Aphra Behn, writing in the seventeenth-century, Barnes uses wit to satirize the sexual  \textit{mores} and customs of the past, and thus creates a pastiche through which to analyse the present. This analysis of the past also allows Barnes to suggest the possibility of change. For example, in works such as \textit{Ladies Almanack}, Barnes uses linguistic and artistic devices from history in order to both satirize the bad practices of the past, and to create revisions of these practices. Therefore these images both refer to recognizable historical devices and subvert those devices (e.g. the lesbian 'host' of seraphim and cherubim in \textit{Ladies Almanack}). As with Behn, it is the appropriation of past forms (the borrowing and the use of what is borrowed) which is important here. The past is not merely seen as something which conditions the present, but is regarded as a historical record which can \textit{itself} be subverted and revised. Thus marginal historical figures (such as the 'walking mort', the charlatan and the 'lesbian') can be foregrounded. Barnes does not appear to suggest that the past is fixed and rooted, as Felix Volkebein in \textit{Nightwood} believes it to be. Rather (through characters such as Robin Vote and Nora Flood) she suggests that the past can be reassessed and that it can be interpreted in many ways. Thus Robin Vote (by wearing a selection of garments from the past) suggests that history can be used as a marker of 'difference'. The past is, in this context, used as a 'border' crossing agent. Barnes's use of history thus appears to run counter to totalitarian ideologies which use the past as a means of

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p.87.
\textsuperscript{76} See the chapter on it in this thesis.
oppression. If the past is not fixed, if figures from the margins can be brought centre stage, then possibilities for change are hinted at. Likewise, if in the past definitions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ were less fixed than is often indicated, then this also suggests that a change in gender roles is possible.

In a recent article, Sara Mills has outlined the difficulty of negotiating discourses which rely upon gendered terms such as ‘femininity’. Mills describes the ‘qualities which are ascribed to femininity’, such as politeness, not pushing yourself forward and vulnerability, and goes on to state that:

By defining femininity as a situation it is possible for women to escape it and for femininity itself to change if society changes.

Likewise, Barnes’s texts analyse the boundaries of social constructions of ‘femininity’, and suggest verbal and visual methods of displacing social norms. What Barnes defined ‘lesbianism’ as being is also important to a discussion of her work. In this thesis (as is discussed throughout), Barnes’s representations of ‘lesbian’ characters varies from text to text, from the joyous lesbians of Ladies Almanack, to the profoundly tragic relationship of Nora Flood and Robin Vote, or the elegiac ‘voice’ of Barnes’s early love poems and elegies. Perhaps Barnes was suggesting, as does Elaine Hobby at the present time, that there is no such thing as a ‘typical’ lesbian. Thus she creates a series of voices, over a seventy year time span, which continually change and suggest new dimensions.

By continually changing genre and aesthetic, Barnes constantly questioned both category and perceptions of gender roles. Barnes is remembered for creating the doomed love affair of Nora and Robin, yet she also suggested that transgression could provide means for survival in

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78 Ibid, p.274.
79 Ibid.
a hostile universe, for example, the ladies of the *almanack* are far from tragic, Dr O'Connor survives due to his iconoclastic wit, and the old women of the late poems retain a type of fierce power. In this thesis, I hope to demonstrate the immense diversity of Barnes's texts, and to outline how the use of historical sources enabled Barnes to create pastiche which allowed a series of genre and border crossings to take place. A fluid critical discourse, which combines techniques outlined here, appears to allow a space in which both the sources for the texts and the texts themselves can be discussed.
A Language of Her Own: The Poetry of Djuna Barnes

As the introduction to this thesis has explained, in choosing to reject basic principles employed by French feminist theorists, I have based my own theories concerning Barnes's work around writing by Anglo-American feminist theorists who use a historical basis in which to ground their work. Thus, critical works used to emphasize my argument in this chapter (including work by Elaine Showalter, Elizabeth Bronfen, Janet Wolff, Lillian Faderman, Julie Abraham and Julie Epstein) all consider works of 'modernism' from a feminist historiographical perspective. Critics such as Wolff imply that to compare works by female 'modernists' to those by their male counterparts achieves little, a view which I endorse. Thus, although texts by Pound and Eliot appear as footnotes in this chapter, I do not spend time comparing them to works by Barnes within the text itself. To contrast Barnes's poetry with Pound's *Cantos* says very little about her work, which has closer ties with works by women such as Edna St. Vincent Millay. As with works by Millay, Barnes's poetry reveals an implicit interest in the economic and social position of women. As the introduction to this thesis has explained, this cannot easily be defined using structures derived from French feminism, as these perspectives concentrate on post-Lacanian psychoanalytic discussions of

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1 I developed this historical basis as my interest in Barnes's sources grew.
8 Wolff states that the 'central point is that the literature and art of modernism, as currently defined, marginalizes or excludes women's experiences'. Wolff, 1990, p.69.
10 It is interesting, therefore, that this aspect of works by both women has been overlooked.
sexuality. In rejecting the often essentialist nature of such approaches, I hope to discuss Barnes's work from a feminist historiographical perspective. Such a perspective places the works in context, acknowledges sources used by the author, and allows a discussion of textual structures which is informed by the above. This does not, however, preclude a discussion of Barnes's perceptions of the construction of 'femininity' or the female body for, as the introduction points out, the main argument of my thesis can be divided into four strands: These are Barnes's use of historical sources; her representation of the past; the representation of lesbian experience and border/genre crossing. Rather than separate this chapter into four, the presence of these themes is discussed in the context of individual poems. This aims to demonstrate that Barnes's poetry allows a 'lesbian' discourse to take place by deploying sources from the past and that this discourse enables a series of 'border crossings' which challenge fixed notions of gender, class, economics, spirituality and female desire. Such discourse can be termed 'lesbian', as it enables a discussion of relationships between a female lover and a female 'beloved' to occur.

It appears relevant that, unlike Natalie Barney or Renée Vivien both of whom elected to write in French, Barnes chose to write in English throughout her career. She did not compose poetry in a foreign tongue, yet appeared to empathize with those who did. This can be perceived in an article published in February 1928, in transition, where Barnes paid tribute to her friend Elsa Baroness Von Freytag Loringhoven, who had committed suicide in 1927. This piece prefaced a selection of the Baroness's letters which revealed both her despair and talents as a writer. In her letters, the Baroness (a German exile) spoke of the difficulty of being a woman writer who was 'exiled' in language:

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6 The argument of this thesis concentrates on the use of historical sources, thus these sources are discussed individually within each section, using the critical works mentioned above.


9 Ibid, pp.19-30. The Baroness speaks of the fragile nature of her position as a writer who chose to work within a male enclave (Dadaism) in order to create works about women.
I only move in English sounds. I am homesick for the English language, my ear declines, my taste nauseated at German sound and yet I lose my facility in English, words come not easy, sometimes meaning is doubtful, new expressions do not present themselves.\(^\text{10}\)

While not composing work in another language, Barnes might be said to have suffered from similar problems of expression. She therefore appeared to regard herself as 'exiled' within the constraints of language. One example of this is her love poetry, where she deploys linguistic and stylistic devices from heterosexual verse within lesbian love lyrics, thus revealing the paucity of expression available to the creator of non-heterosexual love poetry. In speaking of the Baroness, Barnes, it might be argued, also spoke for herself:

She was, as a woman, amply appreciated by those who had loved her in youth. Mentally she was never appropriately appreciated. A few of her verses saw print, many did not. Such of her things as are in my possession, letters written in her time of agony, when in that Germany that had given her birth, and to which she returned to find her knowledge of death ... I now give parts, as they make a monument to this, her inappropriate end, in the only fitting language which could reveal it, her own.\(^\text{11}\)

This passage can be regarded as an important one for those studying Barnes's aesthetic. As, by identifying closely with the reception which met the Baroness's work, Barnes revealed knowledge of the accusation that women poets 'chose' to work in obscurity.\(^\text{12}\) However, Barnes (as with many of those footnoted) did not only publish in 'obscure' avant-garde reviews, but also in popular journals such as *Vanity Fair*.\(^\text{13}\) Publishers as diverse as Robert

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\(^{10}\) Ibid, pp.19-30.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, pp.20-1.

\(^{12}\) An accusation which was to haunt Barnes's career, see Broe, 1991, p.8.

McAlmon and Horace Liveright championed her work. Thus Barnes's modes of publication enabled 'transgression' to take place between the popular and the avant-garde. Far from being confined to a literary elite, her readership was varied and spanned class barriers. Thus the implication that the Baroness was categorized as a certain 'type' of woman writer, could easily be extended to herself. What Barnes appeared to value most about the Baroness was a refusal to use a language 'foreign' to her artistic vision. This concept of a specific language 'of one's own' (to alter Woolf's famous phrase) is also revealed in Barnes's work, as the remainder of this chapter hopes to demonstrate.

The Publication of Barnes's Poetry: A Brief Survey

Before one can discuss Barnes's aesthetic, it is useful to briefly outline the diversity of her published output. As was stated above, Barnes's poetry has a varied record of publication. Djuna Barnes's poetry is usually spoken of with reference to two volumes, namely The Book of Repulsive Women printed by Guido Bruno in 1915 and A Book, the miscellaneous volume published in 1923 by Liveright. Barnes's magazine publications are eclectic and are not fully documented in bibliographies of the writer's work by Douglas Messerli and Louis Kanne. These bibliographies can be amended by revealing that between 1911 and 1918, Barnes published no less than thirty poems in a diverse selection of magazines. Examples of

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14 Messerli, 1975.
15 See the introduction to this thesis for an explanation of my use of this term.
16 This is a difficult point to prove. Some justification of it can be derived by studying the use of advertising space in magazines such as Broom and Vanity Fair. In Broom most advertisements are placed by small publishers and art galleries and are specifically 'literary'. In Vanity Fair the advertisements are of consumer products and popular or cinema-related texts.
17 Barnes, 1928, pp.19-30.
19 Barnes, Djuna, A Book (New York: Liveright, 1923).
21 Ibid, pp.184-8, for a selection of her works. Also see the biography by Andrew Field.
22 Field, Andrew, Djuna The Formidable Miss Barnes (Texas: Texas University Press, 1985), pp.252-3.
the disparity of places of publication can be derived from the fact that poems by Barnes appeared in *The Dial* in the 1920s, and in the 1930s she had work accepted by the more conservative *London Bulletin.* Barnes published short stories and poems in *The Little Review* between 1918 and 1923, whilst in *Vanity Fair* between 1923 and 1930 she published many poems including 'I'd Have You Think Of Me', (Oct 1922), and 'Two Lyrics: "The Flowering Corpse", and "She Passed This Way"', (March 1923). If places of publication count as enabling 'border crossings' such as Humm describes, then Barnes's audience ranged from the small 'literary' readership of *transition* to large consumer groups who read *Vanity Fair.* As Barnes worked for both popular and 'literary' publications, she could be regarded as 'demythologizing' the literary, as 'literary' works appear in non-literary sources. Over her career, Barnes published over forty-four poems in fourteen different magazines.

As Barnes also published work in numerous edited volumes, her output can be regarded as being much larger than Kannenstine indicated. Poems printed in selected volumes had often been previously published: for example, of the poems published in *A Book* at least eleven of the twelve were published elsewhere first. This would suggest that to limit a discussion of Barnes's poetry to *The Book of Repulsive Women* and *A Book* is to mask a diversity both of output and place of publication. James Scott argued that future criticism of Barnes's work would ignore her large output, preferring to present her as a recluse with few publications to her name. Scott's fears were prescient, as more recent texts demonstrate. One illustration of this is the recent volume edited by Mary Lynne Broe, which contains no essay on Barnes's early poetry, poems mentioned in the volume being from *A Book* and *The Book of Repulsive Women* for, as has been indicated here, to concentrate on these volumes does not outline

22 Ibid.
'border crossings' between elitist and popular forms which Barnes enabled via her choice of places of publication. Broe's volume, whilst providing a 're-evaluation' of Barnes's prose, leaves her poetry in its former place.

'Pattern in the Mind': Barnes's Early Poetry 1915-23

When speaking of Barnes's love poetry, one is bound to raise the question of what her perceptions of 'lesbian identity' were at various stages of her career. For example, in the early 1920s, many poems by Barnes sympathetically describe erotic contact between women, encapsulated within a single image. In these poems, the narrative voice often describes a shift from a male-centred world to a relationship with a single woman. Thus while not being 'lesbian' in a contemporary sense of the term (Barnes does not name her desires or create a polemic around them) her works reveal a shift from the 'competition' of the patriarchal world, to an erotic identification with women on an individual basis. Rather like the love poetry of Gertrude Stein, these poems provide indications of erotic identifications which enable a personal choice to become a covertly political statement.

For example, in 'Lullaby' (1923) the speaker of the poem remarks:

When I was a young child I slept with a dog
I lived without trouble and, I thought, no harm;
I ran with the boys and I played leap-frog;
now it is a girl's head that lies on my arm.

The narrator records how she turned from a competitive male world (where she 'ran' with the boys) to the difficult tranquillity of a relationship with another woman ('now it is a girl's head

27 Broe, 1991, p.14, p.138, p.370. I state here that Barnes chose her methods of publication because, as she frequently stated, she would not work for volumes in which she did not believe, and despised others for doing so. See Field, 1985, pp.239-40 for one example of this.
28 Barnes, Djuna, 1923, p.219.
29 A good discussion of this topic can be found in Raitt, 1993, pp.12-5.
30 See Grahn, Judy, Really Reading Gertrude Stein (California: Crossing Press, 1989).
31 Barnes, 1923, p.179.
that lies on my arm'). The poem could be seen as partly autobiographical, as the speaker is a woman writer living in Greenwich Village. The speaker has wearied of her role in life and the idea that continuing to live is difficult and not always desirable, permeates the poem:

Then I pricked my finger on a thorn, or a thistle,
Put the finger in my mouth, and ran to my mother.
Now I lie here, with my eyes on a pistol,
There will be a morrow, and another, and another.\(^2\)

The past is not necessarily regarded in the poem as a time of total innocence, but as a time of naivety, the speaker of the poem realizes that she thought that she lived with 'no harm'. Childhood in a pastoral landscape is not portrayed as paradise, as the child's communion with the natural world does not prepare it for the loneliness which is endured in adult life:

Then I grew a little, pricked plantain in the yard;
Now I dwell in Greenwich, and the people do not call;
Then I planted pepper-seed and stamped on them hard.
Now I am very quiet and hardly plan at all.\(^3\)

By the time that this poem came to be published, Barnes was a well-known writer and had already left Greenwich Village for Paris. The idea that fame breeds loneliness was to be a recurrent theme in her work, as was the difficulty of continuing to live in an essentially shallow world. The idea of becoming 'very quiet' could, therefore, be regarded as vital. In this poem, the creative woman becomes 'very quiet' in order both to love and work. Barnes does not seem to have regarded creativity as staving-off despair but as a necessary act, thus this connects the poem to later ideas which Barnes expressed concerning the Baroness. As the writer has discovered, to run 'with the boys' solves nothing. Thus the poem moves from a 'masculine' point of identification to a woman-centred one. Whilst being of biographical interest, the poem also creates a 'border crossing' between the male world (noisy, competitive

\(^2\) Ibid, p.179.
\(^3\) Ibid.
and crowded) to a relationship with a woman (silent, challenging and difficult). The woman is preferable to the rejected 'boys' but the pistol appears to stand as a reminder that this identification might also prove disappointing.

The use of silence in the poem raises another topic which recurs in Barnes's poetry. Mary Lynne Broe's work has continued to describe Barnes's portrayal of the 'silence' of the daughter who exists within a series of complex and incestuous family relationships.\(^{34}\) She also speaks of the 'silenced' woman writer and the way in which silence came to typify the elder Barnes's perception of self.\(^{35}\) Yet to use silence as a code for incest is to read all poems as autobiographical, as the narrative voice becomes that of Barnes herself. Thus 'Lullaby' becomes a poem specifically about Barnes's time in Greenwich Village. Of course, one can make biographical connections (and some of these might be considered vital to a full textual reading), but this should not occur at the expense of the narrative voice created by Barnes.\(^{36}\) In 'Lullaby' the writer embodies the concept of silence as knowledge, in the case of the poem the knowledge that 'there will be a morrow, and another, and another'.\(^{37}\)

The burden of continuing to live also occurs in *The Book of Repulsive Women*.\(^{38}\) This volume was pirated by the Alicat Press in 1948 and deserves a reprint, as it could be regarded as providing a coda to many of Barnes's later works.\(^{39}\) The poems in the volume are titled 'rhythms' and this highlights Barnes's concept of the text as a rhythmical whole, balancing poetry and drawings. There are eight rhythms and five drawings in all and the volume begins with the verse 'From Fifth Avenue Up' which presents a disquieting vision of femininity, a depiction of a woman exiled by her own 'suspect' sexuality.\(^{40}\) There are eight stanzas, all of which (except stanza two, which is of five lines) are of six lines each. Each stanza possesses a

\(^{35}\) Ibid, pp.24-45.
\(^{36}\) Barnes, 1923, p.179.
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
\(^{39}\) Ibid, Alicat, 1948.
\(^{40}\) Ibid, pp.1-2.
basic rhyme scheme. There is a strong rhythmic quality in all of the eight poems contained within the volume and, it might be suggested, the first 'rhythm' in the work, with its eight stanzas, anticipates the structure of the text as a whole.

As a journalist, Barnes would have been aware of media representations of 'free women' such as herself and Millay. It could be suggested that her 'rhythms' are mimetic, satirizing such representations by echoing the tone of media accounts:

Someday beneath some hard
Capricious Star-
Spreading its light a little
Over far,
We'll know you for the woman
That you are.\(^2\)

Thus the poem mimics contemporary media constructions of 'femininity'. By so doing, it crosses a border between a media construct and Barnes's self knowledge, as it uses familiar language (that of the tabloid journal) in order to reveal the shortcomings of that language. As Barnes worked as a journalist, it is a language which she was familiar with. Thus the poem mimics the tone of a report, whilst indicating the emotions which such pieces omit. It also empathizes with women such as Millay, by distancing them from sensationalist stories. Suzanne Clarke has noted how 'new' women poets were often portrayed in terms of their 'free' sexual behaviour, noting that Millay's uncomfortable stance between new woman and feminine object enabled Allen Tate to come to the conclusion that:

Miss Millay is rarely and very barely intellectual, and I think everybody knows it.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) It is probable that Barnes interviewed Millay c.1915 but I have been unable to trace this. A drawing of Millay, which might have been meant to accompany it, can be found in Field, 1985, p.85.

\(^2\) Barnes, 1915, pp.1-2.

\(^3\) Clarke, 1991, p.69.
Tate's decision, Clarke states, came from both his opinions on the 'sentimentalism' of Millay's poetic stance and from his knowledge of her life. Barnes, whose poem might be regarded as representing a parodic version of the 'new woman's' sexual exploits as described by the press, knew Millay through her work with the Provincetown Players. Andrew Field stated that:

Djuna and Edna had more than a little in common. They both came from broken homes. They both had a passion even as young women to dress and present themselves in a distinctive fashion.

Field presents the two women as 'new' women, precisely of the 'type' satirized by Barnes in *The Book of Repulsive Women*. Barnes appears, through satire, to have attempted a re-evaluation of the 'new' woman, as her depictions mimic representations of a destructive female 'type' apparent in works by Michael Arlen, Evelyn Waugh, Wyndham Lewis, Eugene O'Neil, and T.S. Eliot. Anne Larbee suggests that women in Barnes's early plays 'projected a dark wave of sensual violence'. She goes on to cite the play *The Dove*, describing it thus:

In the hysterical Amelia of *The Dove*, creativity, rage and freedom are distilled into vital expression.

It might be suggested that Barnes's intense 'new' women (created in plays such as *The Dove*) were satirized simultaneously in her poetry. It might be suggested that this is one of a more complex interpretation. Barnes is satirizing the 'intense' portrayal of the 'modern' woman, but

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44 Ibid, p.69.
45 This parody becomes apparent when one looks at the account of Millay's life recorded by Field. See, Field, 1985, pp.84-5.
46 Ibid, p.84.
47 Barnes, 1915, pp.1-2.
48 The figure of the destructive woman evolved from *fin de Siècle* archetypes and, as such, embodied male fears concerning female emancipation. By ridiculing those fears, Barnes distanced herself from aesthetic strategies employed by writers such as Pound and Eliot who continually portrayed the modern woman as a destructive automata. Characters embodying this idea can be found in Arlen's *The Green Hat* (1924), Waugh's *Vile Bodies* (1930), Lewis's *The Apes of God* (1930), O'Neil's *Anna Christie* (1921) and Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922).
50 Ibid, p.43.
she is also laying bare the limited emotions which were ascribed to 'femininity'. 'From Fifth Avenue Up' presents a figure of a woman whose body and life are distorted by the narrative voice which describes her.51 This voice uses the plural to describe how the woman is perceived, thus the poem comes to signify the way in which an individual is regarded by a faceless, media informed, majority:

We'd see your body in the grass
With cool pale eyes
We'd strain to touch those langrous' length of thies; [sic.]
And hear your short sharp modern
Babylonic cries.52

The vapid crowd is implicitly voyeuristic. She remains an object of desire, to be consumed. Thus her body becomes a type of visual currency. Her cries are both modern and Babylonic and this perhaps refers to the fact that in sensationalist journalism, of the type rejected by Barnes as a career, cities such as New York were often described as modern equivalents of Babylon.53 The woman's body has here become a side-show, distanced from her sense of self. Her body is described in a similar way to that of 'the Peacock' in the newspaper tale 'The Terrible Peacock', mentioned later in this thesis.54 As critics have noted, by the latter part of the poem it is obvious that the woman depicted is a lesbian and that voyeurs are watching sexual activities which they do not fully understand.55 These observers connect the woman's body to orgiastic display:

See you sagging down with bulging
Hair to sip,

51 Barnes, 1915, pp.1-2.
53 This is also present in images from the silent cinema, such as those in Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1926) Germany, black and white, UFA, 139m.
55 Barnes, 1915, pp.102.
The dappled damp from some vague
Underlip.
Your soft saliva, loosed
with Orgy, Drip.\textsuperscript{56}

The tone of the poem parodies salacious written accounts of lesbian love-making by using words such as 'sagging', 'bulging', 'saliva', 'loosed' and 'orgy'. Thus it provides a satire of male accounts of lesbian sexuality which had existed since the eighteenth-century, and which were created in her own time by men such as Henry Miller.\textsuperscript{57} In Surpassing the Love of Men, Lilian Faderman describes the way in which novels such as Mademoiselle du Maupin (1835) by Théophile Gautier, regarded lesbian sexual activity as titillating for male, heterosexual onlookers, but sexually unsatisfying for the women themselves.\textsuperscript{58} Faderman, perhaps mistakenly, asserts that such portrayals were imitated by Barnes and she regards Nightwood as sanctioning the view of lesbianism created by Proust in Sodome et Gomorrhe:

It attests to the power of literary images over lesbian writers that, even after criticizing Proust's lies, Barnes called on her knowledge of lesbians in literature rather than in life in order to write her own novel.\textsuperscript{59}

Likewise, Faderman links Barnes's poetry to works by Verlaine:

In a 1923 poem, 'Six Songs of Khalidine', the beloved's red hair flames and crawls and creeps, as in Verlaine's lesbian poems.\textsuperscript{60}

Faderman's view of Barnes's treatment of lesbianism, like many discussions of Barnes's art work, suggests that it was influenced by the fin de Siècle world of The Yellow Book.\textsuperscript{61} This, as argued below, is largely inaccurate, as Barnes's works satirize nineteenth-century writings, as

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p.2.
\textsuperscript{57} For a discussion of Miller's aesthetic see Miller, Henry and Anais Nin, A Literate Passion (London: Allison and Busby, 1992), pp.92-3.
\textsuperscript{58} See reference in Faderman, 1985, p.365.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, p.365.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p.364.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
opposed to imitating them. 'Six Songs of Khalidine' was written in 1915, as a memorial to
Mary Pyne. It was published in 1923, in A Book. Its contemporaneity with The Book of
Repulsive Women and the fact that it also discusses constructs of 'femininity' make it a
valuable text to discuss alongside the eight rhythms published by Bruno.62

Barnes's elegiac love poems create a lesbian discourse of desire via the means of pastiche. This pastiche (discussed in the following pages) is composed using lines which satirize their traditional counterparts. Thus in 'Six Songs of Khalidine' Barnes is not speaking of a lost love in terms which are chiefly conditioned by nineteenth-century literature but working out a pattern by which to describe her own sense of bereavement and the intense loss which she had suffered at Pyne's death. This bereavement was described in anecdotal histories of Greenwich Village, such as that written by Maurice Sterne.63 Again, a biographical reading of the poem is partly necessary, but should not cloud a reading of the structural pastiche created by Barnes. The poem is divided into six stanzas and appears to be closely linked to Barnes's loss of Pyne, as it is dedicated to her. It could be argued that in stating that writings of fin-de-
Siècle symbolism influence the poem entirely, Faderman ignores any contextual aspects of its narrative. Using a blend of biographical and historical analysis, the poem might be regarded as a lyrical representation of emotions which Barnes experienced at Pyne's death. If one goes beyond biography, then it could be argued that it also represents an early exploration of aspects of 'lesbian' sexuality, being a more personally 'lesbian' poem than those contained in The Book of Repulsive Women. The poem begins with the narrative voice setting the scene;
the beloved is dead and the lover watches over the body with surging emotion:

The flame of your red hair does crawl and creep
Upon your body that denies the gloom
And feeds upon your flesh as t'would consume
The cold precision of your austere sleep--

63 Field, 1985, p.102.
And all night long I beat it back, and weep.\textsuperscript{64} 

Pyne, described by Field in terms of her beautiful red hair, is here defined as the object of the lover's desire.\textsuperscript{65} Vibrant red hair, signifying life, makes the loved one's death more difficult to accept. It is reminiscent of media tales where hair and nails possessed a 'life of their own' after death. The dead lover is directly addressed in the second stanza and the love shared between the two women is outlined in the image of a kiss, an image which undercuts the remainder of the piece:

\begin{verbatim}
Your mouth and mine, and one sweet mouth unseen
We call our soul. Yet thick within our hair
The dusty ashes that our days prepare.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{verbatim}

Again, hair occurs as a potent metaphor here, as if it, so vital in the opening stanza, already contains the seed of death. It could be argued that Barnes selected this image because Pyne's own hair conditioned the fact that she was remembered as a beauty. The remembered image of red hair, not poetry, was to remain Pyne's most enduring memorial, as it is the image of her red hair which occurs in anecdotes concerning Greenwich Village during the period.\textsuperscript{67} Also, as Barnes's interest in clothing as a social signifier might well have reminded her, hair was used in a variety of mourning artefacts, including brooches and lockets. In the poem, the dead lover embodies a significant portion of the living lover's past. The body of the lover is thus distanced, in death, from the beloved. In writing of Nightwood, Judith B. Lee remarks:

\begin{verbatim}
Nora and Robin share a symbiotic bond; Nora's identity depends upon Robin's presence as much as Robin's existence depends upon Nora.\textsuperscript{68}
\end{verbatim}

This bond is also evident, it could be argued, in 'Six Songs of KHALIDINE', where Barnes's

\textsuperscript{64} Barnes, 1923, pp.145-6. 
\textsuperscript{65} Field, 1985, p.102. 
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, p.145. 
\textsuperscript{67} As accounts by Field and Agnes Boulton (first wife of Eugene O'Neill) clearly demonstrate. Field, 1985, pp.103-4; See also Boulton, Agnes, Part of a Long Story: Eugene O'Neill as a Young Man in Love (London: Peter Davies, 1958), p.11, p.19, p.21, p.28, pp.30-3, p.56, pp.66-7, pp.75-6. 
sympathetic viewpoint outlines an aesthetic of loss. The loss of a lover also signifies the loss of a shared past, in this case a past which might, in some circles, have been regarded as taboo.

This is equated with fear within the world of the poem:

The dark comes up, my little love, and dyes
Your fallen lids with stain of ebony,
And draws a thread of fear 'tween you and me
Pulling thin blindness across our eyes—
And far within the vale a lost bird cries.\(^69\)

Faderman has linked this stanza to works by Verlaine, yet, it might be suggested that, as in Judith Lee's interpretation of Robin Vote in Nightwood, the dead beloved of the poem represents:

A consciousness which cannot be understood in terms of ordinary modes of differentiation.\(^70\)

In death, the beloved has become 'other' and has been removed from the shared consciousness with which her lover is familiar. Loss is here quantified by 'blindness' and the cry of a 'lost' bird, perhaps a metaphor for the soul of the departed. Elizabeth Bronfen has outlined the western aesthetic which uses the dead female body as its premier signifier, defining it thus:

Death is the only viable choice because what is at stake all along for the feminine body socially constructed as being nowhere, is the originary division of life and death before and amongst supplementary divisions.\(^71\)

The body in Barnes's poem remains an enigma. It might be argued that her text does not seek to 'reproduce' this enigma but to explore it. Bronfen states that male artists have sought to 'solve' the enigma of femininity. In this poem, it is the riddle itself which counts.\(^72\)

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\(^{69}\) Faderman, 1992, p.289.
\(^{70}\) Lee, 1991, p.213.
\(^{71}\) Bronfen, 1992, p.289.
\(^{72}\) Thus the poem represents the dead woman without revealing a desire to 'resolve' her image.
Another point is that raised by Julie Abraham who regards Barnes’s works as depicting those ‘outside’ the nexus of patriarchal power. This argument which is similar to that deployed by Jane Marcus in her essay ‘Laughing at Leviticus’, could also be used in connection with Barnes’s poetry. ‘Six Songs of Khalidine’ portrays a love which is already, before the death of one partner, outside the ‘circle of power’ described by Marcus and Abraham. It might be suggested that, with the death of the loved one, this detachment is doubled. Abraham has also stated that, in The Antiphon, Barnes describes ‘the lesbian memory’ which is ‘never explicitly spoken’. This, it might be argued, also occurs early in Barnes’s career as ‘Six Songs of Khalidine’ demonstrates.

The poem’s fourth stanza, which has been all but ignored in critiques of Barnes’s work, places the death of the partner in a wider context:

Does not the wind moan round your painted towers
Like rats within an empty granary?
The clapper lost, and long blown out to sea
Your windy doves. And here the black bat cowers
Against your clock that never strikes the hours.

This imitates the tone of Tennyson’s ‘In Memorium’ (1850) with its use of a metaphorical landscape, a point which critics such as Faderman have ignored. In linking Barnes’s poetry to symbolists such as Verlaine, Faderman does not discuss the pastiche of images from nineteenth-century canonical English literature implicit within poems such as ‘Six Songs of Khalidine’. The fourth stanza is reminiscent of both ‘Mariana in the Moated Grange’ and ‘Maud’ in tone, with its references to Tennyson’s own imagery (the ‘rats’ and ‘black bat’ for

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75 Barnes, 1923, p.145.
77 Barnes, 1923, pp.145-6.
79 Faderman, 1985, p.365.
example) and it echoes the 'romantic' tone observable in much nineteenth-century poetry. Likewise, the clock 'that never strikes the hours' is an image which was frequently deployed in nineteenth-century writing, both in poetry and prose, as Mary E. Braddon's novel Lady Audley's Secret amply demonstrates.

'In Memorium' has been perceived by certain critics as a homo-erotic work, dedicated to Arthur Hallam, whom Tennyson loved. In choosing the elegy for Hallam to form the basis of an elegy for Pyne, Barnes appeared to deliberately echo a piece with such connotations. As a lesbian, Barnes appears to have recognized the paucity of documented 'homosexual' verse. Rather like Gertrude Stein, Barnes deployed both pastiche and parody in order to create an alternative discourse of love. Ultimately, Barnes's poem rejects a 'silence' which, as Joanna Russ suggests, is often regarded as defining women's poetry:

And now I say, has not the mountain's base
Here trembled long ago unto the cry
'I love you, ah, I love you'. Now we die
And lay, all silent, to the earth our face.
Shall that cast out the echo of this place?

The narrator of the poem, therefore, refuses to believe that nothing will survive of love. The final stanza of the poem describes death in terms of human unity:

Has not one in the dark funereal

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80 Again, this appears to have been ignored in recent critical studies of Barnes's work, such as Brce, 1991.
83 It appears that this appropriation of forms and devices has not been discussed in terms of Barnes's sexuality.
84 The fact that she chose Tennyson above a 'lesbian' poet seems to attest to this paucity. Barney and Vivien, in their search for lesbian fore-mothers, seem to have chosen Sappho as one of the only women poets openly defined as loving women.
86 Barnes, 1923, p.145.
Heard foot-fall fearful, born of no man's tread,
And felt the wings of death, though no wing spread
And on his cheek a tear, though no tear fell—
And a voice saying without breath 'Farewell'.

The 'he' of this final stanza is the archetypal 'bereft lover' of nineteenth-century literature. It might be argued, therefore, that the final stanza, with its elegiac cadences, is more traditional in tone than the rest of the poem. Yet it reinforces the unity of beloved and lover, divided but not totally separated by death, present in the poem as a whole. Pyne's death becomes a symbol of the universality of both death and mourning; it can be seen to possess a wider significance than that which it has for the beloved. It might also be suggested that in using traditional motifs and devices out of context, Barnes created a space in which a specifically lesbian discourse could occur, as the tradition which Barnes harks back to is itself homoerotic.

Representations of death also occur in The Book of Repulsive Women but, unlike 'Six Songs of Khalidine', these are not elegiac. The poem which ends the volume, 'Suicide', is divided into two stanzas entitled 'Corpse A' and 'Corpse B'. The first of these represents the unknowableness of the dead woman who remains unidentified:

They brought her in, a shattered small cocoon,
With a little bruised [sic] body like a startled moon;
And all of the subtle symphonies of her a twilight rune.

The anonymity of the corpse and the fragility which it embodies makes the tone appear more detached. This hardly resembles the emotive voice of 'Six Songs of Khalidine'. The poem's narrative structure records the corpse as opposed to being 'involved' with its fate. The first body of two, this perhaps remains the more enigmatic. Yet, as a female body it has been

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87 Ibid, p.146.
88 Barnes deploys 'he' (it seems to me) as a device in the final stanza which satirizes the nineteenth-century love lyric, but, despite this, the point of identification in the first stanza is the asexual (or perhaps female?) T.
89 Barnes, 1915, p.15.
exploited even in death, as it is objectified, and lies in a mortuary, awaiting observation. In both cases, the reader remains unaware of the previous life of the corpse of how each woman came to commit suicide. It could be argued that these are no longer regarded as women but as bodies to be 'brought in'. Both bodies are described in terms of their namelessness and isolation, 'Corpse A' and 'Corpse B', as they would be in a morgue. Perhaps it might be suggested that this 'labelling' was derived from mortuary scenes witnessed by Barnes as a journalist.\(^\text{90}\)

Nancy J. Levine has implied that Barnes gave up her journalistic career because she was asked to intrude upon the lives of grieving families and report on the victims of both murder and rape.\(^\text{91}\) Whether or not this is the case, it could be argued that in 'Suicide' Barnes reveals disgust at the way in which bodies of dead women are handled. In 'Corpse B', this becomes more explicit:

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\begin{align*}
\text{They gave her hurried shoves this way and that} \\
\text{Her body shock-abbreviated} \\
\text{As a city cat.} \\
\text{She lay out listlessly like some small mug} \\
\text{Of beer gone flat.}^{\text{92}}
\end{align*}
\]

This is an incredible image, suggesting that the woman's body is both as unwanted and as useless as a flat mug of beer. The woman's body in this poem signifies an abused body, violated both by the act of suicide and by the attendants who 'shove' it 'this way and that'. This is reminiscent of descriptions of how the female corpse was treated by medical men in the late nineteenth-century, an attitude described by both Elizabeth Bronfen and Elaine Showalter:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A popular theme in fin-de-Siècle painting, as in medical literature, was the} \\
\text{doctor performing an autopsy on the body of a drowned prostitute. As Sander} \\
\text{Gilman suggested, these representations make us wonder exactly what the}
\end{align*}
\]


\(^{92}\) Barnes, 1915, p.15.
doctors are seeking in their explorations: 'What will be found in the body of these drowned women: Will it be the hidden truths of the nature of the woman, what women want ...? The face of the Medusa, with all of its castrating power?'

As with the anatomical Venus, also described by Showalter, the corpses in Barnes’s poem become metaphors for the way in which women are treated: as signifiers of ‘femininity’ they are to be touched and explored at will. Those, like Field, who argue that Barnes’s early writing has little ‘feminist’ content, have ignored the way in which Barnes’s poetry describes treatment of the female body both in life and at death. The fear which Showalter defines as implicit in explorations of woman, is also present in these works, whether it is fear of the familiar partner transformed by death as in ‘Six Songs of Khaledine’ or the fear of the secrets contained within the female body implicit in ‘Suicide’. Indeed, the narrative voice of these poems if fearful, due to the fact that in death these women have become unknown.

This aesthetic of fear changes slightly in the poems ‘She Passed This Way’ and ‘The Flowering Corpse’ where a dead woman is also addressed. In the first of these lyrics it is the spirit of the woman, as opposed to her dead body, which is explored:

Here where the trees still tremble with your flight,
I sit and braid thin wisps to beat you down
How shall we ever find you who have gone
In little dresses, lisping through the town?

It is as if in death, the woman has become a child again and thus impossible for an adult to trace. Here the woman has literally ‘crossed’ a border between life and death. She is lost, both to the speaker of the poem in stanza one and to the ‘men’ who hunt her in the second stanza:

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93 Bronfen, 1992, pp.6-7; Showalter, 1992, p.131.
94 Ibid, p.129.
95 Field, 1985, p.248.
96 Showalter, 1992, p.131.
Great men on horses hunt you and strong boys
Employ their arrows in the shallow air.
But I shall be heard whistling where I follow,
Braiding long wisps of grass and stallions hair.**

As with 'Six Songs of Khalidine', written eight years earlier, the image of hair is vital. The braided wisps of stanza one also occur in stanza two. In stanza one the braiding is of the dead woman's hair and embodies the lover's desire not to 'let go' of the beloved. In stanza two the braiding has become a type of love-charm, a bid to return the spirit of the beloved back to the lover. The emphasis has changed from 'Six Songs of Khalidine', a poem essentially about loss, as the lover in this poem is active. In 'She Passed This Way', the lover attempts a 'border crossing' on behalf of her beloved. The 'great men' on horses and 'boys' who 'employ their arrows in the shallow air' (the hunters of women) are ultimately foiled.® The archaic imagery of stanza two, where the dead woman is quany for figures who could have come from a medieval tapestry, gives the poem the tone of a folk tale. This aura is also contributed to by the image of the love-charm, or amulet and is thus re-enforced in the final stanza of the piece:

And in the night when thirty hawks are high
In pendant rhythm, and all the wayside loud;
When they are burning field and bush and hedge,
I'll steal you like a penny from the crowd.101

The obscurity of images such as 'at night when thirty hawks are high' gives the piece the air of a folk tale without making direct references to a specific story.102 Thus the whole spectrum of imagery within the poem (the braids, the hunters, the hawks, etc.) could be seen as referring to folk-lore without using a singular reference. In one sense, Barnes creates a pastoral landscape

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
which she then destroys as the fields, bushes and hedges in line three appear to be
indiscriminately burned. This 'burning', however, allows the lover to 'steal' the spirit of the
lost beloved. This image of the lover reclaimed 'like a penny from the crowd' is enigmatic, as
if the poem's narrator had become 'a thief of souls'. Like Romaine Brooks's drawings of
communion between the living and the dead, Barnes's poem reaches an unexpected
conclusion. It is the living lover, not her dead counterpart, who haunts her partner and
steals her spirit. The poem achieves a border crossing both in theme (the crossing between life
and death or vice versa) and in execution (a crossing between 'high' and 'low' art forms, for
example, the poem and the folk-ballad).

The second poem in the cycle, 'The Flowering Corpse', rejects this communion between
the living and the dead:

So still she lies in this closed place apart,
Her feet grown fragile for the ghostly tryst,
Her pulse no longer stricking in her wrist,
Nor does its echo wander through her heart.

Over the body and the quiet head
Like stately ferns above an austere tomb,
Soft hairs blow; and beneath her armpits bloom
The drowsy passion flowers of the dead.

This poem, with its likeness to later works of magic realism, seems to deny the action of 'She
Passed This Way'. The corpse here is devoid of the spirit which wanders abroad in the first

103 Brooks's visual explorations of spirituality can be located in Secrest, Meryl, *Between Me
and Life* (New York: Macdonald and Jane's, 1974).
105 Ibid, p.14. The image of flowers occurs in magic realist works such as those by Leonora
Corrington and Isabella Allende.
poem. Again, the corpse is defined in terms of silence. Yet, unlike the echoes of past love which haunt Barnes's elegy for Pyne, here silence is all consuming. The 'tryst' is no longer with the lover, as in 'She Passed This Way', but with death which will ultimately silence and define the corpse. Language used in the poem suggests closure, the corpse lies in a 'closed' place, her feet are 'fragile' and almost ghost-like, and there is no echo of her pulse. The head is 'quiet' and only the hair is suggestive of life (as with the media tales mentioned earlier). This is not braided against death but blows free, the only moving part of the body. The 'flowering corpse', an image which seems to hint at Catholic miracles, is not in itself miraculous but remains a confirmation of death. The 'drowsy passion flowers of the dead' define the boundaries of the body. If the two poems are taken in sequence, as they were published, then the first poem could be seen as a fantasy of what the narrator wishes might happen, whilst the second, as with 'Six Songs of Khatidine', is a confirmation of loss. The second poem explores the female body as a singular shell, without 'soul' or 'spirit'.

Images contained in Barnes's early poems are often of death, yet the author's pessimism does not appear to be a key issue when analysing them. A discussion of the poems as proof of the author's misery might prohibit an exploration of her construction of images which refer to ideas concerning 'femininity'. These images, which enable many 'border crossings' to take place, are evident in *The Book of Repulsive Women* where she depicts a series of women whose lives are both fragmented and shackled by ideas concerning gender and sexuality. These women either have restricted, poorly-paid jobs or work which has sexual overtones.

In 'To a Cabaret Dancer' Barnes charts the life of a woman who has been conditioned to regard falling in love as the main purpose of existence. The dancer of the title trades on her own sexual image, that of a *femme fatale* and has been encouraged to regard her body both as her greatest asset and as public property:

107 They also replace a more usual funeral flower, the lily.
108 For example, the 'Cabaret Dancer' later becomes a prostitute and men pay 'coin' to observe her body. Barnes, 1915, p.14.
A thousand lights had smitten her
Into this thing;
Life had taken her out and given her
One place to sing.*°^ 

The woman begins by representing an archetype which is called 'fine' and 'splendid'
(resembling the performer Gaby Deslys, whom Barnes interviewed in 1914) and becomes
little more than a commodity. By stanza three of the poem she has crossed the border
between relative wealth and hard times and is described as having become 'less fine'.^ Indeed, she might be regarded as 'impersonating' one construct of 'femininity' as she
'impersonates' the popular idea of the femme fatale, as defined by Julie Wheelwright in her
work on the dancer and 'spy' Mata Hari. The best of the woman's art is never revealed but is
hidden alongside her 'secret self' and she contents herself with 'dancing' from one relationship
to another:

Yet some wonderous thing within the mess
Was held in check;--
Was missing as she grasped and clung
About his neck.113

It is implied that the woman is not encouraged to think about her sexuality and is therefore
unable to question what she wants from life, what is silenced here being her own potential.
This loss is 'hinted' at in the woman's performance but is never fully articulated. This,
implies the narration, 'kills' the woman's self:

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We saw the crimson leave her cheeks
Flame in her eyes;
For when a woman lives in awful haste
A woman dies.\textsuperscript{115}

Society encourages the singer to become an archetype of female sexuality/sensuality, and the very society which creates a need for the singer watches her downfall with a smug eye. As Wheelwright has argued when describing the career of Mata Hari (one of whose only genuine supporters appears to have been Natalie Barney) 'the quest for the reality of her existence melted in the face of an enduring fantasy of female evil'.\textsuperscript{116} This social need has, the poem suggests:

Soiled a sweet and ignorant soul
And fouled its play.\textsuperscript{117}

The woman, it is implied, descends from singing in a nightclub to prostitution. When last observed she is walking the street and, as Barnes wryly notes, has become as anonymous as the corpses in 'Suicide':

You've passed her forty times and sneered
Out in the street.\textsuperscript{118}

The price which was paid to watch her sing (and implicitly to view her body) is now the coin which is paid for her body. She has crossed from being applauded for her body to being 'sneered' at because of it. This is precisely the cycle identified by Wheelwright, where the female performer's former audience become her harshest judges.\textsuperscript{119} Yet, the poem reaches the conclusion (in the second person) that this is all part of the 'crowd's' function:

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Wheelwright, 1992, pp.2-3, p.18, p.131.
\textsuperscript{117} Barnes, 1915, p.14.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, p.14.
\textsuperscript{119} Wheelwright, 1992, p.131.
Until her songless soul admits
Time comes to kill;
You pay her price and wonder why
You need her still.120

In this context the woman becomes objectified and loses her own song. She is silenced just as is Wendell Ryder’s mistress, Molly Dance, who has no official claim on him even though she bears his children.121 The woman’s body is, in both her professions, objectified and remains essentially anonymous, as with corpses in the other verses mentioned.

By creating figures such as the dancer to use as metaphors for the social treatment of women, Barnes was able to explore the spaces and confines associated with the condition of being female. These include economic confines (the dancer works for money), physical confines (her costume is dictated by the ‘construction of femininity’ which she is obliged to impersonate) and sexual confines (the ‘crowd’ imply that they ‘own’ her and can discard her at will). In her fiction, Barnes was to explore gendered spaces using images of rooms: in her poetry she uses the female body itself as an image of gendered space.

This can also be observed in a similar poem in The Book of Repulsive Women, ‘Twilight of the Illicit’, which describes a woman who has lost all her potential and motivation, becoming a passive figure in a hostile landscape.122 The woman’s needs have become so basic that she is almost bestial but the work suggests that this is due to the society in which she lives, as opposed to her own inclinations.123 The woman has become an impersonation of her young self, dressed in trappings associated with femininity but no longer aware of her own desires:

121 Barnes, Djuna, Ryder (New York: Liveright, 1928).
122 Barnes, Djuna, pp.12-3.
Your knees set far apart like
Heavy spheres;
With disks upon your eyes like
Husks of tears,
And great ghastly loops of gold
Snared in your ears.\textsuperscript{124}

The woman has kept the outer-trappings of the female dress-code but, Barnes seems to imply, has lost her needs within them. It is hinted that the woman possesses lesbian feelings (hence the title) but has painted on a mask of heterosexuality.

By so doing she has buried 'sweeter gifts' which she 'had, but did not keep'.\textsuperscript{125} Critics such as Faderman appear to have linked this type of poem to Barnes's lack of understanding both of other women and of her own lesbianism.\textsuperscript{126} However, this can be disputed. What this thesis seeks to argue is that Barnes does not mean her readers to sneer at the women depicted in volumes such as \textit{The Book of Repulsive Women} but rather wishes them to question a society which has encouraged passivity and ignorance and which, by its very nature, is patriarchal.

The women in this volume are not 'repulsive' in themselves but have been transmuted into objects. Thus the 'suicides' have become anonymous corpses, the nightclub singer becomes a prostitute and the once lovely woman of 'Twilight of the Illicit' buries her own lesbianism and enacts a charade of heterosexuality.

Women in these poems also use a specific dress-code in order to 'enact' a type of stereotype, and such issues of gender transgression have been described by Garber, and by Straub and Epstein. The latter have discussed how, when the body is dressed in a way which renders gender ambiguous, the individual might transgress questions of both gender placing and political placing. As an uncodified body (which falls into neither gender nor class

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid. The disks upon the woman's eyes appear to be circles of kohl, yet recall the pennies placed upon the eyes of the dead.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Faderman, 1985, p.365.
definitions) is uncategoryable, and thus unplaceable, I would argue that textually Barnes creates a confusion of identification through her use of dress codes. For example, she defines oppression by describing the woman 'snared' by her earrings. Transgression is, likewise, hinted at in the woman who dresses as an 'imitation' of her former self. For example, she wears clothes which define her as a 'feminine woman', but these entrap her 'present' self.

Straub and Epstein have outlined the 'performance' aspect of gender transgression and ask the questions 'why are we being stared at? Why are we staring?' Barnes's poetry often appears to pose similar questions, as the women in volumes such as *The Book of Repulsive Women* (such as the derelict, the suicides and the cabaret performer) are on display. Here, Barnes questions the effects of dress and gender codification, hinting at the perils of self-presentation.

Indeed, as a cub journalist, Barnes often seems to indicate that she was also on display. The female *flâneur* (the *flâneuse*) is a figure who exists in many works by women early in the twentieth-century, such as those by Crystal Eastman. In both her journalism and her poetry, Barnes appears to comment on the ambiguity of such a position. Janet Wolff has discussed the status of the 'invisible *flâneuse*' in the nineteenth-century, a character 'rendered impossible' due to sexual divisions. It could be argued that in the twentieth-century the 'modern' equivalent of the *flâneuse* was the female journalist. In much of Barnes's early journalism, the writer links the oppression of women to class oppression. In articles such as 'Who's the Last Squatter?' (1913), 'Found on the Bowery' (1917) and 'The Hem of Manhattan' (1917), Barnes explored inner-city poverty interviewing, amongst others, the city's poor women:

But squattin' or no squattin', it's a sad place to be, when the vegetables won't

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grow and money goin' no distance at all; me takin' out a quarter only last week
and comin back wid' no change at all and buyin soup meat, an' it lastin' only two
days, and Johnny not able to eat at all, and then me man coming home from the
stone crusher wid' his finger smashed.\textsuperscript{32}

As with representations of class structures in her poetry, in these interviews Barnes remained
conscious of the dividing line which women perceived between themselves and their
interviewer. She implied that such class divisions were signified by dress codes.\textsuperscript{33} In her line
drawing to 'Who's The Last Squatter?' Barnes depicted herself as well dressed, standing
amidst the squalor of a squat in 'Pigtown'.\textsuperscript{34} The interviewee is dressed in rags, forming a
sharp contrast to Barnes's own fashionable garb. Thus dress codes are deployed to make a
social point, as Barnes makes the reader aware of two distinct frames of 'femininity', namely
the squatter woman (whose dress is as shapeless as her dwelling and who has no choice in
what cloth or cut she wears) and the young reporter (whose smart, fashionable dress likewise
reflects her social status). It is ironic that Barnes recognized herself as also being victimized
by the fashion code: her hobble skirt confines natural movement and would compromise any
sense of equality with her male counterparts. The article contains a passionate plea on behalf
of 'Pigtown's' inhabitants, particularly the women.

In both poetry and prose, Barnes seems to have regarded women's oppression as being
ignored both by governments of the period and by private citizens. Poverty, it is suggested, is
regarded as the 'fault' of the poor for whom talk of the 'American dream' has no meaning. The
knowledge that the oppression of women is often linked with that of the dispossessed is
reflected in Barnes's poetry. As with earlier writers, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and
Olive Shreiner, Barnes was concerned with the social results of oppression and this is
reflected in poems such as 'From Third Avenue On'.\textsuperscript{35} This piece depicts a woman whose

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid. p.121.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Discussions of both appear in Shreiner, Olive, The Story of an African Farm (London:
Watson, 1883); and Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, 'The Yellow Wallpaper' in Daughters of
creative powers have 'slipped away'. The woman moves in a landscape redolent of inner-city decay:

And now she walks on out-turned feet
Beside the litter in the street
Or rolls beneath a dirty sheet
Within the town.
She does not stir to doff her dress,
She does not kneel low to confess,
A little conscience, no distress,
And settled down.

Critics such as Field who have chosen to regard poems in *The Book of Repulsive Women* as exploring the single theme of lesbianism have ignored the discussion of poverty and its links with gender also contained within the volume. Here, Barnes implies that poverty (indicated by dress and cleanliness) is ignored by social structures which blame poor women for not dressing well. It is as if such women have chosen to 'let themselves go' rather than having no actual choice. Thus women whom society regards as 'repulsive' are economically forced into such roles.

The woman's rooms in 'From Third Avenue On' are redolent of a type of genteel poverty and this is reflected in her features, as she:

grins too vacant into space--
A vacant space is in her face--
Where nothing comes to take the place
Of high hard cries.

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136 Barnes, 1915, pp.10-1.
137 Ibid, pp.10-1.
139 Barnes, 1915, pp.10-1.
140 Ibid, pp.10-1.
It is as though the woman's personality and also, as the last line of the previous quotation suggests, her sexuality have become invisible due to the poverty of her surroundings and appearance. She becomes ignored by passer-by who, Barnes implies, represent the poem's readership. The narration suggests that the woman embodies the 'living dead up in their rooms' who people New York City. She sleeps with men whom she does not love for comfort and is indicative of thousands:

And those who have their blooms in jars
No longer stare into the stars
Instead, they watch the dinky cars--
And live aghast.\footnote{42}

The metropolis described echoes the city which appears in Barnes's early journalism. In this environment, women divert themselves from the problems which they face either with 'love affairs' or the concept of romance. The idea of romance was also discussed in 'The Lament of Women', which appeared in a 1918 number of _The Little Review_ and which depicted women as constantly 'falling' for the myth of romance.\footnote{13} In style it shares much in common with 'The Midwives Lament' from _Ryder_ (see the chapter on _Ryder_) and questions the whole concept of a 'romance' which solves all women's problems:

Ah my God, what is it that we love.
This flesh laid on us like a wrinkled glove?
Bones caught in haste from some lustful bed,
And for momentum, this a devil's shove.\footnote{14}

Thus on returning to Barnes's poetic discussion of love, one perceives a 'border crossing' taking place between the love lyric and the complaint.\footnote{15} By employing this technique, Barnes

\footnote{141} Ibid.
\footnote{142} Ibid.
\footnote{143} Barnes, Djuna, 'The Lament of Women' in _The Little Review_ 8, (Dec 1918), p.37.
\footnote{144} Ibid, p.37.
\footnote{145} For a selection of both forms see Mulford, Wendy, _The Virago Book of Love Poetry_ (London: Virago, 1990).
describes anger as a part of love, rather than as existing in opposition to it. Later poems by Barnes are not about falling in love but rather ask why women fall for love, a question asked by women poets from Sappho onwards. These poems maintain that women are 'cheated' of their liberty, deluded by a romantic myth which exists to maintain patriarchal stability.

It is valid to outline Barnes's use of the 'complaint' at this juncture. In her introduction to the *Virago Book of Love Poetry*, Wendy Mulford states:

> There is little veneration in these poems. There is, I would say, markedly more rage, and sometimes sheer bad temper.

This, it might be argued, is also true of Barnes's 'love poetry' which frequently rages at concepts of love. As a poet describing the love between women, Barnes satirizes existing types of love lyric, illustrating the paucity of imagery contained in these. Thus the narrative voices which she creates often appear to be either angry or bemused. Mulford goes on to conclude that 'sometimes the persona of the poem is the watcher who warns, or laments or deprecates the love relationship'. Barnes's poetic voice frequently achieves just this, marking the complexities of the love lyric as a female form. Mulford cites the 'complaint' as a recognized form used by women since ancient times. It could be argued that most of the poems by Barnes on the subject of love are 'complaints' of one type or another. 'Complaints' by women poets include Edna St. Vincent Millay's 'Sonnet XXXI' where the speaker upbraids a male lover for underestimating her intellectual powers and concludes:

> And some sane day when you knock and push the door,
> Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,
> I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

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146 As is also demonstrated in Mulford, 1990.
147 This, it might be argued, also exists in contemporary romantic fiction aimed at a chiefly female market, such as Mills and Boon romances. See Moss, Gemma, *Unpopular Fictions* (London: Virago, 1989), pp.108-9.
149 Ibid, p.xv.
150 Ibid.
Although Millay's poem deals with heterosexual love, use of the complaint can also be found in works by Barnes.

Barnes's poetry is commonly perceived as dividing into two major periods; the early works which were published between 1913 and 1929 and later poems published between the mid-1960s up until her death in 1982.\textsuperscript{152} This suggests that Barnes wrote nothing between the two periods mentioned and that her main periods of poetic creativity occurred early and late in her career. This is probably not the case, as the McKeldin collection houses many notes which contain poems in progress.\textsuperscript{153} However, this chapter concentrates on published volumes and thus it is appropriate at this point to move to Barnes's later poetic works.

Ancient Beasts: The Later Poetry of Djuna Barnes

Many of the concerns mentioned in the first section of this chapter reappear in the study of Barnes's later works. As she grew older, Barnes reverted to a more archaic set of images with which to create poetry. These include linguistic conventions and devices from the sixteenth-century chapbook (also deployed in the \textit{Ladies Almanack}), beasts from medieval bestiaries and images from myths and the folk tradition.\textsuperscript{154} Andrew Field and others have regarded these works as being primarily 'complaints' against the old age which so offended Barnes.\textsuperscript{155} Whilst this undoubtedly forms an element in the works, it does not override her desire to create works which formed a critique of gender by deploying a pastiche of traditional forms.

These themes can be outlined using \textit{Creatures in An Alphabet} (1982) a slim volume which is lighter in tone than other works.\textsuperscript{156} Despite this, it reveals preoccupations which recur in important later poems such as 'Work in Progress', 'Quarry', and 'Walking Mort'.\textsuperscript{157} 'Work in

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{152} See Kannenstine, 1975, pp.184-8.
  \item\textsuperscript{153} \textit{McKeldin Library Catalogue} (Maryland: Maryland University Library, 1989), unnumbered.
  \item\textsuperscript{154} Barnes, Djuna, \textit{Ladies Almanack} (Dijon: Darrantiere, 1928).
  \item\textsuperscript{155} Field, 1985, pp.21-4.
  \item\textsuperscript{156} Barnes, Djuna, \textit{Creatures in an Alphabet} (New York: Dial, 1982).
\end{itemize}
Progress' is so short as to be almost a haiku:

Man cannot purge his body of its theme
As can the silkworm on a running thread
Spin a shroud to re-consider in.158

The natural image of the silkworm twinned with the reference to human mortality returned Barnes to the type of natural imagery which she had used in the poems in A Book.159 The delicacy of the piece is also to be discovered in the short poems contained in Creatures in an Alphabet:

Though it be loud with auguries
Of summer sun, and happy days;
Nonetheless the Blue Jay is
Lined with insect agonies.160

The creatures in Barnes's animal alphabet (which is reminiscent of works by Edward Lear, Isaac Watt, Lewis Carroll and Mina Loy) are outwardly content and colourful whilst being inwardly contrary.161 Human society appears to control them but often this is not the case:

With cloven lip, with baleful eye,
The camel bears the Caliph high.
But though he do the master's will,
He himself's his habit still.162

Like Barnes's discussion of old age, which defines the state as both solitary and proud, the animals here are self-absorbed and self-contained. The volume is dedicated to Barnes's friend Emily Holmes-Coleman, whom she also regarded as a self-sufficient entity.163 Creatures in

158 Barnes, Djuna, 'Rite of Spring', in Grand Street 1, 3 (1982), p.82.
159 See Barnes, 1923.
160 Barnes, 1982, un-numbered.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
163 For an account of this friendship see Guggenheim, Peggy, Out of This Century (New York: Dial, 1946).
Barnes's bestiary echo beast images which occur in most of her works and define her notion that animals remain independent, more so than do human beings. Not only this but, in at least two of the verses, Barnes parodies the pretensions of male writers. The verse concerning the raccoon contains a reference to Laurence Vail, whilst the tiger echoes and parodies Blake:

'Tyger, Tyger' - who wrote that?
You won't take it with your hat,
Nor lure it with a golden cage;
It won't leap its master's page.\(^{164}\)

Fixed as it is within a poem the tiger has been lessened by the art which defines it. Thus, although Creatures in an Alphabet can be considered a slight work it contains important images which can be discussed in the light of other works.\(^{165}\)

'The Walking-Mort' is an important poem in the Barnes oeuvre and yet has seldom been discussed.\(^{166}\) Andrew Field has maintained that the 'walking-mort' of the title refers to Barnes's perception of her own old age, thus 'walking-mort' can be translated as the walking dead.\(^{167}\) This could be linked to a concept of abjection or the image of the degenerate female body but to do this denies its specific origins.

I believe that this thesis is the first critical study to link Barnes's work with the sixteenth-century sources used by her, and that I have also discovered similar sources behind many of her texts.

For example, as works on the sixteenth-century by Salgado and others reveal, a 'walking-mort' was a type of criminal female vagrant who usually followed 'an upright man', a vagrant thief.\(^{168}\) The 'walking-mort' (as with the Tuppeny Upright [sic] in Nightwood) was characterized by her vagrancy: she wandered from place to place often following someone

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\(^{164}\) Barnes, 1982, un-numbered.
\(^{165}\) Ibid.
\(^{166}\) Barnes, 1971, p.53.
\(^{167}\) Field, 1985, pp.241-2.
\(^{168}\) Salgado, Gamini, Coney Catchers and Bawdy Baskets (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
who had preceded her. Thus the poem's opening lines contain a specific reference:

Call her walldng-mort; say where she goes
She squalls her bush with blood. I slam a gate.
Report her axis bone it gigs the rose.
What say of mine? It turns a grinning gate.169

As an avid reader of sixteenth-century literature, Barnes chose her imagery carefully.170 The fact that the speaker of the poem (presumably female) identifies with the 'walking-mort' indicates that she feels herself to be dispossessed. The central image of the piece might be connected with Kristeva's notion of the stages of woman's time, from birth to death.171 Thus the cycle of menstruation in line two is echoed in the cycle of post-menopausal time left to both the walking-mort and the narrator in lines five and six:

Impugn her that she baits time with an awl.
What do my sessions then? They task a grave.172

The identification between narrator and walking-mort, which crosses accepted boundaries of time and space, suggests that Barnes was still interested in exploring connections between women. That the two women possess the ability to face each other at the poem's conclusion, hints at a type of eternal solidarity which might replace the essential loneliness of old age. What is questioned is whether the women will face each other, or whether they will choose to stand alone:

So, shall we stand, or shall we tread and wait,

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169 Barnes, 1971, p.53.
170 This is borne out by her biographer and also by the fact that she is thanked for lending books at the end of The Gourmet's Almanac, a volume using sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources (for a full discussion of this see the chapter on the Ladies Almanack in this thesis. See Macdougall, Alan Ross, The Gourmet's Almanac (London: Desmond Harmsworth, 1931), p.358.
171 As was stated in the introduction to this thesis, I do not intend to dwell on such concepts, preferring to read the work from a historical perspective. For an introduction to Kristeva's concept see Kristeva, Julia, 'Woman's Time' in The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism, edited by Catheringe Bolsey and Jane Moore (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.197-218.
172 Barnes, 1971, p.53.
The mantled lumber of the buzzard's fall,
(That maiden resurrection and the freight).

Or shall we freeze and wrangle by the wall?173

The final line implies a choice. The women can either 'stand' and await whatever death and resurrection is their lot, or they can 'freeze and wrangle', an image implying a kind of universal prostitution. Again, at this point one needs to turn to the original source as walking-morts were frequently forced to turn to prostitution.174 The women in this poem can choose not to become the victims of age and time, whereas in 'Quarry', a poem from the same period, the speaker herself is hunted.

In this poem the imagery represents a silenced, harried creature pursued by the sounds of a hostile pack. The tree of wisdom is here 'tongue-tied' and although wisdom is impregnated in its 'carbon' it cannot speak.175 The creature, resembling a walking-mort, is constantly on the move:

I come, I come that path and there look in
And see the capsized eye of sleep and wrath.176

The beaters (a little like the press who hounded Barnes in old age) assume that the beast is 'gone to earth'.177 As with much of Barnes's poetry, this is enigmatic but it does suggest a final poetic theme explored by her, this being the connection between gender and old age. Writing towards the end of her life, she was satirizing those who assumed that she was already dead and that her work was anachronistic when compared to others being created in the late twentieth-century. If this is so, it might be perceived as a witty retort to those who saw the value of her work as being chiefly contained in its anecdotal content. The final line, which is reminiscent more of birth than death (Then do I sowl the soul, and slap it's face/that it fetch

174 References to this occur throughout Salgado's text. See Salgado, 1971.
175 Barnes, 1969, p.34.
176 Ibid, p.34.
177 Ibid.
breath') would seem to reinforce this.\textsuperscript{178}

This enigmatic conclusion is one of the many which Barnes left for her readers, leading this chapter to conclude by agreeing with the previous quotation from Marianne Moore which stated that reading Barnes's poetry was like studying a foreign language which you understand.\textsuperscript{179} I take Moore to have meant that there was an unexpected pleasure for the reader contained within Barnes's text, the pleasure of recognizing that she was creating a pastiche from both obscure and famous sources. The texts are 'foreign' as this use of pastiche often renders the meaning obscure. Yet this obscurity can be 'cracked' (as with a code) and the breadth of Barnes's pastiche displayed. Crossings between fiction and history, 'high' and 'low' art and mass culture and elite culture are thus laid bare. Thus these enigmatic texts contain a dazzling selection of references awaiting the reader's discovery.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} Broe, 1991, p.155.
'Museums of Encounter': Rooms, Gender and Identity
in the Short Fiction of Djuna Barnes

In *Nightwood*, the novel which is described by many critics as Barnes's greatest
achievement, several characters can be defined by their need to collect. Felix Volkbein, for
example, obsessively hoards objects from a fake family tree, obliterating as he does so his
own Jewish heritage. About his person he carries seals and elaborate documents which bear
witness to a past in which his actual ancestors played no part. Felix is a collector and is
associated with objects from which he creates his own history. Thus he crosses a division
between his actual past and an invented history, so that fact and fantasy blend within his story.
Likewise, Jenny Petherbridge, who is described as being a 'bold and authentic robber', collects
memorabilia taken from other lives:

Someone else's marriage ring was on her finger; the photograph taken of Robin
for Nora sat upon her table. The books in her library were other people's
selections.

Jenny is a human magpie, an emblematic figure, alienated from the world due to her
discontent. In her way she is as displaced as Dr. Matthew O'Connor, who is haunted by the
fact that he feels nature to have cheated him from his 'womanhood'. Dr. O'Connor, as can be
observed from the section on *Nightwood*, collects female clothing, wearing vestiges of that
'womanhood' to signify his 'otherness'. As the section on *Nightwood* reveals, it is O'Connor's
room which exposes the struggle between the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' facets of his
personality. Likewise, Robin Vote and Nora Flood live in a room awash with objects from an
ostensibly European past:

There were circus chairs, wooden horses from the ring of an old Merry-go-

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1 Barnes, Djuna, *Nightwood* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).
4 Ibid, p.117.
Round ... Chandeliers from the flea-fair, stage-drops from Munich, cherubim from Vienna, ecclesiastical hangings from Rome, a spinet from England and a miscellaneous collection of music boxes from many countries; such was the museum of their encounter.⁸

Using Humm's term, the room enacts a 'border crossing', as the objects come from both a secular history (the spinet) and an ecclesiastical past (the hangings). Likewise, the room contains carnival objects (the circus chairs and Merry-go-Round) and formal objects (the chandeliers). As all these items fill one area, this space comes to represent a type of 'personal theatre'. Thus both the cherubim and the stage-drops can be regarded as 'props'. The room is a museum, both because it is full of objects from the past, which are detached from their original meanings, and because it mirrors the past shared by Nora and Robin. Objects can also be used to connect Barnes's work to the later 'magic realist' tradition in Europe and Latin America, where objects possess lives of their own.⁹ This tradition involves images of rooms and objects which are brought into such sharp focus that they attain a magic, symbolic appearance. For example the objects in a room might be described in minute detail, overpowering the room itself.

Such objects also illustrate Jane Marcus's idea that the novel can be linked to Bakhtin's concept of a carnival, as they represent a 'world-turned-upside-down', where the religious and secular fulfil similar functions, such as providing the individual with a sense of identity.⁷ What such images have in common with Barnes's earlier short fiction is not immediately apparent. Yet there are important links to be established. In both novels and short fictions, objects from the past to fill rooms, and come to define the present in which the character lives. In Barnes's short fictions, modern times appear to create a sense of apprehension,

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⁸ Ibid, p.85.
⁹ Writers in this tradition include Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabelle Allende, Leonora Carrington, Angela Carter, Karen Joy Fowler, Manuel Puig, Carlos Fuentes, and Laura Esquivel.
resultant in a compulsive collection of objects from history on the part of an individual. These objects are meant to fulfill the function of talismans, as they guard against such apprehension, and recall memories of a 'golden age', a period which was somehow better than the present. Of course, this past is, itself, invented but this does not matter to the characters whom Barnes describes. Their desire to collect appears to mirror Barnes's own experience in Europe, particularly Paris, where she lived between 1920-30, as this chapter hopes to demonstrate. Barnes's view is of a century cluttered with objects from a past which appears to be inescapable.

It could be argued that the short fiction which Barnes was to produce in Europe was to condition her later writings. As with the cast of *Nightwood*, characters who people her short stories are often themselves exiled, and thus use objects from the past in the hope of discovering a sense of place. Mary Lynne Broe regards exile as a crucial theme in Barnes's art, as does Shari Benstock. Yet in Barnes's fiction exile (which is not merely confined to Americans living abroad) is linked to houses, rooms and objects. Individuals (even if they have chosen the objects themselves in order to feel the sense of order mentioned above) feel 'exiled' within rooms cluttered with objects from the past. These themes and images have seldom been discussed in critiques of Barnes's work. Before they can be discussed here, however, it seems appropriate to provide a brief outline of the development of Barnes's short fiction, in order that the change between the stories written in America between 1913-20 and those composed in Europe between 1920-41 can be registered.

**Early Fictions**

To study changes in aesthetic, which the move to Paris enabled Barnes to make, it is first necessary to study Barnes's pre-European writings. Her journalism, which has been briefly discussed in the opening chapter of this thesis, was only one part of her early work. Short fictions, most of them illustrated by the author, were influenced by both journalism and poetry

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and this connection is what can be charted here, using a single tale, 'The Terrible Peacock', as an example. Barnes's journalistical style was notoriously quirky, linguistically daring and rather obscure. For example, the following description, from an article on New York's Chinese Quarter, could be used as a prime example of this:

Chinatown is a period over which the alphabet of our city has to step.

There is no Chinatown.9

As with the writings of Louis Aragon which describe the familiar city of Paris in terms which remain unfamiliar, Barnes make an obscure point which she describes but does not qualify.10 This technique is similar to surrealist devices and finds its way unaltered into Barnes’s early short fiction. Between 1913 and 1921, Barnes published over twenty-three short stories, in magazines and newspapers which varied from New York World Magazine to the Little Review, in other words, from the daily news to the avant garde.11 In his introduction to her newspaper stories, published as Smoke, Douglas Messerli comments:

Several of these tales are so startlingly eccentric that, even in a century characterised by its literary experimentation, it is difficult to place them in the modernist context.12

As Messerli has explained, in early books by Barnes characterization could be sparsely emblematic, and it was this that Barnes lost in later short stories.13 In newspaper tales, characterization plays a perfunctory role, characters in the stories being symbolic figures whose natures come ‘secondary to incident’.14 In these stories, incident conditions the narrative. Once in Europe, Barnes forsok any hints of naturalism, as Messerli points out.15

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15 Ibid, pp.x-xi.
Mary Lynne Broe regards Barnes's short fiction as examining:

not only the failures of representational reality but also ... the asymmetries of age and power and the contradictions inherent in gender definitions that undercut family intimacies, encoding complex modes of eroticism for which we as yet have no literary typology.16

Broe's commentary does not appear to outline the change from Barnes's work in New York to the aesthetic which she was to develop in Europe.

In 'The Terrible Peacock', Barnes developed a narrative tone which was deliberately 'hard boiled'. This tone embodied New York, a city defined by its new architecture, the aggressive nature of which is described by Barnes as being reflected in the speech-patterns of those who populate it. As Messerli points out, such a tone is symptomatic of the style of her newspaper stories.17 In several tales, of which 'The Terrible Peacock' is one, this tone becomes so jaded that the text appears to be a brittle precursor to works by Parker, Chandler, Runyon and Hammett. For example, 'The Terrible Peacock' begins thus:

It was during the dull season, when a subway accident looms as big as a thaw getaway, that an unusual item was found loose in the coffee.18

This is reminiscent of the style of much of Barnes's journalism and is more obscure, but less detailed, than the style of the author's later fiction. Messerli contends that Barnes used dialogue which, despite its obscurity, would have a familiar ring to newspaper readers.19 In 'The Terrible Peacock' the use of this technique takes an ironic twist, as Garvey, the story's main protagonist, is a reporter. As the story opens, Garvey is hired by his boss, Karl, to locate a bohemian beauty with the fin de Siècle name of 'the Peacock'.20 The woman, who seems to

17 Messerli, 1985, p.x.
18 Ibid, p.25.
19 Messerli, 1985, p.xii.
20 A symbol used by Oscar Wilde, James McNeil Whistler, Walter Crane and many other
be a precursor of many Chandler heroines, has been sighted in Brooklyn. As has been suggested, as a journalist, Barnes might be described as a female flâneuse, exposing both the artifice and the allure of New York City. It is therefore significant that the Peacock's beauty is a construct based on a commercial concept of 'femininity'. She is objectified and is thus 'quarry' for reporters and public alike.

Many of Barnes's newspaper articles study someone's quest to discover a particular aspect of city life. Both 'modernist' skyscrapers and genteel buildings from Old New York feature in these tales. For example, in 'Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians', Barnes records being approached by a woman (dragging along two children) who was searching for the 'village' of newspaper tales:

'Where is Greenwich Village?' She asked, and she caught her breath. 'This is it.'
I answered and I thought she was going to collapse. 'But,' she stammered, 'I have heard of old houses and odd women and men who sit on the curb quoting poetry to the policemen or angling for buns as they floated down into the battery in the rain. I have heard of little inns where women smoke and men make love and there is dancing and laughter and not much light. I have heard of houses ... striped with gold and silver and of gowns that - Quick, Quick,' she cried suddenly breaking off the sentence and grabbing the hand of either child, exactly like the White Queen in Through the Looking Glass, as she hurried forward. 'There's one now!' And so she left me in search of a mere woman in a gingham gown with a portfolio under her arm.

This is 'the village' inhabited by individuals such as Barnes and Millay and floridly described

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21 See the previous chapter on Barnes's poetry.
in newspaper tales. Barnes uses the quest both to point to the artificiality of the newspaper as a form, and to hint at the expectations which its tales led people to embrace. This heightening of expectations is also a property given to fairy stories in *Nightwood*. The quest for a Greenwich Village which does not actually exist, mirrors Garvey’s search for ‘the Peacock’.

The Peacock is emblematic of both a concept of cosmetic beauty and an idea of the ‘modernist’ appeal of New York itself:

She was a Peacock ... a slinky female with electrifying green eyes and red hair, dressed in clinging green-and-blue silk, and she was very much observed as she moved languorously through the streets of Brooklyn. A somebody - but who?

Like the text, the Peacock is an unadulterated product of New York. Also, it is interesting to note that her green and blue garb reflects the plumage of the male Peacock, rather than that of the brown pea-hen. Thus the Peacock might also be regarded as a symbol of gender ambiguity. The Peacock’s clothing is not meant to be a representative of ‘reality’, and later she is exposed as a beautiful construct from a city which thrives on images. Thus the Peacock appeals to those who have invested (either economically or spiritually) in the new face of the city. At the tale’s dénouement, she turns out to be a hoax; she is actually Karl’s wife, dressed up to publicize their jointly owned tea-rooms. Yet this makes her a living embodiment of the city as she is little more than a human advertisement, a lovely, manufactured emblem of the consumer age. For all his hard-bitten words, Garvey (himself a product of city life) is beguiled by the artifice of her outward appearance. The Peacock could also be seen as representing a certain gender stereotype, that of the *femme fatale*, as described by Wheelwright, which was prevalent at the time when Barnes created her story.

24 Barnes, 1936.
25 Barnes, 1985, p.25.
26 This ‘look’ may have been borrowed from actresses interviewed by Barnes, such as Gaby Deslys. For a good description of Deslys, see Gardiner, James, *Gaby Deslys* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1986), p.23.
27 See the chapter on Barnes’s poetry for an analysis of this. Also see Wheelwright, Julie, *The Fatal Lover: Mata Hari and the Myth of Women in Espionage* (London: Collins and Brown, 1992), pp.14-5.
stereotype is not as apparent in Barnes's later fiction. It is significant that the story was written for a newspaper as, in satirizing the Peacock and Garvey's attitude to the story, Barnes lampooned the journalist's preoccupation with people who are 'somebody'. By doing so, she both satirized the papers for which she worked and the work which she had placed in them.28

Inevitably, such journalistic boundaries would restrict the author's fictional world, which is why figures like 'the Peacock' (an archetypal 'sex goddess') would disappear in her later fiction. By c.1920, when she left Greenwich Village for Paris, Barnes had begun to see herself as being categorized as a 'bohemian'. In other words, a stereotype was threatening to overtake her. Europe was to alter the course of Barnes's short fiction and emblems like the Peacock were to be replaced with subtler, more complex characterizations. What remains of 'the Peacock' in these fictions, is a fascination in the way in which gender roles can be constructed and the method by which artifice can be manipulated to create a space which crosses the boundaries of gendered discourse, as the following to demonstrates.

Gender and the Private Space: Barnes’s Short Fiction 1921-1936

In *Nightwood*, characters collect objects in order to create a sense of self, and objects are also used to create a sense of gender. I wish to demonstrate how this idea began in the short fiction in which Barnes created in Europe (Paris and Berlin particularly) and in *Tangiers*.29 In moving to Paris, Barnes not only freed herself from many of the confines which being labelled a New York 'bohemian' represented, but she moved to the home of many little magazines.30 A glimpse of some of the names and presses and magazines for which an experimental writer could work in Paris demonstrates the appeal which the city must have

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28 *Vanity Fair* and other magazines often took such stories seriously. For an example of this see Amory, Cleveland, *Cavalcade of the '20s and '30s* (London: Bodley Head, 1960), pp.269-71.

29 Again, this refers to published stories.

possessed for a writer like Barnes. There was *The Little Review*, run by Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson, *Jolas's transition*, Cunard's *Hours Press*, McAlmon's *Contact Editions*, *The Black Sun Press* which was run by Harry and Caresse Crosby and then, after Harry Crosby's suicide in 1929, by Caresse Crosby alone, *The Titus Press* establishment, run by Edward Titus*, and John Quinn's *Three Mountain Press*, plus Sylvia Beach's press at 'Shakespeare and Co.', amongst others, (those marked with an asterisk here show the presses for which Barnes worked). Although she continued to write for magazines such as *Vanity Fair* and *McCall's* whilst in Paris, Barnes could afford to experiment in a way that she could not have done when she was writing for papers in New York. That Barnes wished to be part of a city which was home to James Joyce, a writer whom she greatly admired, is probable. Also, many of the village 'crowd' such as Marsden Hartley and Mina Loy (as Virginia Kouidis has noted) were already in Paris.

Barnes took her craft as an experimental writer seriously. In 1922 she had interviewed Joyce for the April issue of *Vanity Fair*. Brenda Maddox describes Nora Joyce's recollection of Barnes seeking Joyce's company upon her arrival in Paris. On February 1st 1922, one day before Beach's publication of *Ulysses*, a nervous Joyce had walked with Barnes in the *Bois de Boulogne* and reminded her of her Irish ancestry. According to Maddox, Barnes hinted that Nora in *Nightwood* was named after Nora Joyce. Experimentation for Barnes and Joyce, as Bonnie Kime Scott has noted, meant an exploration of gender difference. Linguistic freedom, for Barnes, meant amongst other things, a return to an archaic, densely ornate style, the style of the chap-book and the almanac. This technique is discussed in the chapter on the

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31 These were the major 'little' presses of the period.  
32 Messerli, 1985, p.xvii.  
38 See the section on *Ryder* in this thesis and that on *Ladies Almanack*.  

Ladies Almanack.

As her literary career progressed, Barnes's imagery became more obscure and her dialogue developed in both density of tone and intensity of emotion. Her European short fictions reflect a change in style and pace from the stories written when she was a journalist in New York. Indeed, they have more in common with the brief, one act plays, which she wrote for the Provincetown Theatre. These plays, which were published in magazines as diverse as The Little Review and Vanity Fair, concentrate on bizarre instances of family life, retribution and the revelation of concealed emotions. As with Barnes's short fictions, many of these use the theme of emergence of those skeletons which have been hastily concealed in the family closet. As there are links between the two forms (the plays often use rooms to create and explore character) these are worth studying. For example, in the play Three From the Earth, Barnes tells the story of the Carson brothers and their relationship with Kate Morley, their father's erstwhile mistress. John, one of the brothers, is (unknown to her) Kate's son, and at the end of her confrontation with the brothers (who arrive to tell her of their father's suicide) he kisses her on the lips. As Mary Lynne Broe has noted, the theme of incestuous passion runs throughout Barnes's works and Three From the Earth provides an example of an early exploration of this.

What is interesting about the play are descriptions which Barnes employs to set the scene for the reader, and the descriptions of character which she also uses. Like 'the Peacock', Kate Morley is a self constructed being, described as an elegant, beautifully dressed woman with 'an interesting head'. We know that she has learned to be manipulative, as Barnes says that

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40 Barnes's late play, The Antiphon also uses this theme. See Barnes, Djuna, The Antiphon (London: Faber and Faber, 1958).
42 Ibid. pp.3-15.
43 Broe, 1990, pp.20-1.
44 Barnes, 1919, p.3.
she has the 'trick of narrowing her eyes' to conceal her emotions. The Carson brothers, James, Henry and John, are the opposite of this as their eyes are intelligent, their smiles gentle, melancholy, compassionate. And though they have a look of grossness and stupidity, there is, on second observation, a something beneath all this in no way in keeping with this first impression.

Indeed a 'second observation' could be said to be the theme of *Three From the Earth*. Society's facile dictates, which mean that people are enthralled by images, present Kate as sophisticated and attractive. In turn, she considers the brothers to be stupid and taunts them by saying that their mother was a 'prostitute'. If one takes a second look at the characters, then it is Kate who appears to be taken in by the self-image which she has created, as she does not recognize her own son. The brothers appear to be more educated than they at first appeared, as they mention Remy de Gourmont and modern philosophy during the course of the conversation. Kate's room represents the public face which she wishes the world to see, as it could be regarded as an extension of her own exterior:

A long narrow room, with a great many lacquer screens in various shades of blue, a tastefully decorated room, though rather extreme.

This room is of a design that was at the height of fashion at the time. With its many screens it resembles work by the artist Eileen Grey, a friend of Elizabeth Gramont and Natalie Barney, whose work on screens is similar in style to drawings both by Barnes and Mina Loy. By using those gender categories which define 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and are outlined in the introduction to this thesis, one could regard the room as having been designed to evoke a fatalistic female stereotype. This is also a key to the play's underlying theme, the unstable

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46 Ibid, p.4.
47 Ibid, p.3.
48 Ibid, p.5.
50 Again, this stereotype was attached to actresses of the period and has been discussed by both Julie Wheelwright and James Gardiner.
life which exists beneath Kate's sophisticated facade. Although the room is briefly described, it represents an archetype (the room of a 'vamp') which was well known and was itself a cinematic convention.\(^{31}\)

In Paris, Barnes was to explore rooms and pensions which formed the secret heart of the city. Rather like the photographer Brassai, whose pictures seem to penetrate behind the veneer of city life, and whose volume *The Secret Paris of the Thirties* depicts scenes similar to those by Barnes in *Nightwood*, Barnes looked for the private lives played out behind the shutters and grey-stone facades of city apartments.\(^{52}\) Her vision of the city takes into account both history and gender. Thus the 'secret heart' of the metropolis, whether it is Paris or Berlin, fills her short fiction. In the short story 'Vagaries Malicieux' (1922), which was later revised and became the title of a late volume of short stories, Barnes explored the lure of Paris:

> For years one had dreamt of Paris, just why no man could tell, saving that no pear from an orchard stolen has been atoned for without the mental calculation: 'A Frenchman would have understood; in Paris all would be so simple, so charming.'\(^{53}\)

The narrator of the story is, like the heroine of Jean Rhys's *Quartet*, destructively naive.\(^{54}\) This narrator remains anonymous and is, therefore, androgynous. In Paris, the quest is one for the city of Joyce, the metropolis of newspaper accounts. Ironically, this narrator has much in common with the woman who went in search of the Greenwich Village bohemians in the earlier newspaper tale. As with the latter, the narrator's outlook and desires have been

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\(^{31}\) This figure (who was frequently endowed with 'lesbian' desires) was embodied by screen actresses such as Theda Bara, Alice Roberts and, later, Marlene Dietrich. See Weiss, Andrea, *Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in the Cinema* (London: Cape 1992), pp.22-4. It also existed in popular literature, the most obvious example being Mme Zalenska in Glyn, Elinor, *Three Weeks* (London: Duckworth, 1907).


conditioned by reading. An idealized view of the French and their city is dispersed when the narrator confronts actual Parisians and is plunged headlong into an unfamiliar milieu. Similar to the woman in the earlier piece, the narrator appears to have expected 'houses striped with gold and silver'. In describing the original tale, Kannenstein noted that Barnes used the voice of herself as a young journalist.

'So this is Paris', the typical cry of one newly expatriate, which is also repeated in Hemingway's memoirs, recedes under the strain of uncertainty and doubt. Thus an initial border between expectation and experience is transgressed. During the voyage out the narrator meets a Belgian professor, two genteel women who travel alone, a roué and the ship's captain. In Paris there is a meeting with James Joyce, a literary idol, but this meeting is ruined by the narrator's pre-conceived ideas about the writer's personality. Incapable of regarding Joyce as a human being like any other, as opposed to an icon, the narrator destroys any possibilities of connection. Again, at this juncture, experience destroys the expectations of the naïve narrator. As with Garvey and the Peacock, Joyce is described as a potent image by the narrator, the difference between Joyce and the Peacock being that Joyce remains an enigma.

Barnes's short fictions have much in common with works by Katherine Mansfield and Mary Butts. Like characters in works by Mansfield, her narrators are often isolated in foreign places. As with works by Butts, these environments are often depicted as being unknowable. The 'changes in subjectivity' noted by Bronte Adams and Trudi Tate as being central to the narration of 'modernist' short stories, often include this sense of separation on

58 For examples of stories by both authors see Adams, Bronte and Trudi Tate, (editors) That Kind of Woman (London: Virago, 1991), pp.16-28, pp.135-142.
59 Ibid, pp.135-42.
60 Ibid, pp.16-28.
the part of the narrator.® In Paris, the narrator again meets the Professor and is introduced to
two women of the city. Here a collision between the present and the past takes place which
reveals that the narrator is unprepared for such a confrontation between the old and the new.
The women live in a substantial, elegant house in the rich part of the city, the opulent and
mysterious interior of which houses the bric-à-brac of a European past. The cluttered objects
which, like the screens in Kate's living room, mask social fears, also betray the collision
between past and present. Such objects as these create a 'border crossing' much like that
described in the home of Nora Flood and Robin Vote, as objects connected with high art and
classical music (a spinet and oil paintings) rub shoulders with decor of a more bourgeois
nature (satin wall coverings and a coloured shawl). Thus 'high' art and middle class
'decorative' art collide, creating a room which appears to bear little relevance to the twentieth-
century. As with the rooms of Nora and Robin, the possessions in the room are second hand
and opulent. Also, the room is identified by its vast collection of rigid representations of
'femininity':

On the satin-covered walls hung hundreds of gilt-frames, in which winsome
women, of an earlier age, put up their back-hair for someone, and still others
disclosed such busts as are dreamt of only by starved lithographers. These busts,
garnished with a pressure of lace no more obtrusive than lashes on an eyelid,
met the dying sunset more than halfway.62

This room appears to be defined by its past, and this past determines the gender roles of its
occupants. The narrator did not come to Paris prepared for the repressive hold of the past
upon the present, yet the past appears to determine expectations concerning gender roles. The
past, in this context, is detailed and formidably accurate, whilst the present remains
surprisingly obscure.

Throughout the text, references to history continue to define the experiences of those

61 Ibid, p.xiii.
62 Barnes, 1974, p.21.
living in the present. For example, as the narrator steps down from the carriage, the light which falls makes the scene resemble a painting by Rembrandt.® Notre Dame is viewed through a dusky light, and this creates shadows which render it unknowable.® This painterly technique is used to illuminate interior scenes as well as exterior facades. Light, it is suggested, gilds the past but blurs the present. Under such conditions as these, crossings and collisions between the present and the past appear to be inevitable, and disturb the narrator of the text and its community of readers. The house's two inmates, one mature and one young, appear to be confined by their ancestry. For instance, a shawl carefully draped over a spinet seems to be of greater relevance to the rooms than the presence of the women. The women are surrounded by past images of femininity, these depictions are everywhere and can be discovered in portraits, in oil paintings and in the vestiges of old garments, such as the shawl. These images are connected to past constructions of 'femininity', and confine the lives of the occupants of the house who, in an obscure sense, try to 'live up' to them. However, it is not merely women, in Barnes's fictional world, who are trapped by the confines of gender.

Later in the tale, the narrator walks to Napoleon's tomb and describes it as being 'like a cannon ... fired over a lake of corpses'.® Thus young men living in the present, Barnes suggests, are oppressed by a militaristic past, and ostensibly 'masculine' deeds. This celebration of past male militarism is present as being just as confining for young men as are those depictions of 'feminine' archetypes which oppress the two women in the opulent house. For anyone endeavouring to discover the Paris of 'new' literary revolutions, such as visions of old conflicts are disturbing in the extreme. Tombs, the houses of the dead, come to remind both the narrator and the reader of the tale that revolution is an historical process. The concept of a 'new' revolution, in this context, begins to appear meaningless. The 'lake of corpses' recalled by the narrative brings to mind the image of a battle field. This image has greater significance when one considers that, when the story was written, the 'Great War' had only

® Ibid.
been over for four years. As Modris Ecksteins has argued, the memory of war lay behind many desires to 'make it new'.66 Thus, once more, the past appears to condition the narrator's present. Official monuments are also reflected in private houses and gardens which have come to resemble memorials and Ecksteins has pointed out that such images dominate post-war fiction.67 As the past intrudes upon the present, so the dead appear to cling to the living with voracity. When the narrator leaves the house all sense of composure seems to have been eroded under the weight of this knowledge:

I ... went out through the gardens, where half-destroyed satyrs and virgins lie among the grass, as unmolested as the dead, for children and nurse-maids play about them with a reverence which needs no civic reminder.68

Such images of memorials could also be interpreted using biographical evidence. Mary Lynne Broe has argued that sexual imagery in Barnes's work is undoubtedly linked to her memories of childhood abuse.69 For example, the above image appears to contain references to both violation and reclamation. Thus satyrs and virgins, objects of male sexuality and female innocence, lie separate in the grass. Due to this separation the virgins remain 'unmolested'. This is then connected with the concept that the dead are free from the molestation which might have been their lot in life, and this is similar to Barnes's image of the grandmother which was to become a vital part of the text of *Nightwood*.70 As with the room full of antique objects, the garden remains mysterious to both the narrator and the reader.

This enigmatic quality finds its way into many of the short fictions which Barnes composed in Europe. These stories were first placed in the volume *A Book* (1923) and then later collected in the volume *Spillway*, which became part of *The Selected Works of Djuna*  

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68 Barnes, 1974, p.21.
70 Barnes, 1936, p.95.
Barnes (1962), a volume which also includes Nightwood and The Antiphon. The volume was dedicated to Barnes's mother, thus highlighting Elizabeth Chappel's influence upon her daughter's work. Like the Chappel/Barnes home, houses in this volume are cluttered and great efforts are often made by characters to conceal family secrets. These texts transgress a border between physical appearance (how a character looks) and codified images of a character's 'hidden' self (implicit and symbolized in images of rooms and 'gendered' objects).

To demonstrate this one could use the story of 'Cassation' (1962). This closely constructed piece is written using densely poetic language. The story is set in Berlin, where Barnes stayed for a brief period in the early 1920s. Parts of Nightwood were also set in Berlin, and Andrew Field believes that the grotesque atmosphere of Berlin during those years must surely have contributed something to the gloomy atmosphere of Nightwood.

Field also remarked that the drugs that were cheaply available in the city and the low cost of living, must have contributed to its appeal to writers such as McAlmon and Barnes. This, however, is difficult to ascertain. As with the city of Paris in 'Vagaries Malicieux', Berlin in 'Cassation' is a city which can be lonely for those who are strangers. 'Cassation's' Russian narrator is one such individual, until a chance meeting with Gaya, a rich woman, results in her induction into a narrow and enclosed environment. The tale opens with the narrator telling an unknown observer of her life with Gaya, an existence from which she is distanced by time and space (she tells the story in Paris and Gaya lives in Berlin). Unlike Garvey in 'The Terrible Peacock', she does not speak in riddles but begins factually:

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71 Barnes, Djuna, A Book (New York: Liveright, 1923); ------------------ Selected Works (London: Faber and Faber, 1962).
72 Later in this chapter, I also discuss the use by Barnes of the apartment of Natalie Barney.
73 This story appears in the Selected Works published by Faber and cited above (71).
75 Ibid.
76 Field, 1985, p.16.
77 Ibid, pp.16-7, 117-8.
78 Ibid.
Sometimes a woman came here at about the same hour as myself, around four in
the afternoon; once she came with a little man, quite dreamy and uncertain. But
I must explain how she looked, tempermentvoll and tall, kraftvoll and thin.79

The 'girl's' method of storytelling crosses a language boundary, due to its mixture of German
and English vocabulary. Gaya is quite clearly described and is not an 'archetype', as is 'the
Peacock'. The peacock represented a cliché image, a construct meant to suggest the
archetype of femme fatale. This was conveyed by Barnes using colour symbols; a green dress,
red hair, red lips and green eyes.80 In 'Cassation' this brief form of description has been
replaced by rich detail:

She must have been forty then, dressed richly and carelessly. It seemed as
though she could hardly keep her clothes on; her shoulders were always coming
out, her shirt would be hanging on a hook, her pocket-book would be mislaid,
but all the time she was savage with jewels and something purposeful and
dramatic came in with her, as if she were the centre of a whirlpool, and her
clothes were a temporary debris.81

Gaya's clothing is described as if it has a life of its own. As with Nightwood, here Barnes uses
costume to symbolize the contradictions of gender stereotypes. As a woman, Gaya might be
thought uncontrolled and chaotic, resembling a fin de Siècle archetype (such as women in
stories by Charlotte Mew) but there is something deliberate about her external appearance as
she is 'savage' with jewels. Jewels, as will be discussed in this section of this chapter on the
short story 'A Duel Without Seconds', often appear as symbols of power in Barnes's work.
They become equated with possession as well as social status and often form direct statements
of identity made by those who wear them. As a woman, Gaya's place in society is defined by
her possession of jewels. Her eccentricities are tolerated because of her wealth:

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80 Barnes, 1985, p.27.
81 Barnes, 1962, p.13.
Sometimes she clucked the sparrows and sometimes she talked to the
weinschenk, clasping her fingers together until the rings stood out and you could
see through them, she was so vital and so wasted.²

Both Gaya's jewels and her appearance in general are described with clarity, yet other details
are omitted. For example, we never know why the narrator went to Berlin, or the name of the
'big house' into which she moves.³ We are never given the house's whereabouts, nor do we
know what its outward facade is like. Like the apartment shared by Nora Flood and Robin
Vote in Nightwood, its interior is defined by the objects from the past which fill it. Thus Gaya,
the house's owner, is, like Jenny Petherbridge, a collector. Shelves are lined with expensive,
nameless books, 'bound with red morocco, on the back of each, in gold, was stamped a coat of
arms, intricate and oppressive'.⁴ These books, which are similar to those owned by
Fitzgerald's protagonist, Jay Gatsby, are of value due to their binding, not because of the
knowledge which is contained in them.⁵

The atmosphere of the bedroom appears equally 'intricate and oppressive', and seems
stereotypically 'masculine':

A great war painting hung over the bed; the painting and the bed ran together in
encounter, the huge lumps of the stallions reigned into the pillows. The
generals, with foreign helmets and dripping swords, raging through rolling
smoke and the bleeding ranks of the dying, seemed to be charging the bed, so
large, so rumpled, so devastated. The sheets were trailing, the counterpane hung
torn, and feathers shivered along the floor, trembling in the slight wind from the
open window.⁶

It is as if the war canvas possesses a forces which 'does battle' with the room. The linen bed is

torn asunder and plundered. The war fought in the painting seems to have torn the sheets and sent feathers blowing across the floor. The canvas, like works by Lady Butler, is epic, and this is strongly contrasted with the gentle movement of feathers. This bizarre scene seems to represent reality for the tale's narrator, more than does Gaya's disabled child, Valentin, who lies in the bed making a barely human 'buzzing' sound. As with Guido Volkbein in Nightwood, Valentin appears to be destined for a short life. Like many children in works by Barnes, she is ignored for much of the text. She occupies an environment where a battle is constantly enacted (this, one might argue, also symbolizes a sexual battle), and thus is truly dispossessed. It is interesting to note that while Gilbert and Gubar discuss the imagery of war (both past wars and the First World War) in works by women, Barnes's description of the painting in 'Cassation' is not included. Images of war occupy much of Barnes's short-fiction and she appears to have regarded the human state as, at best, fractured and, at worst, violent and extreme. It might be argued that by using such images, Barnes referred both to the First World War, and to a concept of 'gender conflict', also outlined by Gilbert and Gubar. Images of war in works by women have also been discussed by Claire M. Tylee, but as her study is limited to British writers, Barnes's short fiction is not included.

Time is also explored in 'Cassation'. In the house, time appears to be static. Once within its walls the narrator seems to have been plunged into a state of limbo. The relationship between Gaya and her husband, Ludwig, develops off stage and does not seem to be central to the story. The reader never discovers whether he is father to the child, or if the war painting belongs to him. Valentin, the child whose romantic name is ironic, does not improve during the course of the tale, neither does she decline as it ends. She is a permanent reminder of the frozen lives of the parents (if they are her parents), and remains enigmatic.

89 Guido rarely speaks at all, whereas Valentin is identified only by her 'sound'.
As the tale proceeds, the reader becomes immersed in the atmosphere of the house, which is as chilling in its own way as Poe's *House of Usher*.\(^2\) As with the house in 'Vagaries Malicieux', here the sense of claustrophobia is heightened by the objects from history (such as the painting) which occupy isolated rooms. It is as if the narrator is unable to breathe and cannot live in a house defined by images of war, just as the two women in 'Vagaries Malicieux' are confined by the images of femininity which surround them. During the tale Gaya becomes emotionally attached to the narrator although, as with many of Barnes's short-stories, the relationship between the two women is never clarified. As with Jenny Petherbridge who attempts to 'own' Robin Vote, Gaya appears to imprison her companion in the opulent atmosphere of the 'big house'.\(^3\) The story is one of enclosure and eventual escape, an escape denied to both female characters in 'Vagaries Malicieux'. Thus links with *Nightwood* are not facile but indicate a fascination with complicated relationships which remain prevalent in Barnes's works. As with the women who attempts to 'steal' back their dead lovers in Barnes's poetry, so Gaya desires to 'entrap' the girl in the 'big house'.\(^4\) This house resembles the isolated mansions depicted in paintings by De Chirico and Remedios Varo, and as such can be linked to the aesthetics of 'magic realism'.\(^5\) It is a carefully constructed trap which encloses its occupants in opulent rooms, which they inhabit without possessing. *Objets d'art*, (jewels, paintings, books and porcelain) appear to own Gaya, and the 'girl' is also momentarily trapped. This web of objects is shattered by the outsider but Barnes suggests that Gaya and her 'family' cannot break free. The house resembles that which is inhabited by the two women in 'Vagaries Malicieux', as it is 'a museum' of objects which confine the lives of those who live within its walls.\(^6\) 'Cassation' is closely constructed and...
relates how the house blurs the lives of the occupants. The story is located in Berlin, but the house might exist in Paris, Vienna or any other metropolitan city. The 'girl' escapes its snare and lives to tell the tale. Here she differs from Robin Vote, who 'escapes' Jenny too late and descends into madness. In 'Cassation', the narrator leaves Gaya to re-enter the world. It is as if, like Persephone, she has returned from the dead.97 Her Hades is the house which she must mentally re-enter.98

In this story, the narrator 'returns' to the house in order to reject Gaya's emotional pleas. The house becomes part of a story and, by recounting this, the narrator enables her own survival. The symbolism of the story deploys both 'masculine' stereotypes (the picture) and 'feminine' archetypes (for example, the inert Valentin resembles the doll given to Nora by Robin in *Nightwood*) and thus the 'big house' encodes a 'battle' between objects which signify gender.99 The war painting appears triumphant, it represents a version of the past which destroys Gaya's composure, making her unable to leave the big house and search for the 'girl'. However, one could regard the narrator as also being triumphant for, by telling the story, she confronts the past and can enter the world on her own terms. She repeats the words which she spoke upon leaving Gaya:

'I am going away; I am going to Paris. There is a longing in me to be in Paris. So I have come to say farewell'.100

The narrator appears not to desire to liberate Gaya, as Nora wishes to rescue Robin in *Nightwood*.101 She possesses her liberty and by recounting the tale, exorcizes the past.102 The annulment of the relationship between the two women, the 'cassation' of the title, gives the narrator strength. In France, a *cassation* is a court of appeal. This might be interpreted as

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98 Ibid.
100 Ibid, p.20.
101 Ibid, p.20; Also see Barnes, 1936.
102 Ibid.
ironic, as the tale's narrator appeals to the reader for judgement.

When one reads the description of rooms in 'Cassation' and elsewhere, it is difficult not to call to mind depictions of Natalie Barney's apartment at the Rue Jacob. The fictional description of this in Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* probably conveys the feel of its rooms with the most conviction:

The first thing that struck Stephen about Valerie's flat was its rather large and splendid disorder. There was something blissfully unkempt about it, as though its mistress were too much engrossed in other things to control its behaviour. Nothing was quite where it ought to have been, and much of it was where it ought not to have been, while over the whole lay a faint layer of dust - even over the spacious salon. The odour of somebody's Oriental scent was mingling with the odour of tuberoses in a sixteenth-century chalice. On a divan, whose truly regal proportions occupied the best part of a shadowy alcove, lay a box of Fuller's peppermint creams and a lute, but the strings of the lute were broken.*103*

Hall's meticulous account describes the salon long after its initial creation. An earlier work, Renée Vivien's fictionalization of her relationship with Barney, *A Woman Appeared to Me* (1904), describes the main parlour thus:

I entered Vally's drawing room, my cheeks wet with mist ... Inside, tiger lilies opened their great trumpets and gave off their overpowering perfume. Vally, stretched languidly on a divan covered with Persian silks, was 'at home' to a few friends.*104*

As with Barney's rooms, rooms in Barnes's fiction are cluttered with objects from the past. However, unlike Barney's apartments, which are described by both Hall and Vivien using celebratory terms, the collision between objects from both the past and the present in Barnes's

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*103* Hall, Radclyffe, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago, 1990), p.246. The novel was published in 1928, the same year as *Ladies Almanack*.

stories, is represented as chiefly negative. For example, rooms in 'Cassation' are 'disorderly, expensive and melancholy'. As with Vivien's description of Barney's, apartment they are lit with candles. The connection between Barney's aesthetic (which linked women in the present to their historical fore-mothers) has been documented in the chapters concerning *Ladies Almanack*. However, in this context, it could be suggested that Barnes explored the celebratory side of this aesthetic in *Ladies Almanack* but that she used Barney's apartment to provide more negative imagery in her short fiction. Yet, characters such as Gaya are also witty, and it is also interesting to note that Barney connected her apartment to a history of female wit, commenting on the rumour that the seventeenth-century building once belonged to Ninon de Lanclos, the intellectual mistress of Louis XIV, herself a notable scholar. Lanclos was obviously an inspiration to many 'exiled' writers and her letters are mentioned in Harry Crosby's diary as popular reading matter amongst 'the crowd'.

Another source of inspiration for these tales may have been the flat which Barnes shared with Wood at number 9 Rue St. Romaine. The decor of this was said to be an eclectic pastiche of ecclesiastical ornaments, old mirrors and pictures, much like the apartment shared by Nora and Robin in *Nightwood*. A picture which shows Barnes in her final home at Patchin Place also reveals an interior redolent with objects from the past. In this room, drawings and reproductions of her paintings covered the top of a small brick fireplace and these jostled for pride of position alongside candles, vases, seventeenth-century prints and small *objets d'art*. The only reproduction of a major painting by her which I recognized

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106 Vivien, 1904, p.5.
107 Many of the objects which fill stories by Barnes are like those in Hall's description of Valerie Seymour's flat.
110 Field, 1985, p.17.
111 Barnes, 1936, p.85.
112 Field, 1985, pp.central illustrated section.
113 Ibid.
amongst this selection was a small copy of her Portrait of Alice Rhorer, which was a large oil painting completed in the late 1930s. The only other objets d'art which can be identified from the picture (which was taken by Jack Manning for The New York Times in 1971) are a small vase in the shape of a hand and a tiny statue of the goddess Minerva. That Barnes chose to repeat these interiors in her work appears to be obvious, as here also objects from the past vie for space with objects from the present.

In her short story 'The Valet', Barnes describes a Chekovian relationship between a farm-owner, Louis George, and Vera Sovna, a working class woman and, by so doing, analyses gender conflicts within a relationship. The story concerns a relationship which forms a focus for endless gossip in the village where Louis George lives. His house remains, much to the dismay of the villagers, closed to public scrutiny and is anonymous to the villagers just as 'the big house' in 'Cassation' remains for the reader. The only individuals to gain entrance to it are the maids, Leah and Berthe, Leah's deformed child, and the aunts, Myra and Ella. The only occupants of it, other than the owner, are Vera Sovna, his lover, and Vanka, the valet of the title. When Louis George becomes ill Vanka, who is a devoted servant, comforts him and runs the house. Vera Sovna can be heard weeping on occasion, but usually appears 'strangely gay'. The tale describes a house which is divided, as characters adopt rooms which resemble the gender stereotypes which they represent. Also, the decor of rooms reflects concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' which underpin their gender roles.

Another concern of the tale is the class of a room's occupant. For example, in the tradition of many Russian novels, Louis George inhabits a confined sick-room where his valet stands by the bed, awaiting instructions and dreaming of the 'revolution' in which his brother died and which caused his sister's 'decline from brilliance'. Vera Sovna, however, chooses the

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115 Field, 1985, pp. central illustrated section.
116 Barnes, 1962, pp.36-43.
118 Ibid.
warmth and security of the kitchen:

A long bare room that pleased her. From the window one could see the orchard and the pump and the long easy slope of the meadow. From the beams braided onions and smoked meats dangled over the long table, strewn with a thin snow of flour, and hot loaves of new bread.\textsuperscript{119}

The kitchen is traditionally representative of female space, thus the character of Vera Sovna parodies female characters created by Tolstoy, Chekov and Pushkin.\textsuperscript{120} By placing Vera Sovna's 'domestic' life over Louis George's lingering 'wealthy' death, Barnes crosses a border between patriarchal symbol of success (wealth) and the true 'wealth' of Sovna's life in the kitchen. This is a vital place where 'life' continues, symbolized by the new bread which is baked. It is contrasted with the sick room where Louis George lies exiled. By means of this device, Barnes is able to comment on both gender and power relationships, as Vera Sovna, once one of the servant class (and looked down upon by the aunts of Louis George) is happier in the kitchen with the maids. In adopting this space it might be argued that Sovna chooses a role which implies servitude, yet it is she who grows in strength and power as Louis George fades. When Louis George wanes, his valet appears also to crumble, whilst Vera Sovna dominates the house:

She tended the medicine bottles as though they were musical intervals; she arranged bouquets as though they were tributes.\textsuperscript{121}

By choosing the kitchen, Sovna creates her own space rather than inhabiting the servile space of her 'master's' room. She has power because she will benefit from Louis George's death.\textsuperscript{122}

In 'The Valet' women only have the power of choice if they have influence over men. For example, Vera Sovna is of a lower class than the aunts, yet she has greater power over her own life because she has domination over Louis George. As he lies dying his aunts arrive and

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, p.41.
try to recall the reality of his life by touching him. When they can no longer do this, they touch the walls as though they were an extension of his personality:

They wandered up and down the hall, afraid to speak, unable to cry, passing each other, bracing their palms against the walls.¹²³

Alone in his room, it is the valet who truly mourns the dead man. After the wake, Vera Sovna asks Vanka what Louis George was like, and touches him, just as earlier in the text the aunts touched the walls. As she touches him, Vanka realizes that in an obscure sense, he is his master.¹²⁴ Thus Vanka comes to symbolize and eventually 'impersonate' the type of masculinity embodied by Louis George. The reader is left in no doubt that the roles that existed for Vera Sovna and Louis George are about to be re-enacted, possibly for life, by Vera Sovna and Vanka, as he has replaced his dead master. If Louis George can be impersonated, then Barnes suggests that the role of master is, in itself, a construct. This tale is extremely short, and employs an economic use of language, which implies constraint.

Vanka embodies a 'border crossing' agent, as he bridges a gap between the 'living and the dead' by 'becoming' his dead master. When his master dies, it is as if Vanka embodies both the spirit of the house and the living representative of the dead man. His room, which has remained sacrosanct throughout the text, is invaded by Vera Sovna at the tale's conclusion, just as his master's room was taken over during his illness. It is as if death has denied any privacy, either for master (who dies in a room full of people) or servant (whose room becomes public upon his master's death). Vanka can no longer possess a private space because he belongs both to the house and to Louis George's dependents, particularly Vera Sovna. 'The Valet' represents an exploration of gender roles and of identity and by the end of the story Vanka's identity has been consumed by the needs of his dead master's relations.

By contrast, 'A Duel Without Seconds' (1929) presents the reader with an even more complex picture of humanity. This elegant, sardonic piece reveals Barnes's economic use of

¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Ibid, p.43.
symbol. As with many of her works, the main protagonist are aristocrats of rather dubious pedigree. Rather like Felix Vollheim in Nightwood, the chief male character is a baron. The story opens in a dining room:

The Baron and Baroness Otterly-Hans-Clever were two at dinner, each immured in a lonely little canopy of light flung by the candles at either end of the long table. The third course had been served, and the Baron had helped himself to three cutlets in place of his usual two; for, now that his duelling days were practically over, he had no need to keep free of fat. The Baroness sat with lowered eyes, breaking her bread in silence and thinking of the days that were no longer.

Via images of light (the candles), Barnes conveys the intense loneliness within the Otterly-Hans-Clever (utterly hands clever?) marriage. Just as the two are divided by the thoughts of a past in which they played separate gender-roles (he as a famous duellist and she as a great beauty and hostess), they are also parted by the long dining table and the 'lonely' canopies of light. Throughout the tale, light highlights the couple as they move in a stately, but deadly, pas-de-deux. The Baron and Baroness (also like Felix in Nightwood) mentally exist in a semi-mythical, opulent past. Barnes uses them to cross a border between a mythical 'land of shadows' and those 'shadows' which exist and darken the room.

This couple literally represent shadows of their former selves, and choose to live in a candle lit world of twilight. The basic truth behind their carefully maintained facade (which results in silence) is that they are no longer rich. The table, like Gaya's clothing in 'Cassation', appears to possess a vital property, and comes to symbolize the lie upon which their life is founded:

Between them the long, hard expanse of mahogany mocked them with a false gaiety of silver and glass with shadows of candlelight that danced along its

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bland surface like ghosts of the company whose laughter it had once known. Such ghosts become more prevalent as the text progresses and adopt the role of spectres at a silent feast:

There was silence, too, in the room that brooded darkly over the lonely couple - silence heavy and complete save for the whisper of the butler's feet as he moved pallidly in the dimness behind the high, brocaded chairs. But to the Baroness the very silence was loud with echoes of the past, and to her wistful eyes the fleeting shadows now seemed to take form, almost to assume the outlines of phantom guests crowding around the table in a staccato pattern of form and colour as vivid as in the days, not so long ago, when this same room had buzzed with conversation, had rung with laughter.

The room with its brocaded chairs and shadows, dominates the couple. A table, empty save for themselves, rings with voices from the past. What Barnes then questions is the very nature of the past and what it signifies to both the Baron and the Baroness. Gender roles are, in this context, strictly and conventionally divided. The men were men of action, either away at a war or living from memories of wars long past. Women's lives were also split, between those women who waited for men to return, so that their 'lives' might begin, and those who listened to their stories.

Barnes points out to the reader that this 'glorious past' was founded upon political and racial injustice and cruelty:

There had been actresses, statesmen, princes, even a king - and always, like the charming, sentimental refrain running through an operetta, there had been that assortment of wistful little wives whose husbands had been sent out of their own country to do some kind of political injustice in another. But those days were tragically over; and now the Baron and Baroness were alone, and as lonely as

127 Ibid.
This loneliness is caused by the Baron and Baroness having outlived their times, but it is also because of a scandal which lies at the heart of their world. This story was first published in *Vanity Fair*, and as the magazine often profiled the lifestyles of the rich and infamous the tale becomes ironic, as both these categories apply to the Ottely-Hans-Clevers. As with the house in 'Cassation', their opulent house becomes a ghost house. The house's monetary foundations (which were built on colonial gains) crumble as the story continues. The past is precious to both husband and wife, and yet it has brought happiness to neither of them. The pair are haunted by both actual events from the past (such as the Baron's duels) and also by stories from the past, which they have invented.

The Baron is an historian, and is compiling a vast and chaotic history of duelling which, it is implied, will never be completed. As with Felix Volkebein (who designs a giant and redundant family tree), the Baron's history fulfils a personal need. The Baroness, who still yearns to live in the present, regards him as living a defunct life, and observes him, with distaste, 'down the grim length of that deserted table'. During the course of her carefully constructed tale, Barnes moves the reader effortlessly from the present to the past. The reader is told of the Baron's duelling scar and is transported back to the time when he first met the Baroness, a woman with the less than chic name of Gertie Platz. We learn that the Baron had wooed the Baroness with the tale of how his scar was won in 'defense of her beauty and fair name'. She soon realizes that this was a lie, as the story changes for whatever audience the Baron is entertaining. Here we perceive one of the 'great liars' who came to populate the stories by Barnes, a story teller who recognizes, as does Matthew O'Connor in *Nightwood*, that stories can be used to gain entry into the social world. With the passing years, the Baron's story becomes more complex, until his wife hates it. Thus a tale which was meant to

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\(^{128}\) Ibid.
\(^{129}\) Ibid.
\(^{130}\) Ibid.
\(^{131}\) Ibid.
woo her, becomes a distasteful reminder that their marriage is a farce. Barnes describes how, at the start of the tale, the Baroness 'quivered slightly and ... turned her head away'. As Garber has argued, such tales embody a type of display which is a form of transvestite 'theatre', as it involves the 'impersonation' of a particular gender stereotype, in this case it is the Baron who 'impersonates' a particularly 'masculine' stereotype, that of the 'manly' man.

The breakdown of marital relations is further complicated when a theft occurs at their fifteenth anniversary ball. Like Baron Munchausen (the great tale teller who might have been one of the models which Barnes used in the creation of her Baron) the Baron is creating a fabrication with which to entertain a listener:

The Baron, that night, had just been telling the pretty wife of General Koenig how he had come by his scar in Budapest, fighting beside the blue Danube in waltz time with an adversary who would not keep step.

The Baron is a masculine stereotype but, like both Munchausen and Matthew O'Connor, he is also a mountebank who delights in his precarious talent to amuse. The drawing-room, which until this point had been the setting for the couple's social triumphs, becomes the scene of their greatest disaster. The room amplifies this débâcle and comes to symbolize both social disgrace and personal alienation to the Baroness:

One of the Hovig twins, with a long resounding wail (the acoustics of the Baron's mansion being peculiarly perfect for rendering anguish) screamed that she had been robbed not only of her mother's emerald pendant but of her father's father's pendant time-piece, as big as a turnip and wound with a key in the shape of a spade.

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132 Ibid.
134 Barnes, 1960, p.169.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid. Baron Munchausen, who appears in many stories by various authors, appears also to be a model for Felix Volkein.
137 Ibid.
The woman is less worried about the sentimental value of this tasteless heirloom than about its price, which equals 'a thousand British pounds'. From this moment on, the atmosphere of the room becomes unpleasant and a 'reluctant suspicion that is so easily roused among friends dwelt like an evil fog in that brilliant room.' As Field has noted, this type of atmosphere came to exist, at times, at Hayford Hall, where Barnes, Emily Holmes-Coleman, Peggy Guggenheim and others played games of 'truth' which could occasionally end in lasting resentment. In the 'brilliant room' of the tale the 'fog' intensifies with each party, as guests lose objects of value. This leads to the decline of the couple's social life:

Her drawing room lacked spontaneity after that; fewer and fewer guests came, and always there was that nervous expectation of someone rising to proclaim the loss of a jewel.

Using Garber's theory which identifies the connection between life and performance this too can be regarded as a type of theatre as other guests form an 'audience' for the announcements of theft. As 'jewels' (which represent social worth) are taken, the audience for this type of 'theatre' dwindles. From the moment of the robbery onwards, the drawing room is described as belonging to the Baroness. It is as if the Baron has denied all responsibility for the room, and thus the Baroness alone absorbs the shame of what has occurred. The husband is 'armoured and inert', he is protected by his work and communication breaks down between the couple. As the Hans-Clevers own plate begins to disappear, along with some of the Baroness's jewellery, Barnes explores the concept of 'responsibility'.

In this crisis, the Baroness feels that her husband has deserted her, leaving her to cope with the disaster, and has buried himself in work. Such a pattern, in which the male absconds

\[130\] Ibid.
\[139\] Ibid.
\[141\] Barnes, 1960, p.169.
\[142\] Ibid, p.170; Garber, 1992, p.137.
\[143\] Ibid.
\[144\] Ibid.
from responsibility leaving the woman to cope, has been discussed in terms of gender relationships by Sheila Jeffreys. The Baron considers that only the past is worth fighting for, thus he ignores the problems of the present. He will not fight for the social position which his wife regards as so important. The Baroness determines that the battle will be fought, even though she perceives it as being 'a ghostly one.' As with the narrator of 'Cassation', the Baroness is aware that she must fight alone. Rather like Vera Sovna in 'The Valet', she chooses her fighting space:

When the Baron had kissed her hand and excused himself for a long night among his papers, as was his wont, she mounted slowly to her apartments. The rooms waited emptily for her, for her own maid had been dismissed long ago, since they could afford no servants except an old butler and the gardener; but she walked across the threshold as proudly as if trumpets went before her.

The Baroness's empty apartments symbolize her frozen existence. A perceived answer to her problem, which she regards as an antidote to dishonour, is death. The weapon which she chooses for this final task is a gun, a weapon often associated with 'masculinity':

She knew she would die, knew that it would be by her own pistol which her mother had given her on her wedding day 'in case of burglars'. A handle encrusted in diamonds it had, and a long, gleaming barrel. No one had even seen it but her husband and herself, and they had laughingly locked it away in the secret drawer of her escoitoire.

The device of the diamond studded pistol (which is redolent of both surrealism and magic realism) creates a border crossing. It is the Baron who insisted on locking it away and who decided that it was not necessary as his duelling skills would protect his wife. However, the

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146 Barnes, 1960, p.170.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
mother of the Baroness considered it to be needed, despite her son-in-law's prowess with a rapier. This gift from the mother is reminiscent of the communication between mother and daughter in Angela Carter's retelling of the Bluebeard myth 'The Bloody Chamber'.\textsuperscript{150} As with Bluebeard, the Baron convinces his bride to lock away the weapon which symbolizes her autonomy. In so doing, he takes away her ability to defend herself and she becomes reliant upon him. The object creates a border crossing as it is a practical object (a 'masculine' signifier) which has been 'feminised' as it is jewelled. As with Colette's first husband, Willy, the Baron might be perceived as his wife's captor.\textsuperscript{154} She allows him to disarm her and is thus 'at his mercy'. Barnes's heroine wishes to make a last grand gesture and yet this also is denied her. The gun can be perceived as representing wealth (as it is diamond studded) and the desire of the wealthy to decorate every surface of an object. Jewels punctuate Barnes's text, from the grotesque watch-key to the pistol handle. The story ends, much as it begins, with a household ritual (at the opening of the tale it is dinner, at the end of it, the lighting of the lamps):

\begin{quote}
Slowly she lit the tall, twisted candles in their heavy sconces; one by one the tiny flames wavered, hesitated, then grew into small spires of light, pale and steady in the high shadows of the room.\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}

The lighting of the candle heightens the suspense of the text and develops the reader's sense of the power of the house over its occupants. For example, after drawing the curtains, the Baroness goes towards the place where the gun is stored. She intends to make 'a last challenge to the heartless world'.\textsuperscript{153} Instead, what occurs is the ultimate anti-climax and the end of her intentions.

For the last four paragraphs of the text, the Baroness's movements are methodical and deliberate. The opening of the \textit{escritoire} was meant to be significant, the taking of the gun

\textsuperscript{152} Barnes, 1960, p.170.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, p.170.
then representing the last part of the ritual. In contrast to this flawless image, the Baroness opens the drawer, only to discover that her plan has been foiled:

For one instant she stood as if turned to stone.

Then she gave a faint, inaudible cry.

The pistol was gone. ¹⁵⁴

It is obvious that it is the Baron, the self proclaimed 'man of honour', who has taken his wife's pistol. Thus it is he who has engineered both his own disgrace and that of his wife. His writing, which is a refuge from his criminal life, can be regarded as a facade. The opulent rooms mock both himself (as he is a thief) and the Baroness (she is the wife of a thief). Thus the reader is left to imagine the outcome of her discovery. The Baroness's intended act, which would have made disgrace public, remains a private secret, witnessed only by an empty room.

In this context, the woman's opponent might be regarded as the disgrace which constantly threatens to overwhelm her. Yet it could also be seen as her husband, who wins the duel only after he has denied her a weapon. The room which bears witness to what she hoped to be her final scene is also an opponent, the reminder of an opulence which has perished. As with the room in which Louis George dies, or Vanka's quarters, or the bedroom in Gaya's house, it is violated despite its owner and will remain forever fixed in that owner's mind, a potent and constant reminder of what might have been.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.
Barnes Among Women 1920-1939: Ladies Almanack and Biography

The following two chapters represent halves of one whole. This half is biographical and focuses upon Barnes's relationships with the creative women who provided inspiration for her *Ladies Almanack* (1928) and the following chapter provides a feminist historical reading of the text itself. Both biographical and textual information prove necessary to an understanding of this particular text. The first part of this chapter analyses Barnes's concept of gender and the development of her 'sense of self' after her arrival in Europe in the early 1920s.¹ Barnes's sense of her own sexuality was to permeate all of her major writings and *Ladies Almanack* is one of her most overtly 'lesbian' texts.² The text celebrates the predominantly lesbian salon of Natalie Clifford Barney and the influence of her Académie des Femmes on Barnes's work.

This section aims to discuss Barney's salon (which was briefly mentioned in the introduction), her influence on Barnes, and Barnes's subsequent relationships with other women, many of them members of the salon. These relationships, some of them fleeting, others lasting over forty years, form important markers both in relation to *Ladies Almanack* and when studying Barnes's creative career as a whole.³

Barney's salon has been explored in many volumes of fiction, autobiography and letters.⁴ Apart from the description by Radclyffe Hall in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), the best of these re-creations are those by Miron Grindea, in the volume of *Adam* devoted to Barney, and in the interview with Berthe Cleyrergue by Gloria Feman Orenstein.⁵ Orenstein's interview with Cleyrergue (who was Barney's devoted housekeeper for over forty-five years) took place

¹ This extends the argument concerning Barnes's concept of 'lesbian relationships' which was outlined in the chapter on her poetry.
³ Ibid.
in 1979, when Barnes was still alive. What is interesting about Cleyrergue's account is that it
dокументs the salon from 1927 when, according to many commentators, including Shari
Benstock, it was past its heyday. The salon is often described in terms of its importance to
the literary historian, but Barney herself is frequently presented as divorced from the literary
activities which went on there. Yet, as a poet and epigrammatist, volumes of which were
composed in French, as a writer of memoirs and as a novelist, author of The One Who Is
Legion: Or A.D.'s Afterlife (1930), Barney was not disconnected from literary creativity.
Despite this the impact of Barney, and of the female academy which she set up to rival the
exclusively male Académie Française, on women writers in the early part of this century has
been largely ignored by literary critics.

Despite attempts by feminist critics, such as Gillian Hanscombe, Virginia L. Smyers and
Shari Benstock, to place Barney's salon both within the context of women's writing and within
a lesbian social history, it seems to remain firmly rooted in the anecdotal history of literary
Paris. Nonetheless, Barney's salon and her friendship are crucial to our understanding of
Barnes's development, both as a writer and as a lesbian. This friendship should also be
explored in terms of Barnes's subsequent relationships with creative women who felt
themselves to be sexually 'other' - women such as Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap, Thelma
Wood, and Romaine Brooks - and her relationships with heterosexual women writers such as
Mina Loy. In short, Europe, and her induction into the lesbian life there, changed Barnes, both
as a writer and as a woman. These women, although not connected by location, as some
critics have suggested, were bound together both by their gender and their creativity. At
Barney's salon, Barnes was to meet a number of women writers and artists, many of whom

8 Barney, Natalie Clifford, The One Who is Legion or A.D.'s After Life (London: Partridge, 1930).
9 Benstock briefly discusses this. See Benstock, 1987, pp.306-7.
formed the 'host' of figures in the *Ladies Almanack*. In order to analyse Barnes's life in Europe accurately, it is necessary to look both at her existence there between the wars and at the women who inspired her work during that period.

Andrew Field has remarked that when Barnes arrived in Paris it was as 'a well-known journalist with a distinctive style'.\(^\text{10}\) He also notes that Barnes already knew Jane Heap, Margaret Anderson (editors of *The Little Review*) and Mina Loy, all of whom were in Paris, from her Greenwich Village days.\(^\text{11}\) As has been mentioned, *Three From the Earth* was published in the American Edition of *The Little Review*, and she was to continue her association with the review while in Paris.\(^\text{12}\) Between 1918 and 1928, Barnes published over twelve pieces in *The Little Review*, both in its American and in its Continental edition.\(^\text{13}\) Indeed, in the Spring 1922 edition in an advertisement listing the achievements of the magazine ('What *The Little Review* Has Done'), Anderson refers to Barnes's work as an example of the magazine's literary merits.\(^\text{14}\) These relationships, professional and otherwise, were to become more complex in Europe. When Barnes first arrived in Paris, as Field, Noel Riley-Fitch and Arlen J. Hansen all confirm, she stayed at the Hotel Jacob, of which Hansen notes that it served

after World War One, as temporary headquarters for many newly arrived

Americans. For instance, when Djuna Barnes came to Paris as an aspiring writer

she stayed here for several weeks before travelling to Berlin.\(^\text{15}\)

This view of Barnes's arrival in Paris as an 'aspiring writer' is a prevalent one, and yet it is

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\(^{11}\) Ibid, p.15.
\(^{13}\) A collection of these magazines exists in the Pilkington Library, Loughborough University.
\(^{14}\) Anderson, Margaret, 'What the *Little Review* has Done' *Little Review* 8, 2 (Spring 1922), p.un-numbered.
doubtful if one should call a recognized writer with countless items of journalism, much
published poetry, including one complete volume, an established relationship with magazines
such as The Little Review, and many short stories and plays to her credit, aspiring. Despite
this, Hansen does go on to point out that by the time she was living at the Hotel Jacob, Barnes
was well thought of. Harold Loeb, the editor of Broom, the magazine which was to promote
A Book in its 1928 edition, was heard to say that it was worth staying at the Hotel Jacob
because 'Djuna Barnes was staying there'. Hansen notes that from the mid-1920s, Barnes
took up residence with Wood at 9 Rue St. Romaine, a new brick building. Looking at the
building today it appears to have changed little and, characteristically of Barnes, is far from
the homes of many of the others in Barney's circle. The time which she spent between her
trip to Berlin and her residence with Wood in the Rue St. Romaine is an obscure period of
Barnes's history. Field records that this period was spent with Wood in a flat on the Boulevard
St. Germain.

Shari Benstock has noted that Barnes wrote to Barney in 1972, speaking of the unreal
quality of their years in Paris:

I think of us all with amazement and antique, amused affection - what a far-off -
unlike our present that world was ... or like too, if I think back far enough ...
long hair and all, capes, our polemics for an against freedom and love.

Those who, like Field, give the impression that in her old age Barnes became bitter
concerning the past, fail to convey her 'amused affection' when writing to friends such as
Barney. It could be said that this affection partly centred around Barney with whom Barnes
kept in touch. Shari Benstock has suggested that Barnes did not know Barney 'that well', but

16 Ibid, p.58.
17 Ibid.
18 This advertisement for A Book was placed by Liveright in Broom 5, 3 (October 1928),
(frontispiece).
20 To arrive there from the Rue Jacob, if one walks briskly, takes about forty minutes.
this point could also be debated.\textsuperscript{23} It is true that, in old age, Barnes was separated from Barney and saw little of her, yet it could be argued that Barney's influence remained with Barnes. Benstock notes that, in later years, Barney helped to support Barnes. As Virgil Thompson pointed out (when interviewed by George Wickes in 1975), Barney was 'no easy touch' for money and would only finance artists in whose work she believed.\textsuperscript{24} That she believed in Barnes's work almost goes without saying. Benstock states inconclusively that Barnes 'probably had a brief affair' with Barney in Paris and describes Barney as 'frequently' inviting Barnes to her salon, where, said Truman Capote, the latter was known as 'the red-headed bohemian'.\textsuperscript{25} But before one can fully assess Barney's influence upon Barnes's work, a brief biography of Barney is required, as it was her hedonistic attitude to life and love (analysed below) which was to be reflected in the portrayal of Dame Musset, one of Barnes's most affirmative representations of the lesbian self.

\textbf{Natalie Clifford Barney: Patron of Women Writers}

As Karla Jay has pointed out, women such as Barney and her early lover, Renée Vivien, have been written of more often as exotic lesbians than as writers or patrons of the arts.\textsuperscript{26} In her paper on Paris in the 1920s, 'The More Profound Nationality of Their Lesbianism', Bertha Harris speaks of both Barney and Barnes as important literary figures and also as lesbian foremothers.\textsuperscript{27} To literary historians, such as Wickes and W.G. Rogers, who have dwelt on the anecdotal tales surrounding Barney's salon, Barney remains a glamorous, enigmatic figure, thus her contribution to twentieth-century literature is overshadowed by her opulent way of life.\textsuperscript{28} Natalie Clifford Barney was born to the artist, Alice Pike Barney, and the railway

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Wickes, George, 'A Natalie Clifford Barney Garland', \textit{Paris Review} 64 (Spring 1975), pp.4-134.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p.5.
\textsuperscript{26} Jay, Karla, \textit{The Amazon and the Page} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
\textsuperscript{27} Harris, Bertha, 'The More Profound Nationality of Their Lesbianism' in \textit{Amazon Expedition} (New Jersey: Times Change Press, 1973), pp.77-88.
magnate, Albert Barney, in Dayton, Ohio on 31 October 1876. As Grindea and others have noted, her upbringing, unlike Barnes's, was both wealthy and irrepressive. As Benstock succinctly puts it, Barney 'seems to have escaped entirely from certain aspects of western culture, escaping the pervasive guilt from which most of her generation suffered'. As was pointed out by Gilbert and Gubar, Barney's cross-dressing activities began in childhood. In his biography of Barney, George Wickes noted that Mrs Barney was probably, in part, responsible for this:

So that Natalie's portrait would never appear dated, Mrs Barney dressed her as a Renaissance page. In Souvenirs Indescrits, Natalie reflects that this choice of costume may have been unwise, suggesting to her the role that she was to play in courting women. Not that Natalie objected to the role; later she and her friends delighted in all sorts of transvestite costumes, exchanging male and female roles as readily as the heroines in Shakespeare comedies and with similar effect.

When Barney met Vivien and later on began her salon, these roles were to become part of pageants and tableaux which depicted not only rather precious pre-Raphaelitic beauties but also visually represented the lives of great women in history, such as Lady Jane Grey. These historical figures found their way into poetry by both Barney and Vivien and were later to influence other women writers such as Barnes. Thus the roots of Barney's interest in historical figures (both famous and obscure), whose lives could be both re-claimed and re-interpreted, can be partly discovered in accounts of her childhood. This pre-occupation could also be linked to a profound female tradition, as has been argued by critics such as Sue Ellen Case and Elyse Blankley, for these images were deployed by writers as diverse as Barnes, Anna de

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29 Benstock, 1987, p.268.
30 Grindea, 1962, pp.5-6.
Noailles and Colette. Likewise, Barnes makes use of the imagery of clothing from history in many of her texts. These frequently create 'border crossings' between the present and the past. By robing in the dress of the past, women living in the present tense which Barnes creates recognize a female history which might otherwise remain buried.

As with Barnes, and despite the hedonism which Wickes sees as ever-prevalent in Barney's childhood, Barney's family life was to be disrupted by the licentious behaviour of her father. Unlike the situation of Barnes's family, however, Albert Barney's relationship with his wife had faltered due to her blossoming career as a painter. Eventually, Barney was to move to Paris with her mother, a city which, as Karla Jay has pointed out, she regarded as essentially feminine. In *Souvenirs Indescribs* (1906) Barney was to write:

> Paris has always seemed to me the only city in which one can express oneself as one pleases. In spite of harmful progress inflicted from abroad, it continues to respect and even encourage personality. In France, thought, food, and love have remained a matter of personal taste and one's own business.

Liberty was the ability to live openly as a lesbian but it was also a matter of having the freedom to live hedonistically. As Jay notes, in the poem 'Love's Comrades' (1920) Barney wrote:

> You say I've lived too long in France?
> I fear no country's ready yet, for our complexities.

These complexities were later to be explored and acted out at Barney's salon at the Rue Jacob.

Barney met Vivien when Vivien was already becoming obsessed by notions of death and decay, as Jay points out. As Colette noted in her article on Vivien, Vivien's house was one in

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35 Wickes, 1976, p.27.
which darkness was cultivated, an impression also borne out by Louise Faure-Favrier:

This cult of paganism bothered me. It made me want to laugh and at the same
time get out of there.40

Both Vivien and Barney took up residence in Paris circa 1899 and their relationship probably
began in that year. Rather like contemporary lesbians who look to them for signs of a
collective cultural heritage, so both Barney and Vivien looked to Sappho and Mytilene for
their roots as lesbian writers.41 Jeanette H. Foster points out that both Barney and Vivien were
'proud' of their lesbianism, but what they did not share was a common attitude toward
fidelity.42 Barney firmly believed in the benefits of multiple relationships, whereas Vivien
regarded the love between women as sacred and therefore essentially monogamous. In 1901,
because she was heavily involved with Barney, Vivien failed to arrive at the bedside of her
former lover, Violet Shiletto, who was dying of tuberculosis.43 At Shiletto's death, Vivien's
guilt was intense and her relationship with Barney could not recapture the hedonistic quality
which it had expressed before 1901. Grindea and others have noted that Barney did not
believe in guilt, seldom attended funerals and believed in the sanctity of life, rather than a
veneration of the dead.44 Foster maintains that the draft of a poem by Vivien titled 'Let the
Dead Bury Their Dead', reveals the contrasting attitudes of the two women for in the margin
Barney had written 'but not the living', demonstrating an attitude present in Barnes's creation,
Dame Musset.45

In 1904, reconciled after a serious breakdown in their relationship, the two women

40 Fauve Favrier, Louise, 'Renée Vivien', in The Muse of the Violets (California: Naiad,
43 See Glasgow, Joanne, 'What's A Nice Lesbian Like You Doing in the Church of
Torquemada?: Radclyffe Hall and Other Catholic Converts' in Lesbian Texts and
Contexts, eds. Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow (New York: New York University Press),
pp.241-54.
44 Grindea, 1962, pp.5-6.
45 Discussed in Jay, 1988, p.19. Vivien's poetry suggests that the dead bury the living,
whereas Barney was adamant that the living should not dwell on death.
travelled to Mytilene in order to found the colony of women of which they had dreamed, but the split between them proved to be too painful to repair. From 1904 onwards, Renée Vivien seems to have been in thrall to the Baroness Van Zuylen, a dominating lover who, at times, prevented her from seeing Barney. By 1908, Vivien was almost certainly anorexic, refusing Barney's pleas for a reconciliation, and had embarked upon a desperate course of alcohol and opium abuse. Combined with her increasing tendency towards anorexia, this was to prove fatal. Vivien died on 18 November 1909, of a combination of alcoholism, drug abuse and starvation; she was thirty-two years old. On her death bed, she became converted to Roman Catholicism, rejecting the paganism which she had espoused in life. In her article on lesbianism and Catholicism, 'What's A Nice Lesbian Like You Doing in the Church of Torquemada?', Joanne Glasgow cites Vivien's Catholicism as a 'recovery of virginity', and thus a 'pure' return to Shiletto.

The relationship between Barney and Vivien may appear to have no links with Barney's later relationships with women writers such as Barnes. Yet, in some ways, it is vital to our perception of Barney's salon and to an understanding of Barney's attitude towards other women writers as she encouraged them to celebrate their sexuality. Barney's salon at the Rue Jacob became routine around 1910, one year after Vivien's death. The salon was mostly held on a Friday afternoon, and was not confined only to lesbians, although it is remembered mostly for their presence. Yet, all these women should not be discussed as if they shared the same political views. For, in 'Paris Lesbianism and the Politics of Reaction, 1900-1940', Shari Benstock speaks of Barney's right-wing political opinions, which, influenced by Ezra Pound's fascist sympathies, were voiced during the Second World War and can be seen as directly

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50 Grindea, 1962, pp.5-9.
opposing the left-wing sympathies of women like Barnes.\textsuperscript{51} Despite this, in may volumes, the blanket terminology which surrounds the concept of 'Parisian lesbian society' groups all the women who attended Barney's salon together politically. It seems inevitable that Barnes, who had always had to rely on a meagre income, would be politically at odds with the wealthy Barney, who could fund the arts at whim. As Shari Benstock has noted, during the Second World War Barney, like Violet Trefusis and others, was attracted to the cult of \textit{Il Duce}, choosing Pound as her mentor, whereas poorer artists, such as Barnes, who did not mentally link art to a concept of natural aristocracy (a type of artistic eugenics), were appalled by fascist manifestations of power.\textsuperscript{52} Barney was not alone in her sympathies: one of Barnes's old friends from Greenwich Village, 'Putzi' Von Hanfstaengl, became a cultural agent to Hitler's court. It also appears odd that critics such as Wickes paint Barney's salon as being rooted in the opulent world of the \textit{fin de Siècle} and her time with Vivien, when it really came to fruition after Vivien's death.\textsuperscript{53}

Whilst the \textit{fin de Siècle} décor of the salon's interior may not have changed between 1910 and 1972, the writers who passed beneath its portals, and the literary dialogue which went on there, seem to have \textit{remained; always} in a state of flux. Benstock cites the myths of the early salon, mentioning beguiling images, such as that of Colette sliding naked down a chute in the garden, and that of a bejewelled Mata Hari dancing for a lesbian audience, and contrasts them with the later salon, satirized by Barnes in \textit{Ladies Almanack}.\textsuperscript{54} Yet the later salon and the \textit{Académie des Femmes} seem to be of lasting interest to literary historians, whether they be feminists or traditionalists, while the early tales have often been cited for their erotic, as opposed to their literary, appeal. It is interesting that Barney, who is represented by Wickes and Foster as having no sentimentality or commitment concerning the past, should establish a

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, pp.332-46. See also Trefusis, Violet, \textit{Don't Look Round: Violet Trefusis, Her Reminiscences} (London: Hutchinson, 1952), pp.121-4.
\textsuperscript{53} Wickes, 1976, pp.81-111.
\textsuperscript{54} Barnes, 1928.
This prize established Vivien in a tradition of women's writing, holding her up as a literary fore-mother for writers like Barnes, who came to Paris after Vivien's death. Given that this was the case, then it might be suggested that Barney did not reject the idea of recognizing a continuous line of important women which she and Vivien had begun in their use of tableaux. In creating a prize for women in Vivien's name, Barney added her name to a specific list of writing women, suggesting an alternative, 'female' literary history and creating a 'border crossing' between female creativity past and present. By organizing an *Académie des Femmes*, Barney established a group similar to that which she and Vivien had hoped to establish on Mytilene. I believe that in attending Barney's salon, Barnes recognized her alignment to a collective female literary past and this was to inform her creation of what is, perhaps, her most celebratory work of fiction, *Ladies Almanack*. Barney created a female aesthetic which looked back to a progression of matriarchy, which had been denied by patriarchal history. Likewise, Vivien in her *Souvenirs* used figures such as Lilith, Lady Jane Grey, Elizabeth Woodville and Cleopatra, creating a technique which Karla Jay links to Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*. This created a concept of tradition, whilst also enabling a line between past and present to be transgressed. What Jay does not acknowledge is that Barney also backed women artists who explored such a matriarchy in their own time.

In *Ladies Almanack* Barnes created a portrait of a matriarchal society. By mythologizing Barney and her circle, Barnes continued a tradition begun in Barney's tableaux and Vivien's writings. As will be explained, in adopting an old form (the almanac) and also by deploying archaic language, as used in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century almanac and chapbook, Barnes was deliberately paying homage to the past. As she used the anonymous *nom-de-
plume of 'A Lady of Fashion' she also recognized an innate truth about the historical positioning of women's writing, that in the past women's works were often published anonymously: thus she made her text one which was at once both private and public. This pseudonym might also refer to a private joke within the circle, as in 1908 (as Meryl Secrest records) Romaine Brooks had a portrait photograph taken of herself in costume as 'a lady of fashion'.

If one looks again at the letter to Barney, in which Barnes speaks of their dress, and in particular of the 'capes' which they wore with such flamboyance in their youth, then the nom-de-plume is revealed as a wry one. Bearing this in mind it is ironic that both Djuna Barnes and Natalie Barney have been described in terms of their glamorous clothing, which was actually used by both women as a sign of artistic 'difference'. This 'difference' is recorded in portraits by Barney's later lover, Romaine Brooks (Cynic Sal of the Ladies Almanack), who painted self portraits, depictions of Barney, Elizabeth de Gramont the Duchess of Clermont Tonnerre (Clitoresse of Nantescourt in Ladies Almanack) and Una, Lady Troubridge (lover of 'John' Radclyffe Hall and Tilly-Tweed-in-Blood in Barnes's text). If Brooks ever painted a portrait of Barnes, then it has gone unrecorded in the Smithsonian's catalogue of her works. Brooks's portraits represent sexual 'otherness' and rely heavily on the costumes of her sitters. As will be discussed later, Ladies Almanack also relies on appearance to convey 'difference', and it is interesting to compare the illustrations done by Barnes with drawings executed by both Brooks and Mina Loy. Natalie Barney met Brooks in 1915 and was her lover until a couple of years before her death, when Barney's affair with a younger woman destroyed the relationship. Apart from Brooks, Barney's closest companion was Berthe Cleyrengue, whom

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59 Ibid, p.162.
61 The above contains reproductions of most of Brook's portraits.
Bames had recommended to Barney.\textsuperscript{64}

Cleyrergue came to work for Barney in 1927, one year before Barnes published her *Ladies Almanack*. Thus the interview she gave is interesting to anyone preparing a study of Barnes's work, as it captures the circle which the *Ladies Almanack* celebrates.\textsuperscript{65} That Cleyrergue had found the job at Natalie Barney's (which she kept until 1972) via the recommendation of Djuna Barnes was something which she never forgot.\textsuperscript{66} She recalled that Barney's Fridays began at 4.30, when she received her more 'intimate friends'.\textsuperscript{67} She lists Barnes as being present most often in the years 1928-9 and also cites Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas as attending, even though Wickes and others have painted Stein's salon as an alternative to Barney's and described the two women as 'rivals'.\textsuperscript{68} As with Grindea, Cleyrergue cites Barney's love of literature, stating that 'she loved the works of all her friends. She loved Colette, Gertrude Stein, Djuna Barnes'.\textsuperscript{69} Thus the assertions by Wickes and others that Barney seldom read, and was therefore distanced from works such as *Ladies Almanack*, seems to be one worth disputing.\textsuperscript{70} It is the intimate 4.30 circle described by Cleyrergue, the women who arrived before the other guests (of whom there could be any number from seventy to one hundred), which is portrayed in *Ladies Almanack*.\textsuperscript{71} In *My Blue Notebooks*, Liane De Pougy described Barney's energy, both as a young woman and as the older 'amazon' whose salon Barnes attended.\textsuperscript{72} Liane De Pougy's journal reveals Barney as an energizing spirit, much like Dame Musset in *Ladies Almanack*. In 1921 De Pougy, one of Barney's many

\textsuperscript{64} Orenstein, 1971, pp.484-96.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, pp.484-96.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, p.487.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p.488.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, p.489.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, p.491.
\textsuperscript{70} This seems to be questionable, particularly in the light of this interview. See also Barney, Natalie Clifford, *The Adventures of the Mind* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), pp.31-157. Here Barney lists her reading and gives her opinions of work by authors she favours.
\textsuperscript{71} Barnes, 1928.
lovers, described her as being 'a luminous and subtle ray of light which gilds everything it
touches'. Dame Musset in *Ladies Almanack*, while not being herself quite as glowingly
described, is regarded by the women in her circle as a saint.

Despite these descriptions of Barney's energy, Benstock has portrayed the salon, post-
1918, in terms which are essentially negative:

When the women of Barney's circle returned to Paris following the war to meet
in the garden at 20 Rue Jacob, changes in clothing styles - brought about by the
war - revealed the extent to which Barney and her androgyne friends had aged.
They had cropped their hair, become stocky, large-breasted and full-hipped.
Their hair was now grey and thin skin sagged along the fine bones. In 1918,
Barney was forty-two years old, and she no longer resembled the wood nymphs,
 shepherdesses, or court pages of her youth.

This description seems to be contradictory, as it seems to convey someone much older than
Barney's forty-two years. It is also a description of Barney in 1918, two years before De
Pougy's glowing portrait of her and ten years before her appearance as Barnes's Dame Musset.
A portrait of her, executed by Romaine Brooks in 1920, shows that in Brooks's eyes she had
changed little from a photograph taken of both Brooks and herself in 1915. True, Barney
had aged from being Vivien's lover, but portraits and photographs of her in maturity do not
seem to merit Benstock's acerbic description. The salon, which had altered from the days of
the tableaux, still held its own in the literary world, and the *Prix Renée Vivien* (of 500,000
francs) enable young writers such as Marguerite Yourcenar to establish themselves. Not only
this but Barney's salon inspired writers such as Barnes, Liane de Pougy and Radclyffe Hall to
fictionalize it and it also enabled many women to gain a platform for performance: women

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73 Ibid, p.125.
74 Barnes, 1928, p.16.
75 Benstock, 1987, p.304.
76 Ibid, p.304.
who performed at the salon included Barnes, Colette, Edith Sitwell, Gertrude Stein and Mina Loy.\textsuperscript{78}

When Natalie Barney died in 1972, ten years before Barnes, Barnes's remaining link with Paris was severed. In his 'Natalie Barney Garland' (1975) George Wickes asked Janet Flanner about Barnes, who was then in New York.\textsuperscript{79} Flanner told Wickes that Barnes was too ill to see him, suggesting that she would have contributed to the 'garland' had health permitted.\textsuperscript{80} She went on to say:

She was very devoted to Natalie. Deplored the life she led. But a good many people would say that about Djuna's life, as far as that's concerned. Djuna was one of the strongest personalities around Natalie and one of the most devoted, one of the most appreciative.\textsuperscript{81}

In Berthe Cleyerquio's recollections, said Flanner, Barnes was a 'pillar' of Barney's salon.\textsuperscript{82} As Dame Musset's circle, a fictionalized version of this salon was to become one of Barnes's most memorable creations. In 1972, the year of Barney's death, Barnes was feeling the vulnerability of old age. Thelma Wood had died in 1970, as had Romaine Brooks, who was estranged from Barney until the end. Emily Holmes-Coleman was to die at a Catholic workers farm at Tivoli, New York, in 1974 and Peggy Guggenheim died in 1980. In 1973, Margaret Anderson, who had lost her lover, Georgette le Blanc, some years earlier and with whom Barnes had kept up a warring friendship, occasionally lunching with her in New York City, had committed suicide.\textsuperscript{83} Not only this, but Barnes outlived most of the subjects whom she had interviewed between 1913 and 1928. These deaths, particularly those of Barney and Wood, to both of whom she was 'devoted', must have contributed to her sense of isolation and could have led to her increasing cynicism concerning old age. The biographies and

\textsuperscript{78} Wickes, 1976, pp.152-70.
\textsuperscript{79} Wickes, op.cit, 1975, p.128.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, p.128.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, p.129.
\textsuperscript{83} Field, 1985, p.16, p.41, p.79, p.80, pp.97-9, p.102, p.120, pp.164-5, p.241.
autobiographies, which had begun to appear as early as 1930, must have seemed to be remote from the past which Barnes herself had celebrated in *Ladies Almanack*.

If Barney's life is celebrated in the pages of *Ladies Almanack*, then so is her work. This biographical chapter aims to define how the women Barnes knew influenced her writing. It is obvious that Barney inspired Barnes in a direct way, as she forms the basis for a recognizable fictional creation, who is both hedonistic and lesbian. Yet if Barney can be regarded as directly inspiring Barnes and also as a key patron of women writers, then Barnes's ten year relationship with Thelma Wood must also be regarded as a watershed in her career. For, if Barney was to both inform Barnes's work and provide a platform for it during her stay in Paris, then Wood was to provide both a creative bond and a catalyst. Thus it is to Wood and her influence upon Barnes's work that this study now turns.

**Thelma Wood and the Dialogue of Gender**

According to Andrew Field, Djuna Barnes first met Thelma Wood early in the 1920s and she was the 'T.W.' to whom *Ryder* is dedicated.\(^4\) This very dedication, using Wood's initials, marks Barnes's desire for privacy. The couple met in Berlin, where Wood was practising sculpture.\(^5\) The obscure time-reference used by Field when describing this period points to an essential difficulty for the historian studying this stage of Barnes's career.\(^6\) What is interesting is that, while much has been made of the tempestuous nature of their relationship, little has been written of the fact that both were visual artists. Barnes had studied art in New York in the early 1900s. Wood, about whom less is known, is listed by Field as having a piece of sculpture photographed and published in the magazine *Gargoyle* (1921) but he does not mention her artistic training.\(^7\) Art was something which the two women had in common and which formed a strong bond between them.

Field describes Wood as having chosen a deliberately difficult artistic technique, that of

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid, p.116, p.136, p.159.
silverpoint etching, as her chief method. In choosing a technique where a single slip of the pen can mean disaster, Wood chose a deliberately difficult form. This could be likened to Barnes's choice of language and illustration in volumes such as *Ladies Almanack* but, thus far, no comparison has been made between the two women's approaches to their work. Wood and Barnes had much more in common than their lesbianism, yet the link between the two has often been presented as physical attraction only.

Wood's alcohol and drug addiction has meant that she has been linked, by Field and others, to the fictional Robin Vote in *Nightwood*. Many of the women in Barney's circle, including Barnes herself, had such problems: a list of women who suffered with either drug or alcohol related complaints might include Renée Vivien, Mary Butts, Emily Holmes-Coleman, Dolly Wilde and Thelma Wood. In making Wood the living original of Robin Vote, writers such as John Glassco have obscured her actual career. If Djuna Barnes often seems to have survived in memoirs of the 1920s as a glamorous background figure, then Thelma Wood has endured more as an exotic shadow than as a creative artist. In the course of this study, I have not come across a single biography of Wood or a volume in which she is not portrayed as the alcoholic, vague, lover of Djuna Barnes. In a way which is similar to Vivien's positioning in biographies of Barnes, Wood emerges as an essentially tragic figure. I have found few traces of her life and art either before or after her relationship with Barnes: Emmanuel Cooper,

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88 Ibid.
90 This remains the case with many lesbian artistic couples, including Renée Vivien and Natalie Barney, Barney and Romaine Brooks, Violet Trefusis and Vita Sackville West, and Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland. The only critic to give Ackland's writing its due appears to be Wendy Mulford in *This Narrow Place: Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland, Life, Letters and Politics* (London: Pandora, 1988).
whom I contacted, said that he was also unable to trace Wood.

Yet reproductions of work by Wood in Field's biography of Barnes, demonstrate that she was a talented artist who merits a study in her own right. As with the drawings of Mina Loy, who is now discussed chiefly as being a poet, Wood's illustrations have become foot-notes in the discussion of a period of artistic history. As Emily Pine in Glassco's *Memoirs of Montparnasse*, Wood is described as having a 'dazed look', similar to that exhibited by Robin Vote in *Nightwood*. Indeed, Emily Pine is described both in terms of her vagueness and in terms of her beauty. As Emily Pine, 'a fatal woman as far as Willa Torrance (Barnes) is concerned', Wood is marginalized by Glassco. He speaks of Pine as exhibiting 'laziness and unformulated discontent', thus distancing her from both articulate discourse and creative work. Yet Wood worked hard at her chosen form, as remaining pieces by her attest. Ultimately, Glassco records having tried to seduce 'Pine', and then accuses her of frigidity because she would not respond to his advances. While one could merely ignore Glassco's account as a homophobic settling of old scores and thus being too biased to be of much merit, his view of Wood as a beautiful 'somnambule' persists.

This 'vagueness' and laziness of mind obscures for her latter-day commentators any opinions on art which Thelma Wood might have held. Field calls Wood 'the main love of Djuna Barnes', but he does not describe her as Barnes's artistic equal, which drawings by her in his biography indicate that she was. James B. Scott hardly mentions Wood, except as Barnes's partner. Unlike Broe, Benstock and Hanscombe and Smyers, Field chose to

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95 See Kouidis, 1986, pp. illustrations.
97 Ibid.
100 Broe, 1991, p. 110.
dissociate Barnes from her lesbianism, quoting her as saying 'I'm not a lesbian. I just loved Thelma'.

This statement, the source of which is not revealed, has been backed up by statements alleging Barnes's bisexuality.

Although it can be acknowledged that Barnes's texts are not wholly autobiographical, a discussion of Barnes's lesbianism should contain a brief analysis of the way in which certain critical strategies may lead to a construction of Barnes's texts as non-lesbian. This textual reading occurs when critics dissociate Barnes from her relationship with Wood, giving primacy to her brief heterosexual relationships. This biographical slant can be extended to textual readings. Whilst I use Barney's life and her relationship with Wood in order to look at Barnes's creation of Dame Musset and her salon, and also consider Barnes's attitude to lesbianism, I do not 'read' the text solely via her life. Indeed, in many ways, a conventional reading of Barnes's life might privilege her bisexuality by citing her relationship with the writer Courtenay Lemon. Thus a 'lesbian' text, such as Ladies Almanack, might be read using a heterosexual focus. For example, in Virago publications of works by Barnes, Barnes's 'marriage' to Lemon is mentioned before her relationship with Wood. Yet the relationship with Lemon was comparatively short, and accounts differ as to whether the couple were married in the legal sense. Lemon, who was in his thirties when Barnes was 'married' to him, was a writer for a magazine known as The New York American, and drank as heavily as did Wood. Lemon and Barnes lived, briefly, in Greenwich Village at number 86 Greenwich Avenue and Field has likened their relationship to that which Barnes was to later share with Wood. A letter (undated) from Lemon to Barnes reveals that he was homosexual. 

Field does not seem to know how to interpret the letter, yet Lemon's reference to his own 'marriage' can't help it ... it is all simply an unfortunate accident, for which fate is more to blame than you or I ...; Field, 1985, p.58, appears self-evident.
willingness to link Barnes's relationship with Lemon to her relationship with Wood, reveals an innate desire on the part of her biographer to portray her as being bisexual, as opposed to overtly lesbian.\textsuperscript{112} This strategy has led to texts such as \textit{Ladies Almanack} being regarded as 'diversions'. If Barnes is discussed as bisexual, then \textit{Ladies Almanack} can continue to be discussed as a text which is separate from the main body of her work. Thus Dame Musset and her women can be displaced and Wendell Ryder, Felix Vollbein, and Barnes's other male protagonists can be foregrounded. In actuality, Barnes's relationship with Lemon seems to have been founded upon the homosexuality of both participants. It is interesting that, despite a few short stories such as 'Katerina Silverstaff' and 'A Duel Without Seconds' which portray ostensibly male/female relationships, Barnes refrained from fictionalizing her relationship with Lemon.\textsuperscript{113}

As this thesis aims to reveal, the mainstay of Barnes's fiction is a study of relationships between women. Where male/female relationships are portrayed, as in Barnes's work for \textit{The Little Review} and in some of her short features for \textit{Vanity Fair}, they are shown as fraught with difficulty, the woman often choosing death or solitude over a male lover.\textsuperscript{114} It would be wrong to surmise that this fictional world implies that female bonding necessarily results in a happy ending. As with Matthew O'Connor in \textit{Nightwood}, Barnes often denied that such a conclusion was either possible or desirable. Andrew Field has recorded that once Barnes had broken off with Wood, she resisted all attempts at reconciliation.\textsuperscript{115} What appears to be important, as with Barnes's relationship with Barney, is not how long Barnes spent in the company of Wood but the influence which this relationship had on her works.

To compare Wood to the fictional Robin Vote, and to describe incidents in her life as

\textsuperscript{112} This also occurs in many works relating to Barney's salon, where the women are depicted as being bisexual as opposed to lesbian.

\textsuperscript{113} Barnes, Djuna, 'Katerina Silverstaff' in \textit{Little Review} 7, 4 (Jan/March, 1921), pp.27-33.

\textsuperscript{114} See the chapter on Barnes's short fiction for an exploration of this.

\textsuperscript{115} Field, 1985, p.235.
moments from the existence of a fictional character, seems to be a pointless endeavour.
While, as with the links between the real Dan Mahoney and the fictional Matthew O'Connor, Wood is one source for Vote, Vote is actually a subtle fictionalization culled from many people known to Barnes. Unlike Dame Musset, who was a direct product of Barnes's association with Barney, Vote's origins are less clearly defined.

Wood and Barnes attempted to form an alternative 'family', a situation outlined by Hanscombe and Smyers. As has been observed in the section on Ryder, naming was important to Barnes's life. Her name, along with those of her brothers, Thurn, Zendon, Saxon and Shangur, was deeply unconventional. All the children had been named by their father, and although publicly Barnes kept the name which he had given her, privately she and Wood created an alternative to it. This, and the 'family' which she and Wood created, seems to indicate that she wished to suggest an alternative to the patriarchal family. When one considers that Barnes's 'upbringing' within her father's family resulted in fears of incest, rape and the bondage of an arranged marriage, there is little wonder that Barnes found the idea of a male centred family undesirable. It may appear ironic, therefore, that Wood chose a male name, Simon, or 'Papa', but this could be regarded as both indicative of her time and the artistic milieu of which she was a part. As Michael Baker and Katrina Rolley (among others) have noted, Marguerite Radclyffe Hall chose the name 'John' for herself. Also Diana Souhami recalls how the painter Gluck (born Hannah Gluckstein) chose an ambiguous name for herself and was painted by Romaine Brooks as 'Peter: A Young English Girl'. This blurring of gender identity and the adoption both of male dress and names points to the exploration of gender undertaken by many women early in this century. As Gilbert and Gubar have argued, this process of cross-dressing and re-naming pointed to more than merely a

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117 Field, 1985, pp.24-5.
desire on the part of these women to adopt a masquerade or a male guise. What Wood, among others, seems to have been exploring were the limits of gender roles. By wearing male dress, these women appear to have been asking whether gender stereotypes were composed using dress-codes. Thus, by adopting both male pseudonyms and dress with 'masculine' associations, these women created 'border crossings' of their own. In demonstrating that gender roles were transmutable and relied upon a series of social signifiers (dress, names and body language etc.), they were able to create a space which enabled a critique of gender to take place. Unlike 'John' Radclyffe Hall, who was influenced by the sexological writings of Havelock Ellis, Barnes did not consider herself to be an 'invert' or to possess an essentially 'masculine' spirit which remained trapped within a female body. Her writings do not suggest that lesbianism is a form of inversion, as do Hall's, nor do her letters suggest this.

In her relationship with Wood, Barnes was Junie or Momma. Although Barnes took a female name it could be suggested that she did not, like Una Lady Troubridge, adopt a 'wifely' role with Wood, as she appeared to suggest that their 'roles' were interchangeable. What Barnes explored both in her life and in her texts were the gender-roles which society forces upon the individual. When Djuna Barnes first encountered Wood, Wood was nineteen and already well-thought of as a sculptor. Their relationship was at once passionate and committed. Their cat, 'Dilly', they treated as a kind of 'child'. Thus, particularly in their letters to each other, the two women created a 'family' unit which was divorced from the implications of patriarchy, as this family unit could be altered at any time by a change of titles or of roles with gender associations. It was not committed to staying in one location. One member of it was not the premier source of nurture, neither was the other the bread-winner. Until 1924, Hanscombe and Smyers suggest, Barnes and Wood shared an 'idyll', divorced from the presence of others. Yet, from 1924 onwards, they imply that the 'idyll was over ...

120 Gilbert and Gubar, 1990, pp.324-79.
122 Ibid.
and there were from then on very few quiet fireside dinners with just the two of them and their beloved Dilly.¹²³

Their description of Wood's state is almost the same as that presented by Andrew Field:

Thelma was notoriously promiscuous and often went on drinking binges while looking for women to pick up.¹²⁴

Like Renée Vivien and Natalie Barney, the pair were to break up and re-unite on several occasions. Also like Barney and Vivien, the couple's volatile relationship was to be portrayed in several volumes of memoirs as typical of a lesbian affair of the period. In 1927, as many critics have recorded, Wood sailed for America without Barnes.¹²⁵ A year later, Wood was back in Paris and the pair were re-united. How much drink and drug dependence were responsible for the lovers' problems is a matter for speculation. From letters between the two and from contemporary accounts it is obvious that both drank heavily. During the first years of their relationship, both had experimented with drugs and it has been suggested that Wood remained addicted.¹²⁶ As has been discussed earlier, when thinking of the women whose works have been termed 'modernist' one realizes that many of them were addicted to either alcohol or narcotics or both. For Barnes, alcoholism resulted in protracted silences which were usually followed by panic attacks.¹²⁷ In Wood's case, the documentation of her addiction merely goes to further the suggestion that alcohol was responsible both for her 'vagueness' and for the violent and damaging arguments which she had with Barnes. These contretemps (as both Broe and Hanscombe and Smyers have suggested) grew worse and less reparable as the relationship between the two women progressed. The 'family' of Simon, Junie and Dilly, which the women had so meticulously maintained, was to split up. Sadly, it proved to be as unstable as any other family unit with which Barnes was involved.

¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Field, 1985, p.159.
¹²⁶ Ibid.
¹²⁷ Field, 1985, p.159.
The arguments between Barnes and Wood, often characterized by violent language and alcoholic 'binges', has been dramatized in many volumes on the period, as the passages from John Glassco quoted throughout this thesis demonstrate. What is not as well-documented is Wood's artistic influence on Barnes. Field does note that 'Wood was a minor artist, to be sure, but a real one'. He then decides that the link between Wood's art and that created by Barnes was chiefly thematic:

The magnetic animal figures of Thelma Wood demonstrate what must have been the strongest shared disposition between the two women.

Yet connections are not made between Wood's painstaking method of working and her adoption of an illustrative form, with Barnes's own choice of illustration as an artistic métier. What seems to be significant, is that neither woman chose abstract forms, but instead, preferred to work figuratively. As with discussions of the career of Marie Bashkirtseff, Field perceived an intense 'narcissism' as being at the core of Wood's work, rather than recognizing that she was a woman trying to execute works whose theme was 'the limits of femininity'. Her works could be linked to drawings by Barnes, Loy and Romaine Brooks, amongst others, but such connections have yet to be explored. The common ground shared by Wood and Barnes seems to have been artistic as well as sexual with each influencing the work of the other.

By 1930, the relationship between the two women seems to have come to an end. Field calls the woman with whom Wood lived 'Jenny', after Jenny Petherbridge, the 'collector' in Nightwood. This would seem to indicate how far the links between reality and fiction have merged in discussions of the emotional lives of the two women. Thus, although I discuss Barnes's life here, the following chapter separates the text from a single biographical interpretation. Wood wrote to Barnes in 1930, saying:

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128 Ibid, p.159.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
You seem to have had a pretty rotten time - with my brutishness and I'm sorry - sorry - you say you know me now so terribly well ... I did not mean to reject your friendship - that I took for granted in the course of events - as we loved each other - But perhaps it's grown so colossal in your mind you would not want that either - for after all why an untrustworthy friend?\footnote{132}

Barnes, as Broe discusses, did not return to Wood, but she did write to her.\footnote{133} Relationships followed with the homosexual writer Charles Henri Ford and with the painter Jean Oberle.\footnote{134} By 1934, according to Field, Barnes had left Ford in favour of a life of 'endurance, solitude, and a certain, obscure greatness'.\footnote{135} From this standpoint, Field goes on to dramatize Barnes's mental seclusion:

> Thelma Wood was nothing less than the ghost of a mistress past, and the mind of Djuna Barnes, no longer held in Paris, could now range back with its former intensity to the farms, Storm King and Long Island, to the story of her childhood and family. She would have nearly half a century left to her to brood upon it, the freedoms of her father and her grandmother. But she saved the broken doll and kept it with her until she died.\footnote{136}

The doll, which is here as much of a fictional motif as is the doll shared by Nora and Robin in *Nightwood*, becomes a symbol of the fractured relationship between Barnes and Wood. To re-evaluate that relationship in the face of such emotive symbols is fraught with difficulty. What is certain is that, as both a woman and an artist, Thelma Wood left an impression on works by Barnes which time would not eradicate, just as Renée Vivien left her imprint on works by Natalie Clifford Barney, and on Barney's salon. What is also important as I will show is that Wood is excluded from the fictional universe of Dame Musset's salon in *Ladies Almanack.*

Significant Others: Barnes and the Creative Woman

If Barnes's relationships with Natalie Clifford Barney and Thelma Wood are interesting examples of her bonding with other lesbian artists, then her friendship with Mina Loy is worth studying in the light of Loy's heterosexuality. As anecdotal studies of Paris in the 1920s inform us, Loy appears as Patience Scalpel in *Ladies Almanack*, a wry heterosexual observer of lesbian sexual *mores*. In real life, the friendship between Barnes and Loy was always close, typified by Man Ray's double portrait of them. Loy was also a frequenter of Barney's salon and knew Thelma Wood, having once shared the same apartment block as Wood and Barnes. With the character of Patience Scalpel, Barnes was to create a fictional portrait which owed as much to the almanac tradition as it did to Loy herself. With Scalpel, Barnes was able to transgress patriarchal gender divisions as Scalpel, a heterosexual, is represented as being in the minority. Her views are described in terms of their peculiarity, thus borders between heterosexuality and lesbianism are erased and Musset's circle given primacy over the singular Scalpel.

There is no study of Barnes's friendship with Loy and of similarities between the careers of the two. Both women were concerned with experimentation in writing and the visual arts. Mina Loy's drawings, like pictures by Barnes, have been likened to works by Aubrey Beardsley and other *Yellow Book* illustrators, whereas they seem to bear a greater resemblance to works by other women, such as Romaine Brooks and Barnes herself. In her biography of Loy, *Mina Loy: American Modernist Poet*, Virginia M. Kouidis notes that the relationships between Loy and others who worked both within the fields of art and literature have not been explored in much depth. If we take the portrayal of Patience Scalpel as being

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137 Barnes, 1928.
139 See the following section of this thesis.
140 All of whom executed precise line-drawings in pen and ink or pen and wash. See the chapter on Barnes's art.
141 Kouidis, 1986.
grounded in reality we can observe that Barnes's sexuality remained an enigma to Loy. Ironically, in turn, Barnes (within the confines of the text) depicted Loy's heterosexuality as a freak of nature. This was a deliberate reversal of how society perceived lesbianism, where instead of the lesbian being regarded as sexually 'other' and thus a cause of heterosexual fears, the situation is reversed.

Mina Loy, as a heterosexual writer also explores gender difference, in the images contained within her poetry, of her disastrous marriage with the writer and nomadic intellectual Arthur Cravan, whom she names as:

Cravan

colossal absentee

the substitute dark

rolls to the incandescent memory.

Loy, like Barnes, penned a strong critique of the patriarchy which had enabled Cravan, from the outset of their relationship, to become such an absentee.

Like Barnes, to whom she was ten years senior, Loy was often poor. Where Loy differed from Barnes was that the needs of her children often compromised her career, forcing her to toke on work such as hat and lampshade making in order to feed and clothe them.

Barnes's poverty, although often desperate, concerned herself only; she was often able to 'survive' on the charity of friends. Her life, although often harder than most of her contemporaries imagined, did not involve her having to give up her time to menial occupations. With three children to support, Loy had no choice in the matter. Just as Barnes was haunted by the death of Mary Pyne, so Loy was also strongly affected by the deaths of both Cravan and her one-year old daughter by her first husband, Stephen Hoewis, Ada Janet

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142 Barnes, 1928. See also the following section of this thesis.
143 Ibid.
145 Ibid, pp.16-8.
Unlike Barnes with Pyne, Loy was unable to describe and therefore exorcize the physical death of Cravan. Cravan disappeared in New Mexico in October 1918 and his body, which was undiscovered for a year, was eventually found in the Mexican desert in 1919. The cause of his death remains unknown. Whereas Barnes, in 'Six Songs of Khalidine', describes herself as sitting by Pyne's body, and thus accepting her death, in 'The Widow's Jazz', Loy explores the feeling of absence which Cravan's disappearance provoked:

seared by the flames of sound,

the widowed urn

holds impatiently,

your murdered laughter.

Husband how secretly you cuckolded me with death.  

As with Pyne's death for Barnes, Cravan's murder represented a watershed in Loy's career.

In Europe, Loy was to consider gender difference from her own heterosexual perspective, particularly in the volume Lunar Baedeker (1923). Similar to work by Virginia Woolf, her version of gender difference is primarily concerned with a difference of vision:

See the men pass.

Their hats are not ours,

We take a walk

They are going somewhere

And they may look everywhere

Men's eyes look into things

Our eyes look out.  

149 Ibid, p.4.
151 Ibid, p.12.
152 Ibid, p.32.
The use of clothing as expressing gender difference ('Their hats are not ours') can also be found in works by Barnes, as is discussed throughout this study. What Loy does not question is the fact that women's gender may also be split, between those who are heterosexual and those who are bisexual or lesbian. Barnes, on the other hand, constantly explores this within her fiction, and this is nowhere more evident than in the text of *Ladies Almanack*.

As was outlined earlier, women's relationships during the period which is often termed as 'modernist' have been presented as competitive. In my interpretation Barnes's friendship with Loy suggests, as does that which she shared with Barney, that this is a literary myth. Loy and Barnes were to remain friends throughout their long lives. Despite working for the same theatre company, the same small presses and 'little magazines' they remained supportive of each other, as this discussion of Loy demonstrates. This can also be said to be true of Barnes and Baroness Elsa Von Freytag Loringhoven.153

This concept of support, however, does not apply to all of Barnes's dealings with other women. For example, her relationships with Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap were much more problematic, as Anderson's memoirs recall.154 Yet, it could be argued that their basic differences of opinion stemmed more from economics than from personal enmity. In her book on the growth of *The Little Review, My Thirty Years War*, Anderson acknowledges that the relationship between herself and Barnes was not destined to run smoothly.155 Many male critics, such as John Glassco, have hinted that this was due to Barnes's near 'affair' with Jane Heap, Anderson's lover.156 Field even describes Barnes as having called Heap 'a shit' in public.157 Yet these tales may be apocryphal as there is very little 'hard evidence' with which to back them. What is clear is that Anderson, according to both her correspondence and her

155 Ibid.
157 Field, 1985, p.102.
autobiography, was proud of the fact that *The Little Review*, even when it was making money, did not pay its contributors.\(^{158}\) Whilst acknowledging that Barnes often neared destitution, Anderson comments that she never considered paying her for her many pieces.\(^{159}\) Thus what has been hitherto constructed as a deeply personal emotional score on the part of the women, could just as easily be viewed as the result of Anderson’s insensitive treatment of one of her major contributors. It is, however, indicative of the way in which literary history has dealt with the subject of lesbian writing in Europe from 1920-45, that the argument with Anderson and Heap has been better documented than Barnes’s friendship with Mina Loy. Even in feminist works Barnes’s friendships often form a sub-text to her years as a recluse. The image of the recluse, which is so enigmatic and appealing to any discussion of ‘otherness’, is often privileged at the expense of the network of creative women who supported Barnes throughout her long life.

\(^{158}\) Anderson, 1930, p.177.

\(^{159}\) Ibid.
Her Wench of Bliss: 'The Sexual Iconography of the Ladies Almanack'

If, as the last chapter sought to suggest, Barnes remained aware of lesbian fore-mothers, the next task of this study must be to analyze the author's exploration of the lesbian self. As the chapter on Barnes's poetry suggested, until publication of Ladies Almanack, her treatment of lesbian sexuality had remained essentially muted. As Broe implies, lesbians in the early poems and stories remain part of a subversive, marginal world. Positive descriptions of the love of one woman for another (which are prevalent in works by both Barney and Vivien) appear to be lacking in these works and this may explain why critics such as Jane Rule and Lilian Faderman continue to regard Barnes's view of sexuality essentially depressing. Yet, in 1928 Barnes created her most positive work, Ladies Almanack, reprinted in 1992. Early feminist texts, such as those by Ellen Moers, came to regard Barnes as pessimistic concerning her own sexuality, as signified by her descriptions of lesbianism in Nightwood. This chapter wishes to challenge that notion, by arguing that Ladies Almanack represents more than literary diversion.

Andrew Field decided that it was a light and parodic work, noting:

'It is a lusty little book, but it is quite possible not to see this aspect of Ladies Almanack too clearly because of its convoluted language.'

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1 A Note on the Text: In this section, I spell 'almanac' thus. Barnes spells her text 'almanack' which is also reflected here.
5 Karla Jay, who edits this series, chose the text to be the first Lesbian Literature reprint.
Earlier Field comments that 'it's a queer little book'. Field's choice of the word 'little' to describe the text, lies at the root of many critics' problematic experiences with it. Due to the fact that the 'slim' volume cannot easily be placed in a recognizable literary category, the text eludes definition. Also the piece has been outlined as a diversion by Field, thus both the text and its size are defined by the word 'little'. In work by Maggie Humm, women's texts which avoid categorization have been described as 'crossing borders':

Each of these writers, by virtue of one border crossing alone, issues a profound challenge to the literary cannon, and to the very process of criticism as an exercise in gender proprieties.

It is the argument of this thesis that works by Barnes, including *Ladies Almanack*, transgress several borders, including those of gender, class and history, presenting just the type of challenge to the establishment described by Humm, and outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Field, with his patronising references to 'this little book', makes the reader aware that he considers the book slight due to its length, style and comic subject-matter. In short, he comes to the conclusion that it is a brief, parodic work, a diverting satire on the salon of Barney and little else. He concludes that

The book does nothing more than describe without duration or action, the circle of women over which she presided. Natalie Barney was delighted with the satirical frolic. The tale doesn't really present recognisable characters. They are rather more like old fashioned humours with no need at all to be more than two dimensional, though there were signs enough for those who were within the satirized circle.

But, using Humm's argument, parody can also be seen to be used as a 'border crossing'.

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10 Field, 1985, p.124.
12 Ibid.
device.\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Almanack}, however, has continued to be dismissed as a 'satirical frolic', and also as a literary 'who's who' of the expatriate lesbian circle over which Barney presided.\textsuperscript{14} Using Barney's personal copy, William Amos has listed the origins of each character.\textsuperscript{15} The main characters identified by him are listed below.\textsuperscript{16}

- **Dame Evangeline Musset**: Natalie Clifford Barney
- **Patience Scalpel**: Mina Loy
- **Clitoressa of Nantescourt**: Elizabeth Gramont, Duchess de Clermont Tonerre.
- **Senorita Fly-About**: Mimi Frachetti.
- **Cynic Sat**: Romain Brooks.
- **Doll Furious**: Dolly Wilde.
- **Sister**: Laura Barney. **Countess**: Baroness Delands.
- **Nip**: Solita Solano. **Tuck**: Janet Flanner.
- **Lady Buck-and-Balk**: Una, Lady Troubridge.\textsuperscript{17}

Significantly, Barnes omits both herself and Thelma Wood from the cast although it could be argued that, at times, the narrator's voice is similar to that used by Barnes in her journalism.

According to Field and others, the original editions were printed at Maurice Darrantiere's Dijon Press, a press used by both Edward Titus and Robert McAlmon.\textsuperscript{18} It appeared in a first edition which numbered 1,050 copies. There were twenty-four pen and line drawings in wood-cut style, and the first fifty copies of the text were hand tinted by Barnes. According to both John Glassco and Andrew Field, galleys of the text were handed around the Falstaff Café before printing.\textsuperscript{19} The copies which were to have been distributed by the publisher Edward

\textsuperscript{13} Humm, 1991, p.15.
\textsuperscript{14} Field, 1985, p.124.
\textsuperscript{16} As can be observed in the main body of the text, this is full of omissions for which I can discover no reference.
\textsuperscript{18} Field, 1985, pp.124-5.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, pp.124-5.
Titus were rejected due to their overt lesbian content. The text was financed by Barney.

Field describes the text as being 'merrily and effectively hawked along the Left Bank by bold young women'. This anecdote sums up much of the popular attitude towards *Ladies Almanack*, both at the time of publication and after. The book became notorious for what it contained and the way in which it was sold. Until the present decade, textual analysis has been influenced by the context in which it was produced. Discussed as a notorious 'underground' work, the text loses both its plurality and its complexity. If the text is regarded as a private jest, its ambiguity is lost. Field lists Barnes's sources as confirming the albums which she had collected, and therefore describes the text as a work of pastiche. Maggie Humm cites Frederic Jameson's description of pastiche as a product of post modernism:

> Each group comes to speak an 'idiolect', a curious private language of its own which is spoken at the moment when pastiche appears and parody has become impossible. Pastiche is blank parody that has lost its sense of humour ... this is a condition of marginality.

Humm rightly discusses the problems of relating this statement to writings by women which use pastiche but display a sense of the ridiculous. *Ladies Almanack* is a pastiche which retains a very definite sense of humour. The text seems to have been undervalued and this dismissive attitude towards it could be regarded as an attitude born from prejudice against its humorous content. The text can be regarded as a pastiche, as it uses elements taken from several types of historical text. However, it is a type of pastiche which contains an element of parody.

As has been discussed, Field's exploration of Barnes's sources for the text is brief:

> Some old French albums which Barnes had picked up in the bookstalls of Paris-

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid, p.125.
22 Ibid.
24 This has added to its reputation as a 'folly' or diversion.
'I shouldn't give away my secrets like this', said Miss Barnes as she showed me one of the French albums which she had kept over the years.25

Again, what appears here is a fictionalization of Barnes's private life. The reader gets to know little about the albums themselves.26 The albums were not listed in the catalogue of the McKeldin Library's Barnes collection. All that was known of them was that they might be albums of popular French works and that Barnes briefly mentioned their existence in her introduction to the 1972 re-issue of *Ladies Almanack*.27 I am now in a position to confirm what I had suspected concerning Barnes's sources for this and other works. In *The Gourmet's Almanac*, Alan Ross Macdougal thanks Barnes for lending him 'valuable books', and, as most of the texts used are sixteenth and seventeenth-century (and those from the eighteenth-century rely on sources from previous periods), one can conclude that the 'albums' owned by Barnes date from these times.28 Thus a textual analysis of the work must take these influences into account.

Therefore, this chapter is structured around two ideas. In the latter part of this discussion, I wish to consider the text as celebratory; an affirmation of the author's own lesbianism, and a contradiction to those who have depicted the work of Djuna Barnes as utterly pessimistic. In this context, the lesbian self is revealed in a positive light as Dame Musset and her lovers are the antithesis of Nora Flood and Robin Vote. First, however, I wish to study the work in terms of the specific influences which shaped it. Whilst recognising that influences on the text are manifold and cross many centuries, it can also be argued that Barnes chose her influences carefully and that most of them represent knowledge of women's history and of how women writers in the past created subversive texts.

"The Book All Ladies Should Carry": The Ladies Almanack and its Literary Origins

In the beautifully drawn frontispiece of her text, Djuna Barnes depicts a woman in eighteenth-century dress, holding a copy of the work. In the background a cook, a priest, a lion, a bride and a doctor stand, all defined by their characteristics, a motif which is then repeated in the text itself:

Thus begins this Almanack, which all ladies should carry about them, as the Priest his Breviary, as the Cook his Recipes, as the Doctor his Physic, as the Bride her Fears, and as the Lion his Roar.

In deliberately aping the chap-book convention and almanac tradition, Djuna Barnes assimilated past forms. It might be argued that these forms were chosen as much for their associations with female writing, as for their recognisable historical context.

At the conclusion of the exploration of the poetry of Katherine Philips, 'The Matchless Orinda', Elaine Hobby states:

It seems to me crucial, that if we are to really recover our lesbian past, that we begin, at least, by allowing the evidence to challenge our pre-existing commitments to what we want to find. The past is a complicated place, a place with as many conflicting cultures as our own.

This statement might also highlight the difficulties which critics in our own century have faced in attempting to place the Ladies Almanack into a cultural category. In briefly stating its origins many critics appear to ignore the fact that, as a work of pastiche which contains elements of the comic, the text deliberately seeks to highlight marginalized areas in which women's creativity often flourished. Ladies Almanack is not a mere 'frolic' but a complex text, much more diverse, one could suggest, than the reader expects it to be.

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29 Barnes, 1928, p.5.
30 Ibid.
In the past, texts which demanded that 'all ladies' should carry them were often instructive. Conduct books, telling women how to behave correctly, have been published throughout history, a good example of these being the conduct books of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Indeed, it could be stated that with continued publications by women such as Moira Bremner, the instructive text has never actually departed. In re-writing the instruction book, a work intended for a young female audience, Barnes re-evaluates a literary form in terms of the lesbian other. Thus the text 'which all ladies should carry' is transformed into a lesbian text. Barnes's preface also creates transformation, as in recommending the text to 'ladies' she reveals the lesbian possibilities implicit within many traditional forms, excluding a view of history which renders the past predominantly heterosexual. The title page, famous more for its satire of recognisable tradition than for the gender implications which it presents the reader, is concerned with revealing all aspects of the female condition:

*Ladies Almanack*

- Showing their signs and their tides;
- Their Moons and their Changes;
- The Seasons as it is with them;
- Their Eclipses and Equinoxes; as well as a full record of Diurnal and Nocturnal distempers.

If we compare this to the title of *Mundus Muliebris*, a seventeenth-century text, both the quality and clarity of the parody become obvious; as both texts form 'lists' of their contents:

*Mundus Muliebris*

- Or, the

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33 An interesting paper on this subject was given by Anthony Fletcher, at the Seventeenth-Century Conference, University of Durham, July 1991.
35 Lesbian politics and readings of the text have, with the exception of work by Susan Snaider Lanser, remained largely undiscussed. Barnes, 1928, p.9.
36 Ibid, frontispiece.
Ladies Dressing-Room
unlock'd
And her toilette
Spread
In Burlesque.
Together with the Fop-Dictionary, compiled
For the use of the fair sex.37

As with tableaux created by Natalie Clifford Barney and Renée Vivien earlier in this century, *Ladies Almanack* sought to explore the past, re-establishing an alternative view of historical progression. To achieve this, Barnes combined the past form of the almanac with a satire in the existing salon of Natalie Barney.38 Barney's salon is rendered timeless by this technique. The text implies that Dame Musset might exist in any century; her modern life is described in both sixteenth and seventeenth-century language, whilst she wears eighteenth-century dress.39 She also evokes the sexual *mores* of the nineteenth-century. Cynic Sal, for example, possesses a 'Pecksniffian' air.40

The text implies that, as a lesbian conduct book, *Ladies Almanack* contains information which is vital to all women. If Dame Musset's life reveals this information, then surely it might be argued that the origins of its sources are more likely to be derived from texts by women. Like many seventeenth-century female writers, Barnes inverted a patriarchal norm. Elaine Hobby, in her account of women writers in the seventeenth-century, *Virtue of Necessity*, describes how conduct books by men usually recommended chastity, as women were perceived as 'the more lustful sex'.41 Hobby then goes on to discuss how women writers

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38 Barney's salon remains the focal point of many textual interpretations.
39 These illustrations have always been compared with those of Beardsley, while they were clearly most influenced by seventeenth and eighteenth-century woodcuts.
40 Barnes, 1928, p.36.
of the period made a 'virtue of the necessity' by subverting the written form, outwardly conforming to the role of social submission, whilst encoding visions of their own strength. In exploiting familiar genres, Hobby argues that women re-interpreted notions of the feminine:

In their texts we see femininity being constantly refined and re-defined, its limits shifting and being re-imposed, as the strengths of domination and subordination are played out: different women, in different ways, 'making a virtue of necessity'.

It could be argued that, as with texts mentioned by Hobby, *Ladies Almanack* seeks to re-define femininity, shifting the limits of past forms and thus precluding a heterosexually gendered reading. Once this interpretation has been placed on the text, it becomes both impossible and unsatisfactory to regard it as a mere literary 'who's who' of expatriate literary lesbian life. From a feminist standpoint, the text can be seen to represent a twentieth-century recovery of a traditionally subversive genre. Hobby, whose work on the seventeenth-century seems to be equally relevant to students studying the twentieth-century, speaks of the dichotomy for feminists engaged in studying both literature and the language of the past. She argues that the problem for feminist historians is contextual:

how can we know if it is simply 'new to us' because of our present knowledge of the past? Perhaps some of the shifts in women's writing that I chart in this book are not changes at all, or are changes of a different kind from the ones I perceive.

These difficulties seem to be relevant for students studying writers such as Barnes, as it could be regarded that texts like *Ladies Almanack* have too long been regarded as no more than private creations or personal jokes, whose value is their curiosity.

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42 Ibid, p.2.  
44 Ibid, p.25.
In *The Sign of Angellica*, Janet Todd discusses how women writers from 1660-1800 borrowed literary forms in order to explore existing constructs of 'the feminine'. She discusses the charge of plagiarism as levelled at Aphra Behn, concluding that:

> Constantly plays were made out of older plays, and plays and characters travelled freely among playwrights. For Behn (in other words), this borrowing is important since it declares to later readers what she goes on to stress herself, that the culture in which she operates is largely male. Women authors are not newborn but already part of culture, and Aphra Behn's work is a clear example of borrowing, adopting and following themes and styles. *The wit is in the appropriation.* (My italics.)

This process of appropriation, it could be argued, is precisely what Barnes employs during the course of the *Ladies Almanack*. Within the confines of the almanac form, itself dating back to Ancient Greece, Barnes employs a heady mixture of seventeenth and eighteenth-century visual representations, sixteenth-century linguistic conventions, hagiography (after all, Dame Musset's life is that of a saint), the instructional, moral tone of the conduct book, the terminology of the sixteenth-century underworld, private jokes, and recognisable caricatures of her contemporaries.

Thus the text seems to have been marginalized in the past because of its eclectic, uncategorizable form. Its resistance to categorization could be regarded as a deliberate ploy on the part of the author who disliked being pigeon-holed. In both her public and her private writings, as the first chapter of this study suggested, Barnes deplored categorization of any form, believing this to be reductive. By adopting a myriad of formulaic conventions, Barnes created a text for which there could be no satisfactory single reading. The volume is not a novel, nor is it an almanac in the traditional sense, yet it contains elements of both genres, and employs themes which Barnes was to concentrate on in other works of fiction.

If one merely viewed the work only as a celebration of the lesbian self and the sexual freedoms of Natalie Clifford Barney's own life, one might force another limiting factor upon it. The text re-writes the idea of a saint's life by making the saint also a lesbian. Likewise, the text's imagery unites the iconography used in early religious volumes with bawdy language deployed in many chap-books, thus combining the secular with the religious, the bawdy with the 'respectable', and the elite with the popular. In uniting the religiosity of the tone with which a saint's life was described with the popular appeal of the chap-book, Barnes enabled her text to transcend both the boundaries of class and codification. In this account the Saint's life becomes gendered and the religious form is inverted to celebrate the lesbianism of Dame Musset. It is likewise interesting that Brooks appears to jokingly referred to Barney as 'sainted'.

The text 'crosses borders' as a religious, elite form is transformed into a secular, popular one. The hedonism of Dame Musset privileges her above her counterparts. The text charts the course of her life but it provides more than a fictional chronology, as it re-interprets the biblical myth of creation in terms of the sexual 'other'. The revised version re-writes the traditionally heterosexual version of creation, opening up other possibilities.

Just as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss how Brontë revised Milton in their reading of *Wuthering Heights*, and also describe how she created a 'bible of hell', it could be argued that the revised vision of creation in *Ladies Almanack* charts a lesbian counter-myth which undercuts the heterosexual view of the original. Dame Musset's life story is, Barnes informs the reader, the tale of the 'first woman born with a difference'. As such, it breaks the rules of society's conventional sexual structure, as it records a full and rewarding sexual life.

If we take this view, as opposed to the view of the text taken by Lillian Faderman and others where the text becomes a private diversion for Barnes' friends, then Dame Musset emerges as

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a revised archetypal figure. As such, the saint becomes sexually 'other' and thus re-writes a particular view of historical possibilities. By this 'other', I mean the self as defined by gender difference. In this case the saint (traditionally celibate but often heterosexual in her former life) is transmuted into the lesbian 'other', allowing a new type of hagiography to be created. The text foregrounds the subversive female figure and displaces heterosexual figures to its margins. Social fears concerning lesbianism are ridiculed, as Dame Musset is the norm. This gendered 'world turned upside down' re-writes biblical lore, as the saint and the she-devil are here combined.

As this volume can be regarded, in some ways, as one in which illustration is as important as the written text, the emphasis of the text becomes truly plural. Both written and illustrated portions of the text contribute to the vision of 'the feminine' which confronts the reader. The links between this, other works by Barnes, and sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts by women appear to be manifold. The mention of some of the latter links would appear to be necessary before a detailed analysis of the text can be undertaken. Due to its varied sources the text is not open to a single reading. It could be argued that many of the forms which it deploys were common to texts both written for, and read by, women.

The first of these forms is the almanac itself, a genre defined succinctly in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as

Annual calendar of months and days, usually with astronomical data and other information.

As such, the almanac might be regarded as an ostensibly masculine form, providing important, technical information for the populace. In taking this form and giving it a female framework, Barnes could be seen as placing a new context upon a yearly calendar and privileging the 'moons and tides' of women above conventional time scales. In this context,

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51 Barnes, 1928, frontispiece.
women, like nature, have moons and changes, signs and tides, eclipses and equinoxes and
diurnal and nocturnal distempers. The oblique references to menstruation, birth and
menopause contained herein, create a calendar of female days which can be likened to those
which exist in almanacs by women, which have been discussed by Hobby. This strategy can
be compared to Barnes's use of the 'walking mort' which was described in the chapter on her
poetry. The functions of the female body are charted and, in writing of them through this
form, Barnes refers directly back to female almanacs of the past. It could be argued that by so
doing, Barnes re-animates the almanac as the female form which it once was.

Almanacs by women have been discussed by Mary Prior, Antonia Fraser, Elspeth
Graham, Elaine Hobby and Janet Todd. They appear to have differed from male almanacs in
as much as they recorded the ailments and needs of the female body. Male almanac writings
were often, Hobby tells us, by young men. From the late seventeenth-century, almanacs
were often best sellers, Hobby records that, in the 1660s, sales averaged about four hundred
thousand copies. She describes traditional almanacs as possessing:

many mundane uses apart from their prophecies on the state of the notion, the
weather and international affairs, as they listed the hours of sunrise and sunset,
the times of the tides, and the dates of holidays, court sessions, fairs and market
days.

These might all be regarded as elements which Barnes chose to appropriate from the almanac

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52 Ibid, frontispiece.
53 Therefore, Barnes's 'woman's time' can be best discussed by comparing it to almanac
sources, not to a philosophical or psychological theory such as that maintained by Julia
54 Prior, Mary, Women in English Society: 1500-1800 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,
1985); Fraser, Antonia, The Weaker Vessel (London: Methuen, 1984); Graham, Elspeth
(with Hinds and Hobby), editors, Her Own Life: Women's Autobiographical Writings in
the Seventeenth-Century (London: Routledge, 1989); Also see Hobby, 1988, p.180; and
Todd, 1989, p.134; (I am also indebted to discussions with Gillian Spraggs, for clarifying
my ideas on women, gender and power in the seventeenth-century and for sharing with
me her knowledge of the language of the sixteenth-century underworld.)
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
form, transforming the general list of tides and times into a list of female tides and times, and transmuting the universal until it became at one with the particular. Elaine Hobby goes on to mention two female almanac makers in the seventeenth-century, namely, Sarah Jinner and Mary Holden. Jinner published almanacs from 1644-1659 and Mary Holden published hers in 1688. According to Hobby's study, Jinner was a radical figure, her works concentrate on women's difficulties with conception and pregnancy and on various infections.

Hobby regards Jinner as being motivated by the desire to 'teach her own sex'. It could be argued that Barnes appropriated this desire by creating a pastiche of an instruction book for women but that the book is pastiche should not be seen as proof that it is a 'light' work. As Maggie Humm argues, in her discussion of Bakhtin, pastiche can contain a very serious message, it does not have to be presented as 'proof of a slight text.

Thus Barnes's text is both comic and serious, as the almanac deals with women and 'the seasons as it is with them'. As with earlier models, this text has been both categorized and reduced. An early example of his technique being a satire on Jinner's work which was entitled The Woman's Almanac, and was penned by a man who signed himself Ginnor. While Jinner warned of the dangers attended to heterosexual sex, once telling her readers that 'breeding' (sexual intercourse in this context) would be painful in February, Barnes uses her almanac to tell of the pleasures of lesbian sexuality. Here, sexual activity stands alone and is not countered by the pain of child-bearing. Jinner advocated the restraining of the sexual appetites of young women because of the pain of child-birth. Barnes, turning this tradition on its head,
depicts Patience Scalpel observing the freedom of Musset and her circle.\textsuperscript{67} Sexuality in this context is the antithesis of the tortured relationship between Robin and Nora in \textit{Nightwood}, as Lilian Faderman rightly points out, and yet Faderman persists in the view that the latter is Barnes's most representative 'lesbian' text.\textsuperscript{68}

Another \textit{Woman's Almanac}, this time by Mary Holden, likewise concentrated on a female calendar of ailments and needs.\textsuperscript{69} Hobby maintains that these works were extremely popular amongst literate female audiences, thus it could be suggested that, in adopting the almanac form, Barnes re-instated a lost female genre.\textsuperscript{70} If possible links between \textit{Ladies Almanack} and the genres which it draws upon are explored, then the literary appropriation which pastiche relies upon can be regarded as important when considering other works by Barnes. Blinking the text to both the tableaux of Natalie Clifford Barney and Renée Vivien and to women's texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, one can begin a plural reading of it. Likewise, the style of illustrations and the manner of printing also lead to this type of reading. Thus the text transgresses the border between past and present, allowing the reader to recognise elements of both 'modernist' biography and sixteenth century almanac construction.\textsuperscript{71} This amalgamation of forms achieves a 'border crossing' which is both political and ideological.

Another form to which the text can be likened is that of the chap-book. This genre had great appeal for working-class readerships of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Interestingly, the chap-book form was often illustrated by a series of wood-cuts which deployed figurative archetypes much like those used by Barnes in the creation of the \textit{Ladies Almanack}. One example of this is \textit{Craw Hall's Chapbooks}, undated sixteenth-century texts.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Scalpel, as was mentioned, being thought to be based upon the poet and artist Mina Loy.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Faderman, 1981, p.364, p.369.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Hobby, 1988, p.182.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{71} In the past, the use of both parody and pastiche in Barnes's work has been noted but not studied in full. This thesis appears to be the first to consider Barnes's work using the concept of 'border crossing'.
\end{itemize}
where symbols such as hearts, strange beasts, female figures and motifs fill the pages. Chap-books, often containing ballads, were mostly illustrated with naive wood-cuts, now beginning to be discussed as an art form in their own right due to the growth of interest in primitivism and naive painting. These illustrations are so similar to Barnes's own that it seems that it must have been to these, and not to the decadence of The Yellow Book, that she turned for inspiration. A further exploration of this genre in the early twentieth-century can be found in the periodical The Chap-Book. This magazine devoted the whole of its September 1920 issue to a re-appraisal of chap-books and 'Old Broadside Ballads'. It is to these ballads that we must now turn our attention, in order to explore Barnes's text further.

As Fraser, Hobby and Prior have all noted, the ballad form in the seventeenth-century was often used to convey misogynistic sentiments. Pepys' collection of ballads and their illustrations, The Roxburghe Ballads, contains several examples, including the following from 'The Batchelor's Feast, or the Difference Betwixt a Single Life and a Double; Being the Batchelor's Pleasure and the Married Man's Trouble':

While married men doe lie,
with worldly cares opprest,
wee batchelors can sleepe,
and sweetly take our rest:
O, married men must seeke,
for gossips and a nurse,
Which heavi makes the heart,
but lightly makes the purse.\textsuperscript{79}

Or this familiar refrain from 'The Discontented Married Man':

Henceforth, therefore, I'll forsake her,
And her mother shall take her,
And, for shame, let her better make her,
Or I againe will never take her,
Pure modesty she doth defie,
Besides, she's fickle as the weather,
And her scoldings plainly shew,
She cannot keepe her and I together.\textsuperscript{80}

Both Todd and Hobby have discussed the misogynistic implications of such ballads, in which women were either represented as vain, inconstant viragos, or as licentious creatures with lustful appetites.\textsuperscript{81} In this world-picture women cuckolded their husbands by taking scores of lovers, the 'discontented married man' and the neglected lover becoming recognisable archetypes. Elaine Hobby regards this negative view of women's sexuality as being continued into the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{82}

Women, these texts proclaim, are essentially masochistic. They are portrayed eagerly agreeing to be whipped. Their flesh is torn, their blood is spilt. Even today, when we are again witnessing a vicious male backlash against uppity females, these works make terrifying reading.\textsuperscript{83}

It is part of the thesis of this chapter that in \textit{Ladies Almanack} Barnes re-writes the misogyny

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p.62.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, p.381.
\textsuperscript{81} Hobby, 1988, p.87.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
of these early works, just as she does in *Ryder*. In her ballad, a key part of the text, Barnes defines female sexuality by means of a list of recognizable conventions and archetypes:

The Vixen in the coat of red,

The Hussy with the honey head,

Her frontal Bone soft lapped up,

With hempen ringlets like the Tup,

The Doxy in the Vest of kid,

Rustling like the Katie-did,

With Panther's eyen dark and wan,

And Dove's feet to walk upon.

This ballad, entitled 'Lists and Likelihoods', lists a selection of female stereotypes but also hints at the lesbian possibilities behind these stereotypical images. These images, 'the Vixen', 'the Hussy' and 'the Doxy', were traditionally linked to prostitution, as works by Saldago and others testify. Thus, these women, however, are described by Barnes in a positive light: the Doxy walks on 'Dove's feet'. These women transcend the stereotypical language apportioned to them. In the verse which follows, Barnes lists archetypes of lesbianism, e.g., the feminine lesbian, the mythic 'mannish' lesbian, described by Esther Newton and the Lesbian History Group, amongst others. Barnes describes this figure as 'the starry Jade with mannish stride'. The masculine sportswoman is also outlined:

The jockey with the pelvis plump,

The high-tipped Wrestler with the Rump

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85 Barnes, 1928, p.60.
87 Barnes, 1928, p.60.
89 Barnes, 1928, p.60.
of yearling Mare, firm sleek and creased,
the tamer smelling like her beast.\textsuperscript{90}

Here, Barnes employs a myriad of images traditionally associated with lesbianism, such as that of the 'masculine' woman, but undercuts them by revealing the humour behind them, humour which previous heterosexual writers have failed to recognise.\textsuperscript{91} In nineteenth-century symbolist works such as those by Pierre Louys, lesbianism was presented as a diseased state, evil, exotic and associated with decay.\textsuperscript{92} Lesbian figures, such as Gautier's Mademoiselle de Maupin are, as Lillian Faderman describes, figures from male fantasy.\textsuperscript{93} In parodying these figures, Barnes shows that works on lesbian sexuality can be both humorous and celebratory. It is perhaps no coincidence that Dame Musset's name echoes that of the symbolist poet Alfred de Musset.

The women described in this ballad vary from trapeze artist to a Queen, who seeks out her own 'wench of bliss'.\textsuperscript{94} This makes the point that there is no such thing as a 'typical' lesbian, lesbians come from all walks of life and all class groups. Barnes links these women to the cycle of the year, making them permanent figures in the landscape:

The whole year long will be like this.
For all the Planets, Stars and Zones
Run girlish to their Marrow-Bones,
And all the Tides Prognosticate
Not much of any other State.\textsuperscript{95}

The verse, with its innate references to the title page of the text, lifts the lesbian firmly out of the margins and places her within a context which is free.

For a woman, whichever social realm she might inhabit, to seek out her 'wench of bliss', is

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, p.60.
\textsuperscript{91} Writers from Field to George Wickes have appeared to take the work at face value.
\textsuperscript{92} See Faderman, 1981, pp.274-5.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, pp.264-6.
\textsuperscript{94} Barnes, 1928, p.60.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
regarded within the text as a wholly natural act. Stereotypical Doxies, Hussies and Viragos, who previously inhabited misogynistic ballads and chap-books have become Amazonian, liberated figures. Thus these figures have 'crossed a border' between a form which used them for misogynistic purposes and a female form which is celebratory. Much like the text itself, and despite their archetypal outward appearances, these figures refused to be placed in any such limiting categories.

Dame Musset, herself a figure of Amazonian proportions, can be linked to Natalie Clifford Barney, her actual counterpart. Yet the figure of the Amazon is also a well-known archetype, which can be found in many sixteenth and seventeenth-century works by women. Elaine Hobby discusses the Amazon as a figure appearing in the works of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, noting of Cavendish's dramatis personae that

The common feature of all these characters is their diffidence and chastity.

Another possible role for the reader to play while reciting the dramas is that of the warrior and the vivid fantasies of the Lady Contemplation in the play of that name, for instance, include not only lovers who die from their desperate passion for her, but also portray her dressed as a general, leading troops into battle, killing the enemy's leader with her own hands.96

Cavendish's creation of characters such as 'the Lady Contemplation' prefigures Barnes's creation of Dame Evangeline Musset. Dame Musset, much like Cavendish's heroine, is an Amazon and as such an inspiration to the women whom she encounters. The 'self' which she represents (depicted both in text and illustration) is described in epic terms, from her birth to her death. The Ladies Almanack's readers, like the readers of The Lady Contemplation, are encouraged to participate with the text, constructing their own version of the Amazon as they do so.97 This type of textual gender construction is also charted throughout the collection of essays compiled by Straub and Epstein.98 In this volume, Anne Rosalind Jones and Peter

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97 Ibid.
98 Jones, Ann Rosalind and Peter Stallybrass, 'Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the
Stallybrass discuss the construction of hermaphrodite figures in the sixteenth-century, using much the same technique as is used here to describe Amazonian figures.\textsuperscript{99}

Barnes’s Amazon, Dame Musset, is constructed and re-constructed throughout her text. She appears few times in illustrations to the text and yet her presence invades both the frame of the picture and the written text. She is a matriarchal figure just as Sophia Grieve Ryder is but, unlike Sophia, she does not seek to aid men.\textsuperscript{100} Barnes’s creation of Dame Musset refutes Lilian Faderman’s assertion that no work in the 1920s reflected a positive view of the lesbian ‘self’.\textsuperscript{101}

\textit{Women, Difference, Text: The Ladies Almanack Re-appraised.}\textsuperscript{102}

As has already been discussed, the text begins with a myth of origins. Dame Musset is born on ‘the first month of the Christian calendar’;\textsuperscript{103} She is born, because nature demands the birth of a woman ‘with a difference’.\textsuperscript{104} The month is described using female terms:

\begin{quote}
Now, in this Month, as it is with Mother Earth, so it will appear as it is with all things of Nature, and most especially Women.\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

From birth to death, Dame Musset comes to be inextricably linked with female sexuality. Patience Scalpel, who seems to have been born almost simultaneously with Dame Musset, appears to immediately age and adopt her role as onlooker. Scalpel does not understand the sexual proclivities of Dame Musset and her circle:

\begin{quote}
She saw them gambling on the Greensward, she heard them pitch and moan with the Gloom of many a stately mansion; she beheld them floating across the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{100} Barnes, 1928.
\textsuperscript{101} Faderman, 1981, p.410.
\textsuperscript{102} Again, this section relies upon an Anglo-American historical feminist theoretical basis in which to ground its argument.
\textsuperscript{103} Barnes, 1928, p.10.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, p.26.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, p.11.
Ceilings, (for such was art in the Old Days) diapered in Toile de Jouy, and welded without Flame, in one incalculable embrace. In equating lesbian activities with cherubim, seraphic children whom the women resemble, Barnes seems to indicate that these women are lesbian from childhood. This is also a reference to 'high' art as they form a painted ceiling. In making a reference to the cherubs which fill Renaissance and Baroque art, Barnes again combines religious and secular imagery. It could be argued that this is nothing new, as depictions of women in art, as connected with concepts of love (such as Titian's Venus at her Toilette), often employed cherubim and seraphim. The fact that cherubs were used by Barnes in the text as manifestations of the lesbian 'other' encourages the reader to revised acquired notions, as cherubs are often defined as either masculine or asexual, and thus a 'heterosexual' reading of an angelic figure becomes impossible. The women in the text seem to possess the ability to form themselves into a type of 'heavenly chorus', making a kind of celestial tableaux. Quite often at the conclusion of certain passages, and in the illustrations which accompany them, the women are frozen in tableaux. Again, this can be likened to both visual representations of the baroque attitudes and to Barney's tableaux, thus rendering the text plural once more.

Dame Musset is presented as a single figure surrounded by seraphim and cherubim of her own kind, forming a parody of religious hierarchy. The heavenly host, in this context, are essentially lesbian. As a singular, saintly figure, Dame Musset becomes recognizable as the very spirit of Barnes's almanac. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century drawings, often based on calendar figures, single women were often held to stand for the seasons; as drawing by Wenceslaus Holler and others indicate. Dame Musset (often crowned) seems to be derived of these images and saint motifs. In the text, she touches the lives of other women but remains, in a sense, singular. If Dame Musset is canonised at the conclusion of the written

106 Ibid, p.11.
107 Many painters such as Bronzino, Tintoretto and Botticelli employ these devices. For a discussion of many of these works see Pescio, Claudio, The Uffizi (Florence: Bonechi), pp.42-50.
108 Holler's being among some of the finest and least crude depictions.
text, she is saint from birth in the illustrations to it. 'Thus began her career,' the 'January' section concludes. 'February's' text begins with an image of the single figure of love flying with stars in her hair. The moon is at her feet and she wears a simple, eighteenth-century style gown, with keys at the waist. Two angels, kneeling in prayer below her, are smiling. Beside the text and the illustration lies a list of months, each telling the acts which lead to Musset's sainthood. One of these acts is to 'come to no good'. Dame Musset, therefore, is sanctified for her vitality and her enjoyment of her own sexuality, which continues unabated until her death at the age of ninety.

The narrator of 'February' appears to be a creative woman, but the reader is left unsure whether or not it is Dame Musset, or the authorial voice. The month ends with the statement:

and fancy is

my only craft.

This appears to be a comment on the position of the author, as well as on female creativity in general. 'March's' section begins with a satire on two British lesbians, Lady-Buck-and-Balk and Tilly-Tweed-in-Blood. Perhaps the most recognizable caricatures of all, these are fictional portraits of Radclyffe Hall and Una, Lady Troubridge, who were both known for trying to contact Hall's former lover, 'Ladye' Batten, via seances:

Lady-Buck-and-Balk sported a monocle and believed in spirits. Tilly-Tweed-in-Blood sported a stetson and believed in marriage.

The two women debate morality, talking of legalizing lesbian passions so that they can marry.

The moral tone invoked by the pair is reminiscent of the final words of Stephen Gordon in

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110 This figure crosses a border between the domestic, earth-bound sphere (she resembles a housekeeper with her chatelaine) and an angel (with plaits of hair resembling wings). Barnes, 1928, p.14.
112 Ibid, p.17.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid, p.18.
The Well of Loneliness, which was published in the same year as Ladies Almanack. At the conclusion of Hall's novel, Stephen calls for tolerance, understanding and a kind of divine sanction:

'God,' she gasped, 'we believe; we have told You we believe... We have not denied You, then rise up and defend us. Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world! Give us also the right to our existence!'

It is not merely the tone of this piece which is repeated, but also its content, thus Hall's earnestness is lampooned. In Barnes's text the two women beg for tolerance:

Just because woman falls, in this Age, to Woman, does that mean that we are not to recognise morals? What has England done to legalize these passions? Nothing. Should she not be brought to task, that never once through her gloomy weather have two dear Doves been seen approaching their bridal Laces, to pace, in stately Splendor up the Altar Aisle, therefore to be United in Similarity, under mutual Vows of Loving, Honouring, and Obeying, while the One and the Other fumble in nice temerity, for the equal gold Bands that shall make of one a Wife, and the other a Bride?

The two women speak of equality within a marriage which echoes the heterosexual marriage service. This equality is mirrored in the capitalisation of words such as 'One,' 'Other,' 'Bride,' and 'Wife'. This plea is then followed by an argument in favour of pacifism, typical both of Hall and many creative women in Britain during the period. Hall, who, as Michael Baker, Una Troubridge, Katerina Rolley and Richard Ormrod all point out, gave up blood sports and was to write an anti-cruelty novel, Adam's Breed, loathed cruelty of any kind. This point of

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117 Ibid, p.447.
118 Barnes, 1928, p.19.
119 Ibid.
view had been complicated by her patriotism during the first world war, as expressed through Stephen Gordon's feeling that being an ambulance driver is secondary to being a man and going to the front. These attitudes have been discussed by both Clare M. Tylee and Julie Wheelwright.

Barnes satirized Hall's serious mien by means of Dame Musset's comic response to the two women. Musset speaks in favour of duels, seeing these as essentially sexual, and one is led to feel that she is not making serious suggestions because she finds the women too earnest:

A strong Gauntlet struck lightly athwart the Buttock would bring her to the common Green, where the Rapier, or Fowling-Piece, she might demand and Take her Satisfaction, thus ending it one way or another.

As if to illustrate this further, 'March' is headed by a visual depiction of this. The English pair are horrified by Musset's levity, saying that women, unlike men, could not kill:

'I could not do it with disconcerting Ease,' said Dame Musset, 'but then there is in me no Wren's Blood or Trepidation. Why should a Woman be un-spit? Love of Woman for Woman should increase Terror.'

This clash of discourses, so typical of the text, is interrupted by Masie-Tuck-and-Frill (not listed by Amos) and the month ends with the tale of 'the first woman born with a difference.' The tale is 'the part of heaven that has never been told' and is another re-vision of a biblical myth. The myth of origins here becomes a matriarchal one:

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121 Radclyffe Hall. (London: Heinemann, 1984); Rolley, Katrina, 'Cutting a Dash: The Clothing of Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge', in Feminist Review 35 (Summer 1990), pp.54-65; Hall, Radclyffe, Adam's Breed (London: Cape, 1928).
122 Hall, 1928, p.280.
124 Barnes, 1928, p.20.
125 Ibid.
There was heard from under the dome of heaven a great crowing, and, from the midst, an egg fell to earth and striking, split and hatched and from out of it stepped one saying 'Pardon me, I must be going!' And this was the first Woman born with a difference. After this the angels parted, and on the face of each was the Mother look. Why was that? 

If one takes the angels as being female and thus arrives at the conclusion that they produced the egg, then the myth of origins becomes feminised. The birth of the 'woman born with a difference' occurs because the angels demanded it, just as Dame Musset's coming was required by nature.

'April' and 'May' are both portrayed as restless months, which begin in melancholy and end in uncertainty. Dame Musset cites the melancholia of April as being to do with the 'chill' climate, but it can also be seen as being cyclical. The melancholia of 'April' follows the exuberance of 'March,' and the uncertainty of 'May' comes before the 'portents signs and omens' of 'June'. The melancholy of 'April' mirrors passages from Burton's *Melancholia*, which Field lists as a favourite text of Barnes's. In 'June', lesbian love is expressed in ballad form:

For woman shall to woman stoop,
when she has birched them well about the coop,
And nowhere else as they have done ere this;
No man shall lip them and no boy shall kiss.
No lad shall hoist them gaily heels o'er head,
Nor lay them twixt his breast bone and his bed.

This passage, which mirrors the 'Rape and Repining' section in *Ryder*, is an important one as

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127 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
132 Barnes, 1928, p.40.
it reveals women taking women from the influence of the patriarchal world. Like Mary Lynne Broe's exploration of Zadel Barnes's alternative 'nanocracy' which was pitted against the world of the destructive father, this world offers a lesbian alternative to the male world of rape and repining. In this context, men are revealed as making women passive objects to be kissed, hoisted and lain with without will. Under these terms of reference, Dame Musset's comment that love between women frightens the patriarchy is exemplified, for if women cleave to women they attain new power. 'June' ends on a positive note:

Of such is high and gaming pride,
of Woman by a Woman's girlish side.

This note is carried through 'July', where women are shown to be ideal partners for each other. However, this affirmation cannot last as the cycle continues. 'August' brings 'distempers' and is a month which begins and ends in confusion. This confusion affects both high and low alike and is composed in true almanac form:

Some dropping Tea-pots and Linens, Some Caddies and Cambric, some Seaweed and Saffron, some with Trophy Skulls and Memory Bones, gleanings from Love's Labour Lost.

As has been indicated earlier, the portions of the text are cyclical, thus they reflect the changing of the natural seasons and tides, as well as women's tides and seasons. The discord of 'August' is followed by the displacement of 'September'. The drawing which heads this section is one of Barnes's most remarkable. The landscape which it shows is a hilly one, dotted with poplar trees. The sky above it is cloudy, lit by a single shaft of sunlight. A black sun bears the legend 'She is a fish of earth', and a huge woman, shaped like a fish, bursts forth

133 Ibid, p.40.
136 Ibid, pp.47-54.
137 Ibid, p.54.
from the landscape. What both the text and the illustration reflect, is the way in which the female form disrupts the landscape. In the illustration, rocks shatter around the giant form who resembles the mythological siren and scoops out the earth with her huge arms. The accompanying text contains a statement which could be used as a coda for the work as a whole and, although it was referred to in the introduction to the thesis, it is worth quoting again in this context:

The very Condition of Woman is so subject to Hazard, so complex, and so grievous, that to place her at one moment is but to displace her at the next.

This statement, dealing as it does with the shifting boundaries of 'femininity', is illuminated by the ballad 'Lists and Likelihoods' (discussed earlier) which ends the section. A discussion of the text has to follow its chronology, as the months disrupt and displace each other. Thus throughout this section of the text and that which follows it, the reader becomes aware that time is passing for Dame Musset, who is no longer young. In one sense, the work is abstract, for, as Barnes outlines Dame Musset's life at the beginning of the text, it does not need to be a straightforward life story. By the time the reader comes to 'October' she/he is made aware that Dame Musset is old. The motif shows an old woman falling from the sky, losing a halo as she does so. This can be seen as a visual representation of Dame Musset's dwindling time on earth. Dame Musset's fall is contrasted with a biblical fall of female power. At the outset of creation, the calendar tells us, woman was not subservient to man. Woman, in the past was attuned to nature, as is apparent in the following description:

There was a time when still rhymed to the rib that had made her, Woman was attune to every Adder, every Lion, every Tiger, every Wood thing.

Woman here conforms to the biblical myth as she comes from a rib. The difference is that in this case woman is attuned to her own fate, but she refuses her power by aligning herself with

139 Ibid.
140 Ibid, p.61.
141 Ibid.
142 Wood might be a pun on Thelma Wood. Ibid, p.61.
Christianity, which will blame her for the fall and cast her in the role of victim. Dame Musset debates this with Daisy Downpour (also unidentified), and concludes that it was Sappho who first tried to turn the fate of woman around:

Sappho, blinked from the Stews of Secret Greek Broth, and some Rennet of Lesbos to force a get-up in the near Resurrection, and put on a Horseshoe to ride Luck's Mare at a Gallop a trot, and when the Mass bubbles and at the River's lip quivers, call it dear Cyprian, and take her under your Wing on the warm side, and but her no buts.

Or would you less trouble?

Away Girl! 143

This positive revisionist view of history is supplanted in 'November' by omens of Dame Musset's passing. 'November's' drawing shows an androgynous figure, dressed as a Cossack, who is called 'wisdom', standing proudly over a woman's body which is labelled 'woman conquered'. 144 Three other women (a parody of the Three Graces perhaps) stand nearby, suffering 'pangs' of love. 145 Near to them is the 'rock' of danger. In the text, we learn that this supine woman is the 'skin of herself'. 146 The whole section of the text is reminiscent of colonial texts, in which men are depicted standing over the bodies of animals in lands which they have 'conquered'. After this section of the text, the death of Dame Musset is anticipated by the reader. Dame Musset dies because the time is right for her to die, just as the time was right for her to be born. Thus the cycle is completed at the text's conclusion. 147

Upon her death-bed, Dame Musset lists types of burials. She dies peacefully after this, and is buried by a troop of mourning women, who are depicted visually at the beginning of the

143 Ibid, p.72. Cyprian may be an in-joke, as it was the name of Sylvia Beach's actress sister, Cyprian Beach.
144 Ibid, p.73.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid, p.81.
passage. She is cremated:

and they put her on a great pyre and burned her to the Heart, warming her Urn for her with their Hands, as a good Wine-bibber warms his cup of wine. And when they came to the ash that was left of her all had burned but the Tongue, and this flamed and would not suffer Ash.

This image of the tongue which will not turn to ash has a parodie essence, as it seems to reflect the legend of Shelley’s death, where the heart of the poet was not consumed by the flames of his funeral pyre. A stronger association can be drawn if one regards the tongue as reflecting the strength of the woman writer who refuses to be silenced, despite the attempts of the establishment to bury her works. It might also be an inversion of the traditional image of the scold’s tongue, one which cannot be stilled, even by death. Death, it is hinted, can do little to quell Dame Musset’s words. As Barney was herself likened to a flame, by Liane De Pougy and others, so the image may also have come from a private joke.

At the conclusion of the text, Dame Musset is interred to the sound of the howling and barking of her female mourners. The next day, a hundred women bend in prayer at her place of rest. The urn is kept within 'The Temple of Love', which could be seen as a satiric reference to the Temple in Barney’s garden. The inscription on the urn bears the legend ‘Oh ye of little Faith’, and a verse on the drawing of Dame Musset’s tomb at the conclusion of the text hints that, like Christ, she will be resurrected. Thus the final image provided by the text is one of hope. This hope, it seems to me, is present throughout the cycle, even though at times it seems to have been dashed. Ladies Almanack could therefore be seen as an important

148 Ibid.
149 Ibid, p.84.
151 Barnes, 1928, p.84.
153 Barnes, 1928, p.84.
text, both in terms of Barnes's career and in terms of lesbian writing, as it provides a positive view of female sexuality and of women loving women long before the advent of novels such as Rita Mae Brown's *Ruby Fruit Jungle*. It also dispels the myth that Barnes presents the reader with an essentially pessimistic world picture, or that the text itself is a mere diversion, with little to recommend it to any readers but the actual counterparts of Dame Evangeline Musset and her circle.

A Critique of Family Life

Using feminist historical method outlined in previous chapters this thesis now turns to Ryder (1928), a text which has been neglected by critics and readers alike. The last edition of the novel was published in the 1970s and since then it has been out of print. The text is a saga of family life and, as such, provides the reader with a damning critique of patriarchal society. As with Ladies Almanack, the text creates a series of 'border crossings', via the use of pastiche created from ballads, the Picaresque novel, plays, conduct books, family sagas, and chap-books. Critics have defined Ryder as a comic novel, applying terms such as 'Rabelasian' to the exploits of the chief protagonists. What I wish to achieve here is a reading of the text as one which creates a family saga in order to present family life as being vicious and exploitative.

During the course of the novel Barnes outlines connections which link women, and using these links enables her to allow a discourse of family life to take place. As with Ladies Almanack, this text defies the category in which it has been placed, as it 'crosses a line' between the comic novel and the chap-book forms. The work has been defined as embryonic, and also as a text where Barnes tried out ideas which would be later to developed in her 'masterpiece' Nightwood. For example, the character of Doctor Matthew O'Connor was introduced in Ryder and his monologues on gender become an important in Nightwood. O'Connor's role appears marginal to the text of Ryder, but his voice is recognisable as that which Barnes was to develop in Nightwood. Therefore in order to study his character in Nightwood, one must study his appearance in Ryder. Thus the latter part of this chapter deals briefly with Barnes's presentation of gender construction, which was created by her characterization of O'Connor.

Andrew Field regarded the novel's importance as being connected to Barnes's specific reference to her father, whereas feminist critics, such as Mary Lynne Broe, perceive it as
formulating a critique of the patriarchal family. The novel's main protagonist, Wendell Ryder, is the patriarchal head of a large family. It is with his life (and how he treats his mother and his wives and children) that the reader is concerned. One could perceive Wendell as the 'Ryder' of the title and, along with Field, come to believe that he is purely a fictional representation of Wald Barnes (real name Budington). Field simplifies the novel when he states:

Miss Barnes hated her father. All the rest followed from that. Dr. O'Connor of Nightwood makes his first appearance in Ryder, and he, too, is offered as an alternative to Wendell Ryder. O'Connor is saved, even though he is a man, because he has the qualities of a woman.

This generalizes both Barnes's attitude to her father and the exploration of gender constructions which occur within the novel. 'Miss Barnes hated her father. All the rest followed from that' seems to encourage an interpretation of the text which is psychologically simplistic, and thus conceals a complex fictional response to a multi-faceted emotional state. Ryder may contain a fictionalized version of Wald Barnes, but it does many other things besides satirize Barnes's father. For example, the novel analyses a complex series of relationships between women, relationships which Field's critique ignores. It also makes assumptions about Barnes's representation of gender constructions, transmuting O'Connor into a 'female-man' similar to those depicted in theories of inversion such as those by Havelock Ellis. As with certain critical responses to Sylvia Plath's poetry, critics such as Field, appear to believe that the facts of Barnes's life make their way, unaltered in all but name, into her fiction. Ryder is a critique of 'the family' and the patriarchal lines along which

2 Field, 1985, p.31.
4 One text on Plath which differs from this autobiographical framework being Rose, Jacqueline, The Haunting of Sylvia Plath (London: Virago, 1991), as Rose explores
society is governed, but it remains a carefully braided tapestry. It transgresses textual borders, drawing upon the chap-book tradition, seventeenth-century texts by women, gothic novels and almanacs of midwifery, as well as on the author's life. The text allows a complex reading, thus a discussion of the following topics could suggest how one goes about creating such a response. Firstly, as it deals with family life, the novel could be regarded as an attack on patriarchal society. Secondly, the novel represents part of a process of 'recognition' as it enables a discourse which 'speaks' about incest. Thirdly, it is a novel which deals with a 'sisterhood', and depicts a host of such relationships, including those between mothers and daughters, sisters, aunts, and wives and mistresses. Lastly, the novel's texture is such that, as I have suggested when listing the sources for it, it can be seen as an anti-canonical text which creates another 'border crossing' between 'high' and 'popular' art forms. As this chapter aims to demonstrate, all of these themes are entwined.

Myths which surround Barnes's childhood are partly responsible for simplistic readings of the text. If Wendell Ryder is based on Wald Barnes, then the text can be regarded as a type of literary 'revenge', as Barnes created many reasons to intensify his daughter's hatred. Barnes was a consummate liar, whose lies have obscured much of his daughter's early history. Andrew Field has noted how in old age, Wald Barnes found it impossible to distinguish between 'facts' from his life and past fictions which he had created. In order to understand the effect which his mendacity was to have upon Djuna Barnes's life, it is necessary to study both 'fact' and 'fiction'.

To attempt to analyse Wald Barnes, it seems necessary to firstly study the life of Zadel Barnes, his mother, which is briefly outlined in Appendix A. She was born on March 9, 1841 and her father, Duane Barnes, appears to have been a bigamist. She was one of fourteen

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5 Plath’s poetry whilst distancing its imagery from her biography.
6 Also see the chapter on Ladies Almanack.
7 Ibid, p.131.
children and, as the family was so large, confusion concerning family history appears to be inevitable. Feminist scholarship has outlined patterns of discourse within the family, where it has been argued, the father's discourse of desire attempted to silence the daughter's knowledge of abuse.9 Zadel Barnes's two marriages (see Appendix A) compare with Sophia's two marriages in *Ryder* and her relationship with her son, Wald, is reflected in the textual relationship between Wendell and Sophia. Critics, such as Marie Ponsot, have spoken of these connections between text and life, thus these links need only be charted briefly here.10 During the 1880s, rather like Sophia, Zadel hosted a literary salon in London. Thus, Axel may have remained in London after he and Zadel separated. In the early 1880s, Wald Barnes married Elizabeth Chappel, of Oakham, Rutland, whom he had met in London where she was studying music. On both sides, as is reflected in *Ryder*, Barnes's family possessed a strong matriarchal line. Yet, Elizabeth Chappel, a shadowy mother figure, is the absent centre of Barnes's text.11 Thus, Wald Barnes could be regarded as the influence behind Wendell Ryder, Zadel Gustafson as the inspiration for Sophia Grieve-Ryder and Axel Gustafson as the model for Alex Axelson.

If the mother forms the absent centre of this text, then the father is foregrounded. Wendell Ryder embodies the abuse of power which patriarchy allows. He installs a mistress, Kate Careless, in the family home and, like his wife, Amelia, she is constantly with child. Field believes that Wald Barnes's mistress the opera singer, Marguerite d'Alvarez, was the original model for Kate Careless.12 Yet, as Barnes had interviewed many female entertainers during the period when she was a journalist, these must also count towards her inspiration.13 As with Wald Barnes, Wendell Ryder fathers countless illegitimate children. Wald Barnes calculated

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10 Ponsot, Marie, 'A Reader's Ryder' in ibid, pp.94-112.
that, in New York State alone, he had fathered up to fifty illegitimate children, few of whom
bore his name.\textsuperscript{14} Both Field and Broe describe Wald Barnes as an unpleasant, perverse man.\textsuperscript{15}
This description is similar to Barnes's depiction of the sexual adventures, or misadventures, of
Wendell Ryder:

\begin{quote}
Wald Barnes, who carried a damp sponge on his saddle to wipe himself after
intercourse whenever the chance presented itself, as it evidently did at several
stops in the region.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Yet it would be a mistake to perceive Ryder as nothing more than a fictional
representation of Barnes's childhood. Barnes criticizes patriarchy and its effects (particularly
on children) and thus transforms Wendell Ryder into an emblematic patriarch whose chaotic
world is only upheld due to the complicity of Sophia, his mother. Ryder fictionalizes a battle
between the patriarchy and a matriarchal figure who upholds the patriarchal system. If Sophia
were to desert Wendell and aid his wife and mistress, he would not remain a patriarch. Thus
Barnes's text reveals the shaky foundations upon which such social law is built. The collusion
of women is represented here as vital to maintaining the patriarchy. Rather like the life of
Antonia White, Barnes's childhood was fractured by the sexual mores of her father. Barnes
was later to meet White at Hayford Hall, Peggy Guggenheim's summer home in England,
where much of \textit{Nighthood} was composed. In her direct and poignant essay, 'My Art Belongs
to Daddy: Incest as Exile, the Textual Economics of Hayford Hall', Mary Lynne Broe states
that Hayford Hall was important to Barnes because there she met other survivors of abuse
including White and Emily Holmes-Coleman.\textsuperscript{17} Ryder can be regarded as an early text which

\textsuperscript{14} Field, 1985, p.26.
\textsuperscript{16} Field, 1985, p.181.
\textsuperscript{17} For other accounts of this see Hopkinson, Lyndall, \textit{Nothing to Forgive: A Daughter's Life
Guggenheim's own account of the period can be found in Guggenheim, Peggy, \textit{Out of
deals with both the physical and mental effects of abuse. For example as the following section demonstrates, the novel does not encode the concept of abuse, but makes it specific by beginning the novel using the description of a family tree where the abuse of daughters, wives and mistresses has made the very wood of that tree appear rotten.

Bames's frontispiece depicts this tree with all its many 'branches'. This illustration, 'The Tree of Ryder', forms an integral part of the text. Ryder's illustrations are most often discussed in terms of their likeness to works by nineteenth-century artists. Yet, as John Lucas indicates, illustrations often form an organic part of the text: For example, the Phiz illustrations which illuminate texts by Dickens are integral to any readings of his works. Barnes's illustrations for Ryder are part of the text's integrity, and are not merely decorative. The 'tree' can be referred to throughout a reading of the text. Indeed, the tree repeats the pattern of the whole, as the novel is structured around the 'family tree' of Ryder. The tree encodes the difference between the relationships developed by Wendell with the women in his family and the relationships which exists between the women themselves.

Although also a literal 'family tree', the tree of Ryder represents an actual oak, which spreads itself across the frontispiece. Under the tree stands Dr. Matthew O'Connor, in the guise of a Regency Buck. Perhaps this hints at the fact that he is 'dandified' or acknowledges his obsession with concepts of cross-dressing and clothing. He is surrounded by sheep, and

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18 If one recalls that, in the late 1900s, Barnes's father had 'engaged' her to Percy Faulkner, a man who was fifty-two years of age in 1909 (Wald Barnes having probably abused her prior to this himself) one might begin to recognize what this 'cycle' of abuse would have represented to Barnes. See Field, 1985, p.43.

19 Field, 1985, pp.14, 70, 111.

20 Lucas, John, The Melancholy Man (London: Harvester, 1970), pp.355-65. Ryder was first published by Liveright in 1928, the edition used here being Barnes, Djuna, Ryder (London: St Martin's Press, 1971). In the introduction to this (pages un-numbered), the publishers cite Ducharté and Saulnière's L'Imagery Populaire as the source for its illustrations. Yet the text also appears to derive much from chap-books, as did the Poetry Bookshop's chap-book series, see Grant, Joy, Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), pp.117-8. Illustrations which were thought disturbing were censored both from the original and the reprint, see Field, 1985, pp.128-9.

21 Barnes, 1928, frontispiece.
this might be interpreted as an ironic reference to the figure of Christ 'the good shepherd'.

The significance of this is heightened when one recalls that, throughout the novel, female characters remark on his goodness and his saintly qualities. Like Dame Musset, if the Doctor is 'sainted' then his 'flock' could be regarded as the women whom he tends. Beasts dance around him and, again, this might be regarded as proof of a saintly nature, as he is said to love all animals. Animals which cavort under the oak include horses (including Hisodalsgus, the horse in Wendell's story), oxen and geese. Dolls lie nearby them, as if they have been abandoned by children. Also discarded under the tree is Molly Dance, a woman who has many illegitimate children by Wendell. Repeating a pattern made by the animals, her children also prance below. Perhaps, as their name suggests, these 'dance attendance' on the legitimate family of Wendell Ryder. Likewise, Kate Careless and her children, Ellie and Elisha, also stand gazing into the branches of the oak, in the upper branches of which sit Wendell and Amelia with their children, Julie and Timothy. Lower branches are inhabited by Sophia Grieve-Ryder and ancestors (who, from their dress, appear to date back to the seventeenth-century). Alex Axelsson sits by her and the tree is topped by an angel similar to those depicted in *Ladies Almanack*. The tree can be regarded as both a 'family' tree, and a diagram of the text's structure. It foregrounds the legitimate family, but includes the illegitimate family within its design. Thus Wendell's 'misdemeanours' form a part of the family's history, and are as divinely sanctioned as his legitimate family. Here Barnes produced a 'border crossing' between the legitimate and the illegitimate, just as the text creates crossings between popular forms (such as the chap-book) and elitist forms (for, as the novel is concerned with Julie's development it might be seen as a *Bildungsroman*).}

It is significant that Wendell’s 'legal' wife sits in the tree with him and their children, whilst his mistress, Kate, whose position would go unrecognized by both church and state,
stands below the tree. Molly Dance (by whom he has had children but who, unlike Kate, is denied a place in the patriarchal home) stands further away from the tree than Kate, thus the pattern indicates that Dance is a marginal woman. Dance’s children have no economic claims on Wendell, therefore they do not approach the ‘tree’ of the recognized family. Adopting the posture of a man in formal portrait, Wendell holds aloft Timothy, his male heir. Timothy represents the important child as far as the patriarchy is concerned, he is first in the hierarchy of gender. A daughter, Julie, (whom Field, typically, identifies as a self portrait of Barnes) sits by Wendell but her stance reveals that she is denied the importance accredited to a son thus, like Dickens’s Florence Dombey, she remains dispossessed. This pattern is repeated by all Ryder’s ancestors. Therefore the tree reveals that Wendell accepts his role as patriarch without thought, and that it is a mantle passed from father to son. It is ironic that the role of ‘master’ does not bring Wendell happiness, for his existence remains typified by exclusion. The pattern of the tree, with its innate references to whom patriarchal law legitimizes and whom it dispossesses, reveals the hypocritical nature of social structures. As an Angel tops it, the reader is led to an inevitable conclusion that the tree is sanctioned by both church and state. Also, it has been maintained for centuries, as Wendell follows the pattern of his ancestors.

Resembling many male protagonists of twentieth-century fiction, Wendell is obliquely unhappy. He is legitimized, even if he has overstepped the boundaries of patriarchal etiquette by making his ‘affairs’ visible. He perceives himself as one of life’s philosophers but, ultimately, he possesses no philosophy. Wendell is a frequent debtor, and always has some woman with child. Ryder depicts a man with no male friends, who cannot form friendships with women. Wendell is a patriarch but one who remains distanced from male relationships, and thus can not play his role to the hilt. Yet, curiously, Field regards Wendell Ryder as being self satisfied. Using this textual reading, Wendell is foregrounded, leaving Amelia, Kate and

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27  Other examples might include Hemingway’s Jake Barnes, Fitzgerald’s Nick Carraway and Monroe Starr, or the journalistic self created by Ring Lardner.
28  Field, 1985, p.28.
Molly to represent his victims, thus suggesting that they are peripheral to the text's action.²⁹

A feminist close reading of the text diverges from this viewpoint. Wendell may be to the fore throughout the text, but this technique only reveals his dissatisfaction with the construct of 'masculinity' which social pressure has forced him to embody. As a masculine stereotype (that of a 'real' man) he engenders children because that is the role which he has been educated to fulfil. He is disconsolate because this role leaves him yearning for an accord which is denied to him. He perceives women as becoming companions in adversity and excluding him from their lives. As I argue throughout this discussion, if any character in the text feels marginalized, it is Wendell Ryder, he who supposedly lies at the heart of the patriarchal world. In theory, the patriarchy possesses power but it is women such as Sophia Grieves-Ryder who uphold its system via collusion. Sophia is aware of her son's weakness and his inability to provide (in either an emotional or economic sense) for his family. She represents a Bohemian of the old school, but is not impractical. By ensuring a strong matriarchal presence she upholds a power nexus of mother, son and state. Thus the following section examines her role in the text, and studies the female community which she helps to drive underground.

The Role of the Matriarch: Women in the House of Ryder

Ryder might be discussed as a critique of patriarchal economics. In the marriage market, women equal possessions. Before her marriage, Amelia remains inseparable from her sister, Anne. Anne recognizes that marriage will separate them both geographically and physically:

'What all women do once in their lives', said her sister, turning her head away,

'That which can in no way be altered.'³⁰

Amelia's physical removal from Anne's world means that the sisters can only communicate by letter. With little knowledge of New York State, Anne is afraid that Amelia

²⁹ Barnes, 1928.
³⁰ Ibid, p.53.
will be 'eaten' in America. This fear is partly due to a prejudice against the 'New World's' barbarism but it also refers to Wendell's voracious sexuality. Both Amelia's body and her time are 'devoured' by Wendell and the Ryder menagerie, even though she is not consumed by the 'Indians', as Anne predicted. As with native Americans and the colonisers, Amelia's body is colonised by Wendell. Thus his culture becomes the dominant culture, whilst hers must 'go underground' only to be expressed in letters to Anne. Wendell, for all his voracity, can not enter this correspondence, nor can he penetrate the discourse which the women maintain.

Therefore, Anne's foreboding of forthcoming separation appears, with hindsight, justified:

'Never', said her sister in the dark, 'did I think when we were children together, that we would be women apart.' And she wept so bitterly now, that Amelia got up and went into bed with her, holding her in her arms, crying too, for she knew not what.

The sisters remain faithful to each other throughout the novel, and are connected by almost a psychic bond. Anne's discourse encodes the knowledge that Amelia might die in childbirth, thus their embrace temporarily excludes Wendell who embodies her possible death.

In America, Anne is increasingly replaced by Kate. This is brought about by Wendell's 'occupations' which exclude women from his world, but also bring them together. Kate and Amelia (mistress and wife) occupy roles which should, in patriarchal terms, lead them to hate each other. Yet, as both are united in the suffering of childbirth (bearing children at the same moment) they become close.

This event is illustrated by the ballad, 'the Midwives Lament', which reveals the fatal

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31 Ibid, p.58.
32 Ibid, p.66.
33 In this he resembles Albert, in Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* (London: Women's Press, 1982), who hides Celie's letters from her sister, Nettie, but fails to mentally separate the two women.
34 Barnes, 1928, p.66.
36 Ibid, p.94.
results of childbirth.\(^{37}\) The drawing which surrounds the ballad presents two weeping midwives in Regency dress holding aloft a pair of huge bloomers. On the bloomers is written the legend:

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And died so- in pitiable child-bed, ere the North
Gave up its snowy custom, and came down,
To waters in the heavy watered sea,
There turned to roaring in the sands of her
Who died as women die, unequally
Impaled upon a death that crawls within.
For men die otherwise, of man unsheathed
But women on a sword they scabbard too,
And so this girl, ultimately to the point,
Pricked herself upon her son, and passed
Like any Roman bleeding on a blade.\(^{38}\)
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The design parodies a heraldic emblem, thus the midwives take the place of lions, and the bloomers replace a shield. The suggestion contained in this passage is that women die as often and as brutally in childbirth as men do in warfare. The epic motif is also carried in the form and content of the inscription, which is beautifully lettered by Barnes. In this context, the birth waters can be regarded as resembling those which kill the first Mrs. Dombey in the novel by Dickens, as they bring life to a child but carry the woman out of it.\(^{39}\) Unlike Mrs. Dombey, the woman in Barnes's lament is nameless and thus emblematic. She is to be pitied because she dies 'unequally', due to a social system that recommends that women become vehicles for child production. She is killed giving life to a male heir and, in this, society appears to have given her no choice. She is 'impaled', but dies with as much dignity as a hero in a Roman

\(^{37}\) Ibid.
\(^{38}\) Ibid.
\(^{39}\) Dickens, 1848, p.9.
tragedy. This might be regarded as contradicting the western male aesthetic of the dead female body (where the body is usually young and beautiful), an aesthetic outlined by Elizabeth Bronfen. In Western art, 'the dead muse' was often represented by a woman whose body was 'perfect'. In using a pregnant female body, Barnes revised gender myths which suggest that a young woman's death is beautiful, or that the Roman's death is noble but also imply that the dead body can not be defined as either tragic or artistic. The Roman's death, in this context, is equal to the death of an unknown woman in labour it is not and never has been, Barnes implies, of greater consequence. This stance concerning female mortality was one which Barnes also shared with Mina Loy, whose poem 'Parturition' reads:

I am climbing a distorted mountain of agony,
   incidentally with the exhaustion of control,
   I reach the summit
   and gradually subside into anticipation of
   Repose
   which never comes.

Loy discussed the society's interpretation of female nurturing from the perspective of motherhood, whereas Barnes was pregnant only once and chose to terminate her pregnancy. In Ryder, Barnes describes how women are forced into child rearing, and she also outlines the result of such social policy as death. The concept is rendered subversive, as it is expressed using heraldic iconography which was previously used by writers wishing to glorify military deeds. Thus the text transgresses the border between the original use of such epic symbols (as heraldic devices were often used to emphasize the glorification of male deeds) and a recognition that such heraldic symbols might just as well be applied to domestic lives.

41 Ibid, pp.206-7.
In this world, women who outwardly dislike each other, such as Amelia and Kate, are closer in spirit than they are to their husbands. Wendell takes Amelia away from her sister and also divorces her from a prospective musical career. Likewise he has separated Kate from her musical career. In the text, Kate reminisces over the time when she played piano for her mother, a singer, but it is worth noting that Field misreads the illustration to this, as he says that the singer is Kate, who resembles Marguerite d'Alvarez. The singing woman in Barnes's drawing resembles Marguerite d'Alvarez, as he notes, but the text states quite clearly that it is Kate who plays for her mother, a street singer. In this illustration, Kate is young and slim, making the constant questioning of the text ('who was that girl?') more poignant, and this passage is used to question both her legitimacy and that of her children:

Does it seem to follow that Kate was a bastard? It would seem to follow, and yet who can tell how craftily a child makes legitimacy prey upon her condition.

She is 'careless' because she lets Wendell remove both the expectations and the birthright of her children. Thus she perceives Amelia as a fellow traveller, a girl who can not fully recognize the woman she has become. As Kate makes her children suffer due to their illegitimacy (just as she has agonized in the past), the 'tree of Ryder' reveals a pattern which constantly repeats itself. In order to accommodate Wendell, his mother, Sophia, accepts Kate, saying, 'and this is Kate, my new daughter.' Kate reflects that she could have become a great courtesan instead of ending up at the family cabin on Storm King, and ponders 'what Kate is not'. Her thoughts cross the border between what is and what might have been, dreams which, as with many preoccupations within the text, are denied 'all because of Wendell'.

Unlike Kate, Amelia wishes to save Julia, her daughter, from repeating the old pattern.

43 Barnes, 1928, pp.100-1.
48 Ibid. Wendell's name may refer to Oliver Wendell Holmes, author of The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (1858). Field refers to Holmes (Field, 1985, p.173) but does not link his name to Ryder's.
She warns her of the dangers and frustrations of bearing children:

Towards five in the afternoon Amelia wept that she was again to be a mother. Her feet in a pail of hot water, she said to her daughter, Julie, 'the birds are singing and caring nothing of the matter, and I shall die this time, and there's no doubt about it, my darling. Don't cry, for you were not a girl when I was a girl, and what can you know? Once I was safe enough and I could not let well alone but must get myself in the way of doom and damnation by being natural. So take warning by my size, and don't let men touch you, for their touching never ends, and screaming oneself into a mother is no pleasure at all.'

Amelia will not die, but in her delirium the patriarchy, as symbolized by Wendell, becomes monstrous. Both Mary Lynne Broe and Jane Marcus have highlighted presents male social affiliations as being destructive. Thus, Wendell becomes part of a patriarchal system which denies any sense of connection between father and daughter, or husband and wife. His life is patterned by exclusivity and violence, and thus it is this world of the father which Amelia warns Julie against.

Wendell is regarded as both a demonic figure, terrorizing Amelia to the edge of her existence, and as a child-like human being. In telling Julie not to accommodate men like her father, Amelia might be perceived as trying to break the pattern of the Ryder family tree. Ironically, she will perpetuate the tree by giving birth to a male heir, as this event fulfils Wendell's aspirations:

Amelia (taking Julie's hand), 'I'm sorry, Julie, I thought a girl. If threats could have sexed it as you wished, it would have been well terrified into a sister. Dear, I'm sorry then, it is as it is.'

Soon after this, as if to acknowledge how patriarchy expects them to be enemies, Kate and

49 Barnes, 1928, pp.115-6.  
51 Barnes, 1928, p.94.
Amelia fight, but later they acknowledge their emergent sisterhood in defiance of the house of Ryder:

Here it is only fair to say, Amelia broke into a British laugh. 'Hot bottom, my poor Trull,' she said. 'I'll have a word with him, he shall not abuse you.'

'You are most good,' said her companion, 'at the oddest times.'

'They are all we have,' Amelia answered.  

This bonding can be connected to shared perceptions of motherhood, and also from a mutual mistrust of Wendell's motives. Amelia shelters Kate from Wendell and she protects Julie from repeating the pattern of the family tree.

By deploying stories and songs, Amelia expresses fears for Julie. In Humm's terms, these songs enact 'border crossings', for example a lullaby to the new baby is a song of infanticide matching the 'midwives lament'. Thus this crosses a border between a song meant to comfort a child and a sensationalist ballad. Amelia also recounts the story of two sisters, who die bonded in simultaneous labour:

Felice said 'at twenty minutes past ten, on April 4, I shall be a mother.' They took two tiny drinks of whisky. Two little pinches of snuff.

They had four little circles under their four blue eyes.

And on April 4, at two minutes past ten, Felice died.

One minute later, Alix died. 'And that's the end of the two little sisters, thank God!' Said Amelia. 

Amelia suggests that although women may die due to patriarchal demands, they are united in spirit. She passes on tales which encode resistance to Julie who, in turn, creates stories of her own. Thus Julie is influenced both by fictions produced by her mother, and by popular tales which she has read. In this sense, she becomes a book, full of blank spaces which have

52 Ibid, p.203.
53 Ibid, p.132.
54 Ibid.
not been filled by childhood experience. In chapter twenty four, Julie is described as resembling many children:

Suffering the tortures of the damned kneeling at the parent knee, in all ages at all times, and all bindings, becoming what books have made of a child.\(^{55}\)

Thus she is transmuted into a book, being bound by stories which encode notions of gender. Yet within these confines she is allowed some freedom, as she is provided with a space in which to fictionalize her experiences. 'What books have made a child' becomes obvious, as Julie transforms her life into that of a fictional heroine, Arabella Lynne:

Is this not the young Arabella Lynne herself? With smoking taper held aloft, wending to the parent knee, where, kneeling, she will ask forgiveness for her multitudinous sins.\(^{56}\)

Arabella Lynne is a romantic fiction, who enacts Julie's supplication to 'the parent knee'. As Judith Rowbotham has pointed out, girls of Julie's age and class were often provided with texts where the heroine endlessly 'confessed' such 'sins', thus Lynne provides a model for Julie's own behaviour.\(^{57}\) Amelia begins to resemble Julie, as her daughter weaves a fiction around her own life. This growth of a sense of identity for Julie is enabled by a series of multi-faceted images which she applies to herself, and these are repeated by the diverse styles and genres reflected in the text. As with the tree of Ryder, the pattern is one of repetition and has existed throughout history.

If one woman both breaks and maintains the pattern of the tree in Ryder, it is Sophia Grieve-Ryder. As has been discussed, she is a powerful matriarch and has also been a 'Bohemian'. As with Zadel Barnes-Gustafson, she has one been hostess to a literary salon,

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ibid.
entertaining no less a luminary than Oscar Wilde. In a parody of the legality of the tree, Sophia has constructed a scandalous will, which Barnes describes at some length. This states that she and her husband, Alex Axelson, are to be buried with their possessions in the 'Dear Reason Cemetery' which much resembles Evelyn Waugh's later parody of the American mortuary business in *The Loved One.* This indicates Sophia's strength, as she will leave nothing, not even death, to chance. The will is both unconventional and didactic, and reveals the emphasis which she places on material goods. Unlike her, Wendell is unable to manage money. As with Matthew O'Connor in *Nightwood,* Sophia is not averse to borrowing money, gulling it from 'respectable' members of society. Barnes created a textual border crossing in this section, by breaking away from prose and composing in play form. In this context, Sophia's letters represent an outlet for her creativity, and are proof of both her talent and panache. Sophia, as with both Kate and Amelia, wastes these talents in her son's home, where her energies are used in bolstering Wendell's erratic personal economy. Sophia's talent for prose is signified by an ability to wring emotion from those who read her letters. Thus, like Julie, she mythologizes herself. Other women in the text also lose creative lives. For example, Amelia connects her role as mother to the pain of continuing the tree and the loss of personal autonomy. Also, via a relationship with Wendell she has lost the implied creative bond with her sister, Anne. Likewise, Kate has rejected a singing career. What Sophia has lost, it might be argued, is writing. If readers of the novel perceive all female characters as having to channel their innate creativity into maternity or the survival of the family, then the novel can be read as making a general point about gender, rather than being a fictionalized biography of Wald Barnes.

Sophia's begging letters create a type of 'personal theatre', which encodes (to use Garber's

58 Barnes, 1928, p.94.
59 The fact that the pair request to be buried with hands touching each other's genitals was censored in 1928. This was perhaps intended as a parody of sixteenth-century tomb carving, where couples are often separate, only occasionally touching hands. It is similar in intent to Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One.* See Waugh, Evelyn, *The Loved One* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1948).
terms) a 'feminine', maternal archetype:

Into these hundreds of begging letters went all of Sophia Grieve-Ryder, her
cunning, her humour, her deceit, her humbleness, and always, with unnerving
faithfulness to her original discovery of the way to the heart of a man, they were
signed 'Mother.'

Sophia's genius for begging is taken for granted by Wendell, yet this very gift keeps him
from ruin. She does not so much use her 'femininity', as use concepts of 'femininity' held dear
by the patriarchy and this is signified by her use of the word 'mother'.

As with female figures in The Book of Repulsive Women, Sophia, again to use an idea of
Garber's, 'impersonates' a feminine archetype, that of the silver haired and dependant 'mother'.
Wendell, when small, attempts to interrupt her letter writing but she ignores him, keeping the
family's finances afloat by creating a stereotype of 'motherhood':

Sometimes her son, out of ignorance, knowing not how his knock would impale
her on her own means to an end, would come to the door and she, starting,
would say 'busy' nor rise to open.

The use of the word 'impaled' should be noted here, as this is the same term used in 'The
Midwives Lament'. Wendell's knock 'impales' Sophia, just as the birth of the child 'impales'
the mother in the ballad. Sophia monitors the lives of Kate, Amelia and Julie. She is a symbol
of a collusion which controls them in order to maintain Wendell's dominance yet, ironically, it
is the connections between Amelia and Kate that she enforces which exclude her son. Mary
Lynne Broe speaks of Zadel Barnes's strength as relying upon collusion and also comments
on the fragility of her position, stating that in order to exclude Wald from her 'nanocracy' she

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60 This description is one of many of thwarted creative women created in the 1920s by
female authors, other examples being Radclyffe Hall's creation, Joan Ogden, in The Unlit
Lamp (1924) (London: Virago, 1989), Laura Willows in Lolly Willows (1926), by
Sylvia Townsend Warner (London: Chatto and Windus, 1928), or Harriet Frean in May
Barnes, 1928, p.17.

61 Ibid, p.17.
was to compromise Barnes's life, as she had to agree to Barnes's 'marriage' to an older man. Thus the grandmother 'protects' the granddaughter from the father, only by agreeing to 'give her' in marriage using Broe's terms, this decision on the part of the grandmother 'betrays' the granddaughter whilst providing her with a brief respite from the father.

On February 2nd, 1934, Barnes wrote to Emily Holmes-Coleman stating:

Suffering for love is how I have learned practically everything I know, love of grandmother up and on.

The world of the grandmother was to provide only a temporary release from the abusive cycle maintained by the father, whilst colluding with his needs, and, Broe implies, by employing some of his tactics:

At the same time, Zadel's own obvious erotic entanglements the letters lavishly illustrated in the margins, encoded with a private mythical world of 'Flitch' and 'Starbits', may well have provided an antidote to the actual isolation and pain of Djuna's natal household.

Thus this complex situation was drawn upon to create a part of a many faceted text. Like Zadel Barnes, Sophia is a manipulative presence, as her ability to write letters would suggest. She knows of her son's promiscuity yet demands Amelia stay with him, she protects Julie, but also exploits her. Field and others have been in error when they argue that the situation concerning Wendell is a simple representation of the bond between a 'bad father' and a daughter who hates him, but who also desires his approval. Sophia possesses a power which Wendell can not encompass and provides a compromised haven from the patriarchy throughout the novel, yet she also endorses the patriarchal norm which makes Wendell a 'bad' father. Thus, is the destruction which occurs within the text 'all because of Wendell?', or does Sophia's collusion enable him to destroy lives? Is he, in fact, part of an ancient pattern of

64 Ibid, p.53.
abuse and betrayal? Nina Auerbach in writing of Nightwood states that the text of Nightwood is 'permeated with shadows and secrecy'. Such secrets are also present in the 'sanocracy' maintained by Sophia Grieve-Ryder.

Rape and Repining: All Because of Wendell?

In her book, The Wounded Woman: Healing the Father/Daughter relationship, Linda Schierse Leonard remarks that:

if the relationship with the father has been impaired, it is important for the woman to understand the wound to appreciate what has been lacking so that it can be developed within.

As has been argued, the tree of Ryder forms a complex patterning of branches, and this is reflected in the diversity of Barnes's text. Thus this eludes a simple reading, as do the characterizations of the father and daughter within it. Wendell Ryder is both the profligate liar and an irresponsible human being. Yet what has led to this irresponsibility? If the patriarchy encourages men such as he to take an authoritative place in society, then why does Wendell decline to do so? The inevitable conclusion is that something in society has gone awry. To discover what this element might be, the reader must turn to the images of Wendell's childhood in the text. Barnes constructs Wendell's character in order to reveal his conviction that something essential is missing from his life. As he struts and preens, Barnes creates an aura of discontent which disrupts his behaviour. Perhaps what the reader experiences is an ironic recognition that he does not comprehend the complex patterning of the family tree. Thus the reader is led to question Wendell's past in order to discover what might have created this mental void.

A solution to this appears to be contained in one of the novel's various moments of flash-

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Had not Oscar Wilde himself, with his then not-to-be-denied right hand, lifted
his, Wendell’s forelock, murmuring ‘beautiful, beautiful?’ He had indeed.\(^67\)

This anecdote comes from the days when Sophia was hostess to a literary salon. The salon
is reminiscent of that run by Zadel Barnes and also of that hosted by Oscar Wilde’s mother,
‘Speranza’. Richard Ellmann’s description of this is an entertaining and accurate rendering of
the salon life fashionable at the time, and he remarks upon the importance to it of ‘celebrity’,
describing how Speranza’s attitude towards children made them believe that they were
destined for greatness.\(^68\) In Ryder, Wendell is also brought up with this belief. In his
recollection of Wilde he perceives evidence that he was entitled to a more opulent future than
the life he has. Wilde, in this context, embodies a myth rather than a man, and it is Wilde the
aesthete that touches Wendell’s hair and murmurs ‘beautiful’. In the text, Wendell questions
his memory of Wilde. The fact that he doubts his past, rather than informing people that
Wilde and he met, reveals his dilemma. As with many of his thoughts, Wendell relies on
Sophia to confirm its reality. For example, a personal recollection might read ‘Oscar Wilde
had caressed his hair, murmuring “beautiful, beautiful” ’ as opposed to the less affirmative
‘had not Wilde?’ In this case, ‘he had indeed’, appears to be an afterthought. One could also
interpret such a moment of recollection as homo-erotic, and as Wendell, throughout the novel,
is determined to prove his ‘masculinity’, this could be interpreted as representing a ‘closeted’
sexuality.\(^69\) Wendell regularly fathers children and ensures that his promiscuity is public
knowledge, as he is loudly heterosexual, proclaiming his sexuality by both word and action.
Thus he illustrates Gregory Woods’s assertion that such aggressive forms of ‘masculinity’
often mask gay desires.\(^70\) This is expressed via memory, as the most important recollection of

\(^67\) Barnes, 1928, p.58.
\(^68\) Field, 1985, illustrated section. This contains a photograph of Zadel Barnes in London in
\(^69\) See Woods, Gregory, *Articulate Flesh: Male Homoeroticism and Modern Poetry* (New
\(^70\) Ibid, p.2.
his life is one of the homosexual Wilde touching his hair. Despite the novel's obscure time scale, it can be ascertained that Wendell is in his forties (perhaps almost fifty) when Julie begins the change from childhood to adolescence. Wilde’s writings would be taboo during this period and the phrase 'then not to be denied' suggests that Wendell’s recollection occurs after the court case of 1895. Yet, in Wendell’s inner landscape Wilde’s hand is still ‘not to be denied’. Thus, Wendell’s ‘heterosexuality’ might be regarded as a disguise. For, just as O’Connor in Nightwood masquerades as ‘the man in black’, so Ryder disguises himself as a ‘manly’ man. By masquerading as this ‘manly’ man, Wendell might openly decry Wilde’s behaviour and subsequent fate, but he does not, thus Wilde remains the image of a childhood promise which never came into being.

As with Wendell, promises made in childhood appear in the text of Nightwood, destroying the lives of Robin Vote, Nora Flood, Dr. O’Connor and Felix Volkbein. Likewise, Wilde’s promise of a life of beauty fragments Wendell’s sense of his place in the patriarchal system. It appears that Wendell blames Sophia for this nameless sense of betrayal, but also he internalizes it. His revenge against Wilde’s promise of beauty appears to be his blatant heterosexuality. Wilde’s touch, resembling the kiss which Sally Seton bestows on Clarissa Dalloway in Virginia Woolf’s novel, Mrs Dalloway (1925), informs the reader of Wendell’s hidden sexual yearnings, and, as with Clarissa Dalloway, these desires are denied.

Another childhood memory informing the text is that of the infant Wendell talking to a stilt walker. As with the ‘freaks’ in Nightwood, the stilt walker is an image from the underground, and is both unexplained and unwelcome. It is though an image from one of Dr. O’Connor’s stories in Nightwood has come to speak to Wendell’s young self. The stilt walker perceives humanity from an unusual perspective, just as Wendell wishes to. He also represent a dream denied, as his elevated perspective is the antithesis of Wendell’s, who remains rooted to the ground. By the time he reaches adulthood, these childhood images are

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71 Barnes, Djuna, Nightwood (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).
73 Barnes, 1928.
embedded in his psyche. A resentment concerning all the dreams which did not come true is profound. He crushes female aspirations, as he carries the inward belief that women have grounded him and denied his expectations, whether they be his mother, Amelia, Kate Careless or Molly Dance. His treatment of them leads to violence, but his brutality is also conditioned by patriarchal demands. Ironically, this reveals that it is Wendell’s behaviour which will forever deny him Wilde’s promise of beauty.

Rape and Repining

What ho! Spring again! Rape again and the cock yet not at his crowing! Fie, alack! ‘Tis rape, yea, rape it is, and the hay stack left a heaping.74

This passage was thought by Eugene Jolas to be one of the best sections of Ryder.75 It outlines a cycle which results in Wendell’s angst, and places this in the larger context of male social behaviour. In this context, rape is presented as a social pattern, thus it is not represented as an isolated incident. The passage also undercuts the platitude ‘in Spring, a young man’s fancy turns to love’. Thus, the piece exposes the sexual violence underlying the heterosexual myth. In spring, patriarchal society encourages ‘masculine’ behaviour which asserts the role of the ‘manly’ man and rape, rather than romance, is the end result. This mirrors a view of sexuality which Amelia passes on to Julie:

A girl is gone! A girl is lost! A simple Rustic Maiden but Yesterday swung upon the pasture gate, with Knowledge Nowhere. Yet is now, today, no better than her Mother, and her Mother’s Mother before her. Soiled! Despoiled! Mauled! Rummaged! Ransacked! No purer than Fish in Sea, no sweeter than Bird on Wing, no better than Beasts on Earth.76

This passage relies on the use of erratic punctuation, and is derived from a clear

75 Barnes, 1928, pp.26-7, also see Fitch, 1990, pp.34-9.
seventeenth-century model, as is *Ladies Almanack*. Similarities between the two are worth repeating at this point.

It is clear that Barnes used chap book symbolism in the creation of the illustrations for both texts. Both were published in 1928 and were illustrated using a style taken from sixteenth and seventeenth-century wood-cuts, using broadsheet, ballad and chap-book writings as a major influence. Barnes took these traditional forms and wove their language and illustrations into her own subversive woman’s text. If there are fore-mothers who influence *Ryder*, they are anonymous, as were many seventeenth-century women writers who composed ballads and chap-books. The passage on rape speaks a subversive truth, that rape is a social pattern as it is encouraged by the patriarchy. The ballads and stories which illuminate the rest of the text further explore this pattern. For example, women in the text follow a path trodden by both the present and ancestral fore-mothers. Women who are abused are often abandoned as ‘bawds’ or ‘slatterns’. Rape is everywhere and fills the natural world, which repeats a human design:

> Adder in the Grass, Ibex on the Peck, Fish in the Wet, Bird in the Air, know something of it, but do they write Books, or talk at Bedsides, or whisper in Galleries, or make the laws? Still, Girl, such shall judge you, perchance even more vigorously than we.

As with Dame Musset’s life, the movement of this piece is cyclical. Similar to many of Barnes’s fictions, here human beings are likened to beasts. Rather like Philomela, women who are thus treated are expected to remain silent, and Barnes stresses that women who have been raped are judged by men who endorse a social system which allows it.

Rape also undercuts pastoral prose, as the incident described takes place at Ttitencote, an

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78 See the chapters on *Ladies Almanack*.
80 Barnes, 1928, p.31.
English village possibly based on Oakham. Thus an English pastoral masks disharmony, and women are doomed to silence, as was Philomela in legend, but the biblical tone of the piece suggests that 'masculine' behaviour will be punished by divine intervention:

You have bent time with tooth of lust, torn the Horn of righteousness, and the Wind may enter, and the Cyclone follow.\textsuperscript{81}

Wendell takes Amelia from Tittencote but judgement pursues him, disharmony and chaos becoming the hallmarks of his life. As part of this system, Amelia's family also have a history of disorder. For example, an Aunt was disgraced because her lover 'whipped' her through the streets.\textsuperscript{82} Because her behaviour was public, this Aunt is silenced by Amelia's family. However, the family accepts Wendell's behaviour, even though this is overtly crude. Here Wendell is perceived as embodying a 'masculine' gender role, whereas the Aunt's behaviour is linked to prostitution. Thus Amelia becomes ashamed of her body, has been told to keep her secret (a euphemism for vagina) and passes on this code of sexuality to Julie.\textsuperscript{83} Sophia, who might be conceived as being franker about her sexual behaviour, concocts a bizarre story about Wendell's conception.\textsuperscript{84} In this context, women contribute to the sexual chaos by masking their sexual desires.

Wendell therefore represents a sexual nemesis and can be regarded as a prophetic figure. As men and women exist in a biblical state of chaos, Wendell can not be named author of the cyclone but rather represents its victim. Thus Wendell, the 'night stalker' (another seventeenth-century allusion) aids chaos but does not produce it.\textsuperscript{85} He is spoken of in a Chaucerian manner, allowing Barnes to create a parody of her father's sexual mores which recalls the story of his carrying a sponge in case of sexual encounters:

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, p.31.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, p.33.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p.40.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, p.40. Sophia maintains that she was impregnated by the spirit of Beethoven.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
So well he rode his sponge, his shirt was light,
And cleanly well, and flappen even white.  

Wendell's rapacious sexuality does not only destroy Amelia (who, Anne comments, must 'fare but poorly at night') it also denies his sense of self, and the accompanying illustration 'All Because of Wendell' depicts a group of men and women, all in female dress, falling downhill. The picture creates a sense of gender transgression, as by wearing female costume the men can be linked to Garber's concept of 'transvestite theatre', which was outlined in the introduction of this thesis, and suggests that cross-dressing both displaces and re-makes meaning. The fall which they enact creates a textual border between a 'domestic' form and a religious text, as it represents both a biblical 'fall' and contains images from the nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill'.

In the light of this chaos, Wendell attempts to excuse his behaviour by recalling the sixteenth-century notion of humours:

I have been tempered, cooked, made what I am, by the various heats emanating from the body of a woman.

He knows this excuse to be shallow and realizes that because of it Kate, Amelia, Sophia and Julie will eventually turn against him.

As an archetype, his 'masculine bravado' is the binary opposite of Dr. O'Connor's 'womanly' attributes. Wendell attempts to 'confess' to O'Connor, who rejects him. Again, Barnes uses a cyclical motion as Wendell's son, Timothy, also turns to 'whoring'. This historically repeated pattern leads Wendell to cry 'God shames himself in me'. By the novel's conclusion Wendell inhabits his own inferno, and is haunted by images of death and

86 Ibid, p.77.
89 Barnes, 1928, p.234.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid, p.248.
destruction. Thus it is that Wendell turns to the 'female' world, in the form of Dr. O'Connor, the 'female man', but this world (which is inhabited by both O'Connor and Amelia) rejects him. Again, a biblical cry 'how am I to fall?' becomes ironic when the reader recognizes that Wendell is fallen. Thus the 'head' of the patriarchal house of Ryder concludes by begging forgiveness of the wife whom he has been educated to ignore:

He put his hand in her hand and said, 'Yes, bloody, bloody mortal!'

As with Gaya and the 'girl' in 'Cassation', the novel ends with Amelia's rejection of her partner, and, as in 'A night Among the Horses', Wendell concludes in isolation with the cry 'and whom should he disappoint now?' echoing around him. This mantra is constantly repeated and forms a cycle of despair, the only answer being available to the reader being 'himself'. In this context, the beasts who once sat passive beneath the tree close in around Wendell, crossing a border between a known and natural world (around which one can create stories) and a menacing one:

Closing in about him nearer, and swinging out wide and from him far and came in near and near, and as a wave, closed over him, and he drowned, and arose while yet he might go.

And whom should he disappoint?

It is as if he has been trapped by those instincts which patriarchal society has informed him to be 'natural', and barely functions as a human being. Barnes reveals this descent as forming part of a social process and the Ambiguity of the novel's ending asserts Wendell's eternal isolation. This scene is as 'obscene and touching' as Robin Vote's encounter with the dog which concludes Nightwood. As a patriarch, Wendell is 'lost' before the action of the novel takes place, thus his destruction appears inevitable. Unlike the 'feminine' O'Connor,

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Ibid.


Barnes, 1928, pp.322-3.

Barnes, 1936, pp.238-9.
who embraces his masquerade, Ryder is destroyed by a 'masculine archetype' which he represents but in which he has ceased to believe.

Dr. O'Connor and the Question of 'Feminime' Desire

Dr. O'Connor first makes his appearance in the text at the joint labour of Amelia and Kate. His role in the text suggests an alternative 'type' of masculinity as he approaches softly, treading 'on Doctor's feet', and is careful, kind and gentle, the inverse of Wendell.97 He is described using a criterion which Sara Mills has outlined as being usually ascribed to 'femininity', words used to describe him including 'nice', 'good', 'pleasant spoken', and a 'jewel' when with children.98 Thus from his first entrance, Barnes defines him as representing the antithesis of Wendell. Amelia counters this 'feminine' image by suggesting that he needs 'some strong woman' to take care of him.99 Unlike his incarnation in Nightwood, the Doctor here is respected as a professional and his arrival is awaited eagerly:

all mothers whosoever he had helped in childhood swore by him, saying that he was a gifted creature, and as comforting as silk; and that his ways with the newborn were nothing short of magnificent.100

Despite their differences, Molly Dance, Kate and Amelia agree that he is a marvel, and that this extends to the animal world (unlike Wendell who alternately bullies and cajoles animals):

Dr O'Connor was gentle with animals. He loved Molly's kennel to a dog, and stroked all coats with range.101

The women of the community conclude that 'such a pattern of virtues should have a

97 Barnes, 1928, p.159. This is like the 'dove's feet' upon which the woman walks in the 'Lists and Likelyhoods' ballad in Ladies Almanack; Barnes, 1928, p.60.
98 Barnes, 1928, p.153. Also see the introduction for a description of Mills' discussion.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid, p.156.
wife'. By so doing, they deny the 'feminine' attributes with which the Doctor accredits himself. Amelia's discourse on the subject of marriage is displaced by the Doctor's discourse on 'femininity':

'Matthew, it's time that you were assisting with the birth of your own, for I never saw such a man for loving kindness and such a way with little things. So if some good, strong woman'... But she got no further, for Dr. Matthew O'Connor had burst into tears. 'It's always been my wish,' he said, struggling with his emotions, 'to be called Hesper, first star of the evening.' And with that he arose, and went away.

Adrienne Rich's concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality' might be cited here, as the heterosexual community does not recognize the Doctor's discourse as homosexual. This is the first statement in which the Doctor creates a discourse of 'difference', and yet his plea is ignored by Amelia. He can not marry because he is homosexual and also because his tendencies lead him towards transvestism. Hesper, the star of the evening, is perhaps a reference to his transvestism, which occurs at night. It is perhaps also used due to the fact that, in Western culture, this star is 'feminised' as the star of Eve. As Gregory Woods and others have argued, in heterosexual communities, homosexual men are defined using a concept of 'femininity'. O'Connor attempts to create his own discourse of 'femininity', one which defines his desire for a 'feminine' lifestyle and displaces other such constructs. Thus, throughout the text, he establishes his own 'difference', whilst illuminating Wendell's shortcomings.

In Nightwood, the Doctor continues to outline a discourse of difference with which to

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102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 A discussion of this concept can be found throughout her collection of essays Blood, Bread and Poetry, see Rich, Adrienne, Blood, Bread and Poetry (London: Virago, 1986).
105 Barnes, 1928, p.156.
Whereas *Nightwood* should not be read as a direct sequel to *Ryder*, what is revealed about O'Connor in the earlier text can be illuminating when studying the later novel. For instance, in the 1928 text, the reader learns that he has a brother, Felix, and a sister, Nora. Nora is close to him and Felix dies in childhood. This might explain why the Doctor feels such close emotional connections with Felix Voßbein and Nora Flood in *Nightwood*. Also, the Doctor's desire to be a woman surfaces early in life and, once more, Barnes connects gender constructions with the adoption of clothing from the past:

> See me, Matthew O'Connor, holding my satin robe about my backsides, tripping up to God like a good woman and taking on something scandalous for the ways of my sins were with me.

This blend of religious references (the sinner 'tripping up to God') and references to fashion (the satin robe) crosses the divide between the secular and the spiritual which also occurs in *Nightwood*. Likewise, O'Connor’s description of his work also appears in the later text:

> I, banging my head against the scrofula and the tapeworm and the syphilis and the cancer and the pectoris and the mumps and the glut and the pox of mankind.

By the time that the Doctor meets Nora Flood in *Nightwood*, he reacts as if this decay has swamped him. In *Ryder* he perceives the patriarchal society as hypocritical and he rails at God as the divine representative of this system:

> And my tongue rattling off with the mundane things of the world and the forbidden fruit still suave in my mouth, for, I says, I love the upright Father, though I say it with tears in my drawers, and it is an anathema. Go, my daughter, he says and love thy fellowmen. And me, beating my breast and

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108 Barnes, 1928, p.156.
O'Connor, raised as a Catholic, never comes to terms with guilt resulting from his sexuality and Fat Liz, the first of his 'misdemeanours', becomes another source of Catholic guilt. This inconstant guilt appears to exist in fluctuation, between a state of repentance and one of defiance. Although angry with God, he can not forsake the iconography of Catholicism. His speech, therefore, confuses religious iconography with fetishist iconography:

For when I'm lost in my bowels like a little child crying against the great darkness if myself, I think of that glorious Moll, and incense going up like birds unto the seat of all thanksgiving, and a great peace is in me and my tears are caught up in light and heat and expectation, and my feet go with me saying, Matthew O'Connor, you'll come to a bad end, for I'm a woman of a few thousand gestures, and a hundred words.

As a man who defines himself as 'feminised', O'Connor becomes an advocate for 'gentle ways', rejecting the violent world of Wendell Ryder. When taking to Hannell, an adolescent boy, he advises him to treat women well and not to behave like a 'man' as Wendell does, thus by proffering this advice, O'Connor negates the patriarchal system by which Wendell lives:

Never listen to a man when he is talking loud, such sounds are not for little ears.

The Doctor, throughout the text, looks for alternatives to patriarchal norms. He constantly seeks an ecstatic vision to alter his life and to rid him of his guilt. He admits to Wendell that he would rather 'die like a woman' than like a man. He also tells the first of his stories, stories which ridicule the male version of history (involving characters such as Stonewall Jackson, General Lee and Barbara Fritchie).
O'Connor's discourse of 'femininity' is charted briefly in Ryder, and the short analysis here can be taken as a preface to the chapter on his role in Nightwood. Here, O'Connor is not yet the charlatan of Nightwood, yet one can perceive the making of the old Doctor within the young, particularly with reference to his ability to tell stories, and with his assertion of a homosexual identity. Between Ryder and Nightwood, a great change takes place in the Doctor's fortunes, as by Nightwood the Doctor is no longer respectable, and is more notorious as a mountebank than for his medical prowess. In Ryder, O'Connor has begun to identify himself as existing outside patriarchal norms. Thus, if Ryder is a novel dealing with patriarchal society and the problems which individuals such as O'Connor encounter within such a system, then Nightwood further explores gender divisions which that system also produces.
This chapter may appear, at first glance, to deviate from previous sections, as it deals with visual rather than verbal art. Yet what I wish to illustrate in this section has relevance for the argument of the thesis as a whole. This section demonstrates where Barnes can be placed in a history of women’s art, the strategies which she used as a visual artist, and suggests connections between her visual and verbal works.

The Historical Context

Throughout history, women artists have suffered due to connections made between their work and their gender. Grizelda Pollock has maintained that woman has been defined more frequently as a muse and a model than as a creator. To employ one of Pollock’s examples to illustrate this concept, Dante Gabriel Rossetti used his models (most notably Elizabeth Siddall and Jane Burden [Morris], both artists themselves) to represent ‘signs’ of femininity. This, Pollock argues, has resulted in their being marginalized in histories of art, Elizabeth Siddall, painter and poet, becoming Elizabeth, or Lizzie, ‘Siddal’, a sign both of femininity and of the mysterious muse. As Elaine Showalter’s work on cultural ideas concerning gender at the fin-de-siècle reveals, the mystery of woman was heavily stressed in the nineteenth-century resulting in a de-personalization both of artist’s models, such as Siddall, and of women artists themselves. In her description of Ella Ferris Pell, whose painting of ‘Salome’ caused an outrage at its exhibition in 1890, she reveals how Pell’s life, like her work, was soon relegated to obscurity:

Yet the painting was largely ignored by critics; and although she worked as a landscape and portrait painter in New York in the 1890s, Pell died in obscurity, disowned by her parents and buried in a pauper’s grave.

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2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
Gallery basements and store rooms throughout Britain, Europe and the U.S.A. possess many uncatalogued and seldom exhibited works by women, as art historian Jane Sellars has remarked.\(^5\) In studies of women artists and muse figures both Mary K. De Shazer and Elizabeth Bronfen suggest that women have been appropriated as muse signifiers, often at the expense of their own creativity.\(^6\) If, as they maintain, women in the past have been regarded as the muse of the creative male, then this begs the question of who the woman artist takes as her muse.\(^7\) One could take an example from the literary world to illuminate this problematic area: if H.D. was, briefly, Ezra Pound's muse (as poems in *Hilda's Book* suggest) then where was H.D. herself to turn for inspiration?\(^8\) Given that this problem extends to the art world, it is perhaps little wonder that Germaine Greer titled her work on women artists *The Obstacle Race*.\(^9\) As Blanche Wiesen Cook has argued, in her essay 'Women Alone Stir My Imagination', the woman artist was often made to feel isolated, as if she had no female predecessors.\(^10\)

Works by women from the past were rarely exhibited, or described in art histories and women artists, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were advised to regard male artist as role models. Cook goes on to argue that such problems are doubled for the woman artist who happens to be a lesbian, as her predecessors, if they appear at all, are defined as heterosexual.\(^11\)

\(^7\) Ibid, pp.110-40.
\(^11\) Ibid. One literary example of this would be the way in which 'Michael Field' was described by Joy Grant as being two heterosexual writers, instead of being the pseudonym of a lesbian couple, namely, Katherine Harris-Bradley (1864-1914) and Edith Emma Cooper (1862-1913). See Grant, Joy, *Harold Monro and the Poetry Bookshop* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1967), pp.116-7.
If a female creator is described as representing a 'sign' of 'femininity' her role as an artist is necessarily complicated. Also, other obstacles contribute to making the role of female creator a problematic one. In the past, those working conditions which Virginia Woolf deemed necessary for a woman writer, namely the idea that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved.  

can also be related to the requirements of the woman artist. As Woolf also pointed out, autonomy alone could not provide solutions to questions arising from both concepts of 'woman' and ideas concerning what constitutes 'great art'. What Woolf omitted from her discussion, was the crisis of identity which faced both working-class women artists and those with only a brief 'formal' training, such as Djuna Barnes. Despite this omission, Woolf's argument concerning the need for personal space becomes crucial to this discussion.

Writing in 1932, Nina Hamnett spoke of the constant interruptions which she suffered as an adolescent:

In the evenings, when I was reading, my father would come in and, seeing reproductions of Whistler etchings on the wall would scream 'Whistler! Ha! Ha! If you continue this, I will have you put in a lunatic asylum!' What with this and my hopeless passion, I became paralysed. I lost the use of my hands completely. I was taken to a doctor friend of my father's, an unpleasant man who could have been my father's twin brother.

Thus a daughter with 'her own space' is aware that it can be invaded at any time by both her father and an authority figure (the Doctor) who represents her father's interests. This could

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15 Ibid.
be linked with Broe's concept of Barnes's personal artistic spaces and the invasion of them by Wald Barnes and Percy Faulkner, his representative. In Hamnett's case, the paralysis which she suffered ceased when she began to work again. The collusion between doctor and father (or in Barnes's case, father and husband to be), both patriarchal authority figures, was not limited to a discussion of Hamnett's 'disease' but to salacious discussions about art and 'women artists' who lived 'bohemian' lives:

He and his horrible Doctor friend would discuss me with leers and winks and talk about what went on in art schools.

Female art students were often represented as promiscuous, as if their creativity were linked to their sexual behaviour. As Showalter has remarked, women like Ella Ferris Pell satirized such notions by detaching female figures such as Salome from representations of them which presented them as creatures possessing 'crazed sexual hunger'. However, this sexual appetite was often publicly attributed to the artist herself. Also, speculation concerning 'what went on in art schools', became fired by writers such as Murger, Gerald Du Maurier and, later, W. Somerset Maugham. Du Maurier's Trilby (1894) told the story of an exploited child/woman, but it also re-established a powerful stereotype, namely that of the artist's muse whose only escape from a sexually corrupt bohemia is death. This archetype, when combined with the promiscuous behaviour of male artists such as Augustus John and Eric Gill, rendered a woman who wished to attend art classes, or go to art school, immediately suspect. It is

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17 Hamnett, 1932, pp.27-8.
18 Ibid, p.34.
19 Showalter, 1992, p.159.
21 Du Maurier's 1894 text presents the possession of model Trilby by the evil Svengali, and displays both xenophobia (Svengali is the archetypal 'foreigner') and fear of sexual corruption, not so much for Trilby, who escapes a loss of reputation by death, but for her lover, Little Billee. See Du Maurier, 1947.
22 As artists such as Hamnett wryly noted.
interesting that, like the male 'geniuses' described by W.G. Rogers in *Ladies Bountiful*, promiscuity was expected of the male artist. Speculations by men such as Hamnett's father seem to have been dependant on the idea of the woman artist as a figure from erotic fantasy, rather than being based on actual knowledge of artistic practice. As will be discussed later, all of these perceptions affected Barnes's artistic work both during her lifetime and after. Before this can be discussed, however, it is useful to suggest some general points concerning the strategies employed by women artists in the twentieth-century, which were often derived from historical strategies.

Why Are Women Looking?: Some Strategies and Visions

If one suggests that female artists employ certain strategies within a patriarchal artistic community, then one must outline possible outcomes of these strategies. Although some of these strategies could now broadly be termed feminist, others actually employ ideals sanctioned by patriarchal artistic establishments past and present. The first of these strategies comes from the latter category.

Although one cannot apply it wholly to Barnes, it is worth bearing in mind that she had some formal training (see Appendix One). The strategy is based upon an identification with male artists and thus involves collusion with an artistic establishment which is, by its very nature, patriarchal. This includes an expression of ideas concerning what constitutes 'fine' art, and concepts of 'great' art which are based upon a 'canon' of great artists from the past, who are often male. Often this meant entering into competition with male artists who were already established within the academy. How this felt can be described by a journal entry written by Marie Bashkirtseff (whose journals provided, according to Hank O'Neal, an account of the female artist which was favoured by Barnes) in April 1883:

*Do you know what I am doing? I am entering into a competition at Julian’s. A woman’s figure, clothed, and her hands. It is very ugly; but, as the men’s studios...*

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will also do this competition, there is the impossible hope of beating men, and so I've started.  

A copy of the journal, purchased by Barnes in 1913, and kept throughout her life, was heavily annotated.

For Bashkirseff, writing in the late nineteenth-century, the personal struggle and the decision to 'enter into competition with men' was time-consuming. Women artists choosing this path would have to play by academic rules, set by those same academies which refused to allow women into life classes due to their gender. In the academy, works were judged by an all male panel and either placed desirably on exhibition (on the line) or placed badly (skied). Panels were usually composed of the same men who had drawn up teaching regulations which excluded female students. Figures created by women who were refused entry into life classes, were judged as harshly as those by their male contemporaries. Thus, history reveals the female academician as an unequal figure. In the eighteenth-century, female academy members in both Britain and France were rare. It is interesting to regard Zoffany's painting of the royal academy, where the two female academy members are depicted as portraits on the wall, whilst male academicians gaze at a nude male model. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gender was used as a means of exclusion. It is also worth recording that although early twentieth-century artists such as Hamnett were allowed to paint from life, the issue of suitability was raised by both the artist's parents and her peers. In her essay on Hamnett, Judith Collins notes that, as with perceptions of Barnes's early writings:

the flamboyant social side of her personality came to the fore and eclipsed the serious and dedicated painter.

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26 Zoffany's painting was completed c.1769 and is one of the few depictions of the academy in the eighteenth-century to include women artists.
27 Hamnett, 1932, pp.27-8.
It was Hamnett's later reputation as 'Queen of Bohemia', argue both Collins and Denise Hooker, which was to survive her and thus her paintings and writings became neglected following her death in 1956. This was also true of Barnes. Unlike Barnes, however, Hamnett was to write an autobiography which attempted to describe both male and female artists but, as her form was oil painting, she aligned herself chiefly with ideas of 'fine art'.

Given such choices, it is interesting to note that in Emmanuel Cooper's broad study of homosexuality and art he links art forms with concepts of gender. In this context, oil paintings and sketches and cartoons in pastel and charcoal are traditionally linked to 'fine' art, whilst pen and line work is often referred to as either illustrative or preparatory. Watercolours, whilst being created by some 'great' artists, are here regarded as a form which came to be perceived in the nineteenth-century as having been 'feminised'. Watercolour painting was a social skill taught to many daughters of middle and upper-class families and was often regarded as a 'safe' artistic form. Of course, these are generalizations but without them a discussion of women's artistic strategies is almost impossible.

For women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were not academicians painting was often seen as an accomplishment, as opposed to being regarded as a means of self-expression. Genre paintings were often suggested as suitable, studies of flowers and pastoral landscapes, or of children, in other words, topics which posed little threat to the onlooker. Artistic choice was therefore limited, as the woman painter was often forced to make concessions to an imagined viewer. Cooper has argued that discussions of 'great' art often relied upon its being regarded as both 'masculine' and heterosexual. Homosexual art,
he concludes, has been read as signifying heterosexuality. Thus an androgynous figure, such as Da Vinci's St. John the Baptist, is perceived as representing a heterosexual stereotype.

Elaine Showalter has also argued that this occurs with Beardsley's designs for Wilde's *Salome*, where critics stated that his illustrations had very little to do with the text of the play. Showalter has argued that critics failed to perceive that the illustrations stressed lines of the play which deal with a homosexual sub-plot and thus the illustrations become detached from their meaning. It is not that the painting does not convey a gendered message but that the observer exists in a society which regards itself as being predominantly heterosexual and therefore the onlooker makes an assumption concerning visual portrayals of sexuality. Later, I will argue that such concepts also condition interpretations of works by Djuna Barnes.

If 'great' art has, therefore, been created and viewed within a patriarchal framework and if the majority of critics still use a language which is informed by such assumptions about gender, then what does this mean for the female artist? In recent times, Maggi Hambling, who works chiefly in oils, has defined herself as a painter who happens to be female rather than as a woman painter with specific concerns aligned to her gender. She compares herself with male artists, such as Francis Bacon. As in works by Barnes, many of the figures in Hambling's work exist in isolation. Her portraits of Max Wall reveal an almost Bakhtinian vision of the carnivalesque. Also, like Barnes, Hambling says very little about her working methods, preferring to concentrate on the image which she has tried to capture:

He (Wall) has the true face of a sad clown, and possesses the power one can only call magical, to make one laugh and cry at the same moment.

My first painting was of a clown, and at various times over the years I have

36 Ibid, pp.7-10.
37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 She has re-asserted this several times in interview. I have written to her concerning information in this chapter but have, thus far, received no reply.
attempted this subject.\textsuperscript{42}

Hambling has often defined her ideas about 'great' and 'minor' art forms, and the position of the artist, chiefly as someone who captures themes which are 'universal'.\textsuperscript{43} As with Bashkirtseff, and others before her, she has chosen to work within the confines of the artistic establishment. Yet, ironically, her paintings of women often reveal gender constructions which have also been explored by feminist artists. This is not a criticism of her works, but rather an outline of one recognizable strategy open to the woman artist. It could be suggested that this is one strategy which Barnes, on the whole, avoided. Her refusal to fit in with ideas of art maintained by established male painters is evident despite attempts by Hank O'Neal to suggest that she preferred the establishment and its rules.\textsuperscript{44} Pressures placed upon women artists during the 1920s are similar to those which were described by Virginia Woolf in \textit{A Room of One's Own} in terms of literary production, where Woolf outlined these pressures as being as great, if not greater, for those inside the establishment than for those who remained outside it. Perhaps being 'locked in', to use Woolf's memorable literary phrase, is actually more problematic for female artists who choose to work on patriarchal terms, than being 'locked out'.\textsuperscript{45} It could be argued that to exist within the establishment, whatever that might represent, is to make a series of choices concerning technique, method and exhibition spaces.

Barnes, whilst receiving some formal training, as will be discussed later, did not choose to exhibit within the artistic establishment. Yet, does this mean that her artistic career was totally unconfined? Or, were the spaces which she depicted themselves limited by her gender?

Grizelda Pollock has noted how both the careers of Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt can be used to discuss the spaces open to women artists in the nineteenth-century.\textsuperscript{46} Unlike their male counterparts and unlike later artists, such as Hambling, the spaces within which they worked

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p.10.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Woolf, 1929, p.24.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
were limited. Pollock's definition of artistic space is a valuable one to bear in mind when discussing women artists in the early twentieth-century. One must enquire if women such as Barnes had left these spaces behind, or whether such definitions still applied:

Space can be grasped in several dimensions.

The first refers to spaces as locations. What spaces are represented in the paintings made by Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt? And what are not.

A quick list includes:

Dining-rooms.

Drawing Rooms.

Bedrooms.

Balconies / Verandas.

Private gardens.

The majority of these have been recognized as private or domestic space.47

In this context, outdoor scenes are represented by 'polite' social gatherings.48 It could be argued that many women artists who have been termed 'modernist', including Barnes, still employed private and domestic spaces in their work, despite having a more unrestricted social life.49 Using such discussions as Pollock's as a basis, ideas on the female artists use of space can be regarded as being important to any discussion of women's art.50 Thus, prior to a detailed discussion of works by Barnes, an analysis must be made of the strategies used by women artists who chose to work beyond patriarchal limits. When establishing a debate of this type, generalizations are bound to occur but such a distinction is necessary in order to create a framework by which to discuss Barnes's paintings and the 'border crossings' which these allow.

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48 Ibid.
49 Barnes's women often stand aloof, defined by the spaces which they occupy.
An obvious technique to link to such 'crossings' is one which provides a celebration of past women artists and significant fore mothers, such as the tableaux photographed by Natalie Clifford-Barney and her circle, or Judy Chicago's famous Dinner Party (where symbolic places were laid on a vast table for women as diverse as Emily Dickinson and Virginia Woolf).\footnote{Also see Churchill, Caryl, \textit{Top Girls} (London: Methuen, 1982) as this appears to be the dramatic equivalent of Chicago's Dinner Party. For an account by Chicago see the volume edited by Mara R. Witzling, \textit{Voicing Our Visions: Writings by Women Artists} (London: Women's Press, 1988), pp.369-82.} Recent uses of this technique have transcended feminism, as the huge quilt made to commemorate victims of the A.I.D.S. virus in the U.S.A. would suggest.\footnote{Peterson, Chris, 'A.I.D.S.: Product of a Killer System' in \textit{Spare Rib} (Sept 1991), pp.16-7.} The tableaux created by Barney and Vivien, as was suggested in the chapter on Barney's salon, did not merely commemorate women of the past but suggested the omission of lesbianism from both history and art.\footnote{Jay, Karla, \textit{The Amazon and the Page} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).} Of course, it could be argued that many of Barnes's illustrations also achieve this, as did tableaux created by the more overtly political 'Pioneer Players' in England, as research by Katherine Cockin has suggested.\footnote{Cockin, Katherine, 'New Light on Edith Craig' in \textit{Theatre Notebook} XLV, 3 (1991), pp.132-43.} In turning to, and celebrating, great women of the past, current notions of what constitutes femininity were and are challenged. Cockin's research on Edy Craig and the 'Pioneer Players' has suggested that they desired to counteract the notion of the 'womanly woman' prevalent at the time.\footnote{Ibid.} Works on Barney and Vivien by Karla Jay have suggested that their deployment of tableaux also intended to achieve this end, by using past images of the feminine to foreground the lesbian 'other'. This, I shall argue, is also true of drawings by Barnes.\footnote{Ibid.}

Currently, Tessa Boffin's photography seeks to achieve this, as her piece 'The Knight's Move' reveals.\footnote{Fraser, Jean and Tessa Boffin, 'Tantalizing Glimpses of Stolen Glances' in \textit{Feminist Review} 38 (Summer 1991), pp.20-3.} This portrays two women, one of whom cross-dresses in the style of an
eighteenth-century dandy, lover or rake.\textsuperscript{58} It recalls images of libertines such as Casanova or De Sade, as well as calling to mind costume balls in the 'modernist' period. Yet the woman in this panel wears contemporary make-up, has a partially shaven head and has her ear double-pierced.\textsuperscript{59} The second panel depicts a woman wearing full eighteenth-century female dress with a white pompadour wig. In her right hand she holds a mask, which echoes an eye mask held in the left hand of the other woman. In her left-hand, the 'feminine' dresser holds a board which bears the names of Una Troubridge, Radclyffe Hall, Alice Austen, Janet Flanner and Sappho.\textsuperscript{60} These names do not, however, appear in chronological order. Boffin has described her work in the following terms:

\begin{quote}
We need to resurrect and honour the concept of role models, which was so important to the early gay movement ... Yet we need to acknowledge that the stakes are remarkably high because of the paucity of lesbian imagery. There are so few representations and so many unfulfilled desires. The burdens imposed by this scarcity of representations can, however, be overcome if we go beyond our impoverished archives to create new icons. One way we can move forward is by embracing our idealized fantasy figures, by placing ourselves into the great heterosexual narratives of courtly love; by making the 'Knight's Move'.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

Boffin regards this technique as achieving a double purpose, both celebrating and placing the past, whilst providing a counter balance to the negative imagery enforced by public fears about A.I.D.S.\textsuperscript{62} She both restores and explores concepts of the lesbian 'self', by creating a shifting construction of lesbian images.

Women artists of the 'modernist' period, including Barnes, Barney, Vivien and Romaine Brooks also employed this strategy: Barnes in illustrations to volumes such as \textit{The Book of}
A similar category into which such 'modernist' works might fall is that of works by women which question notions of 'female space'. As this chapter aims to demonstrate, this involves an exploration of the spaces which surround femininity, such as Gwen John's famous series of paintings of her studio. Woolf's concept of 'a room of one's own' could be said to have been explored in painting as well as in literature. Likewise, objects connected with 'femininity' such as the ceremonial hats concocted by Eileen Agar in the 1930s and 1940s, represent satiric commentaries both on the dictates of fashion and the adornment of the female body. As works by Freytag Loringhoven also demonstrate, Agar's aesthetic considers the boundaries of gender constructions, re-inventing facial decoration and fashionable attire. It could be argued that, while Agar achieved effect through the manipulation of the object, Barnes achieved a similar aesthetic via her use of the oil portrait. Oriana Baddelly's comments on Agar's work could also be applied to discussions of work by Barnes, as below, where Baddelly discusses Agar's 1931 piece 'The Modern Muse' as an exploration of the shifting boundaries of gender construction. Agar, Baddelly maintains, achieves a synthesis of both male and female biomorphic forms. The artist's muse is no longer a passive, objectified female, but a symbol of active sexuality. The combined male and female characteristics present a pictographic image of both sexual and artistic creativity.

By revising images which were considered 'feminine', Barnes and Agar 're-present'  

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64 Pollock, 1991.
65 Agar, Eileen, A Look at My Life (London: Methuen, 1988), illustrated sections.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
themselves both as artists and as women.

If one artistic strategy open to women is to escape those limitations set by the patriarchal artistic establishment, by exposing the constructions which allow the creation of gender stereotypes, then another is to revise familiar images from great art. This, it appears, can be achieved either literally or obliquely. For example, in Barnes's illustrative works, cherubim, seraphim, angels, archangels, bestiary beasts, fabulous creatures, mermaids, scrolls, representations of saints and monarchs, and also images taken direct from art-deco design, constantly appear and re-appear. Barnes used images from recognized art forms in order to create a pastiche, where images taken from different centuries were blended into an artistic whole. This technique was not one which limited itself to women working in the 'modernist' period. In the nineteenth-century, artists such as Siddall and Julia Margaret Cameron deployed images from male Pre-Raphaelite painting to inform their works. Images found in paintings by women later in the twentieth-century also suggest such appropriations. Here references such as Jo Spence's use of the domestic Madonna image, are oblique, whilst others, such as Cindy Sherman's portrayal of herself as Caravaggio, are direct. Sherman creates a cavalcade of character studies, which both challenge and revise famous images. Hers are radical revisions of radical works. For example Caravaggio (c.1570/71-1610), whom she often uses, was a homosexual artist who challenged not only current notions of art but also the authority of patrons who hired him to paint religious works and were, instead, confronted with

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69 See the chapter on the *Ladies Almanack* for a full explanation of this technique. It may be worth noting at this point, that Barnes often took these symbols back to their origins. For example her 'fish of earth' (*Ladies Almanack*, p.55) may not be a mermaid at all, but a siren as first depicted in medieval bestiaries. For a full account of this figure (from which Barnes's symbolism appears to be derived) see Benton, Janetta Rebold, *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in Art in the Middle Ages* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), pp.37-9.


71 Cindy Sherman's 'Sick Bacchus' is one of a series of depictions of herself in the guise of images from famous paintings. See Bronfen, 1992, pp.400-1.
works the models for which were known prostitutes and homosexuals. Sherman, as 'Sick Bacchus' (Original pre 1595) creates a self-portrait out of what was said to be, a self-portrait.

The livid mask of the sick artist, is replaced by a livid mask painted over Sherman's own features, thus art begins to mirror art and one self as 'other' becomes a depiction of the other as self. Sherman shifts the focus of the self-portrait, as did Barnes, creating a pastiche from blended forms which raises questions of identity, gender and genre. Likewise, in the photograph 'Celestial Bodies/Blasphemy', Jean Fraser places her naked self and two nuns in the stead of Manet's famous naked model and two male artists in his cause célèbre of 1863, Déjeuner Sur L'herbe. It could not be argued that Barnes was as direct as this in her appropriation of images but one could suggest that in using recognizable motifs from art of the past she herself suggested certain revisions. Currently, women artists have begun to deploy materials traditionally associated with domestic life with which to create art. Women such as Barnes and female artists who came after (such as Remedios Varo, Paula Rego, Eileen Cooper, Nuria Capdevila, Denise Weston, Gurinder Sikand and Amanda Faulkner) have worked at revising popular images derived from myth, fairy-tale, nursery rhyme and fable in order to explore the margins and spaces of the female subject.

If these represent some of the strategies deployed by women artists, then might this lead to the conclusion that there is such a thing as a female aesthetic? Gisela Ecker, in her exploration of the subject, asks if such a feminist or 'feminine' aesthetic is either possible or desirable. She concludes that:

As soon as we analyse, as women, with our specific concerns and our skills (developed as our historical position), the apparently gender-neutral and

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72 Bonsati, Giorgio, Carravagio (Milan: Scala, 1984).
73 Ibid.
In other words, Ecker is attempting to delineate the high risks run by women artists, past and present, who try to counteract historically based assumptions concerning art and gender. Many of the essays in her volume, *Feminist Aesthetics*, deal with the strategies which are used by women artists and others and discuss how women artists re-tell traditional stories. Perhaps what all these strategies might achieve is best summed up in an open letter by Christa Wolf in the same volume:

> A different way of asking questions, (no longer the murderous who did what to whom). A different kind of strength, a different kind of weakness. A different friendship, a different enmity. Whichever way you look, whichever page you open the book at, you see a cave-in of the alternatives which until now have held together and torn-apart our world; as well as the theory of the beautiful, and of art.

This might seem to be a statement from which to develop an analysis of works by Barnes. Perhaps what should be looked for is not one female aesthetic but many, not one concept of 'great' art but a series of artistic possibilities. Indeed, a series of 'border crossings' which allow a discussion of the spaces within women's art to take place.

Djuna Barnes was a woman best-known for her writing, thus her art has often taken second place or has been defined only by its relation to the written page. In the past, she has been perceived as an 'illustrator' if as an artist at all, and her paintings have been neglected. As Frances M. Doughty has testified, Barnes's paintings were not second-rate, nor were they few. If one is to try and understand her perceptions they are absolutely vital. In her essay, which provides a brief outline of Barnes's work, Doughty describes works which were briefly

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77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
touched on, or ignored, by critics. As she suggests, to study Barnes the writer, one must also study Barnes the artist. Now that this chapter has briefly outlined strategies open to women artists, it must continue by applying these to works by Barnes herself. Therefore, it seems necessary to outline previous interpretations of Barnes's artistic output.

Not Aubrey Beardsley: Barnes's Artistic Influences

'Appendix A' briefly outlines Barnes's short artistic training. The best account of her career is contained in the essay by Doughty. Shari Benstock also touched factually on Barnes's illustrative work, using it to help describe her written texts. Drawings by Barnes are also mentioned by Hanscombe and Smyers, who do not, as Doughty does, liken her works to those of her contemporaries. It is interesting that while Caroline Burke has considered Barnes's relationship to the poet and illustrator Mina Loy, she has not connected the women's drawings and the similarities of theme which occur in visual works by both artists. Burke points to Barnes's initial artwork as 'Beardsleyish', a commonly accepted analogy. Yet it can be suggested that Barnes's drawings and those by Beardsley possess little in common. Both Loy and Barnes, as Virginia M. Kouidis notes, produced drawings of figures which were both decadent and grotesque. Yet it could be suggested that neither woman meant to imitate Beardsley, as they deployed different sources, Loy favouring art deco themes which satirize both fashion plates of the period and work by Eileen Grey, whilst Barnes's work reveals a fascination with illustrative modes ranging from wood-cuts in chap-books to almanacs from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

81 Ibid. For example, Field does not mention Barnes's political paintings. Field, Andrew, *Djuna: The Formidable Miss Barnes* (Texas: Texas University Press, 1985).
82 It is also outlined in Broe, 1991, pp.137-50.
83 Ibid.
87 Ibid, p.69.
Barnes's illustrative career is close to Loy's but does it also resemble that of Aubrey Beardsley? In fact, is the analogy at all useful? If it is not, then why does a comparison between the two still exist?

One obvious answer might be that both early works by Barnes and works by Beardsley use pen and line techniques and both were executed in black and white. Drawings by both reveal a love of the grotesque and a profound skill at using line. However, this comparison remains essentially superficial. Beardsley's work, as Showalter has suggested, is a product of the fin-de-siècle. This can be observed in both the artistic ideas behind Lane's notorious Yellow Book and in Beardsley's infamous illustrations to Wilde's Salome. Indeed, illustrations for the latter (1894) and to the artist's own erotic piece, Under the Hill (1896), reveal both his mastery of mass and line and also his obsession with erotic and 'decadent' subject matter. Beardsley's works, if one were to apply new historical modes of analysis, could have existed in their original published form at no other time. Showalter argues that Beardsley's works inevitably acknowledge closure, coming at the end of a century, and cites the fact that he did not live to develop his artistic ideas in the new century dying as he did in 1898. As Showalter reveals, figures such as Salome, as well as concepts of the grotesque, had a widespread influence among artists at the turn of the century. Barnes, although working in black and white and often with mass and line, could not be termed a decadent artist. This linear style is, as Doughty notes throughout her essay, only one technique used by her. Barnes also experimented with oils, pastels and charcoal, throughout her artistic career. Even her sense of line was different to that of Beardsley. Indeed, to conclude this point I wish

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93 Ibid.
to compare an early drawing by Barnes (fig 1), with one of Beardsley's 'bons mots' (fig 2). Barnes's line could be described as being both fluid and fragmentary, whereas Beardsley's is deliberately unbroken, retaining a severity which closes the picture, creating a complete entity. Beardsley's theme is essentially one culled from symbolist works by artists such as Gustave Moreau, whereas Barnes's is journalistic in origin.

Although it could also be argued that Beardsley and Barnes both use costumes from the past to inform their works, it could be suggested that Barnes uses costume to do more than express the essential decadence of her figures, as did Beardsley. Barnes's costumes often parody fashion plates and while Beardsley also occasionally did this, it could be argued that Barnes uses her costumes to comment upon perceptions of 'femininity'. One example of this might be found in the illustration 'The Tea Shop Type' (fig 3). The article of 1917 which this accompanied constituted a satire on the morals of contemporary New York society. However, the people who appeared in the drawing must have seemed far from contemporary. Two androgynous figures walk offset by a white background which is divided by two enormous black fans. There are no certainties in the picture, as although one figure wears the male periwig and the other a pompadour, both figures could be of either sex. This raises questions of identification in the mind of the onlooker. Are they a lesbian couple? Or are they heterosexuals in fancy dress? Are both figures male? What roles exactly are being depicted here? Both wear a type of eighteenth-century dress, comprising massive skirts and wigs. Here Barnes created the same type of 'border crossing' explored by Tessa Boffin in the latter part of this century. On closer inspection one figure can be seen to wear a military jacket and cravat, whilst the other's upper portions melt into a backless chemise which could have come from an evening gown by Poiret or Lanvin. Both of the figures have sour expressions, and one is languid and lean, whereas the other fills the picture. The couple exist within a carefully

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95 This famous series by Beardsley depicted 'freaks', fabulous beasts and symbolist representations of the female form.
96 Cassou, Jean, Symbolism (Hertfordshire: Omega, 1984); Selz, Jean, Gustave Moreau (Switzerland: Bonfini, 1979).
constructed historical pastiche, perhaps representing a satire on what Americans might consider to represent the European 'Tea Shop Type'.

Cross-dressing and jumbled gender roles represent a vital part of drawings such as this. The couple cross several borders such as those existing between cultures, historical periods and illustrative styles. Because they appear to exist in an unspecific historical context, the pair remain ambiguous. After all, who are these people and why is their sexuality unconfirmed? In this particular example, Barnes could be regarded as lampooning the expectations of a tourist to New York, who might visit a 'European' tea-shop in Greenwich Village hoping to mingle with both exotic and sexually suspect bohemians. Advertisements from *The Little Review* and other *avant-garde* magazines from the period reveal 'the village' was full of such places, from 'The Samovar' on 128 West Fourth Street, to 'The Russian Tea Rooms' at 133 Washington Place. In her piece *Greenwich Village As It Is* Barnes was to comment:

> The Truth has never been penned about Washington Square and Greenwich Village - names which are not synonymous. To have to tell the truth about a place immediately puts that place on its defence. Localities and atmospheres should be let alone. There are so many restaurants that have been spoiled by a line or two in the paper.

'The Tea Shop Type' may also represent this type of criticism, where places are described for the prospective tourist as being 'exotic' or 'unknown', with differing *mores* to those of the home environment. Yet, it also might be perceived as possessing a more complex significance. Articles by Djuna Barnes were often published in fashionable magazines such as *The Smart Set* or *Vanity Fair*. Unlike the more *avant-garde* expectations of magazines such as *The Little Review* or *transition*, where Barnes published poetry and short stories, these magazines were, on the whole, undemanding of their readers. Bearing this in mind it

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98 Advertisements which can be found in most issues of *The Little Review*.
99 Barnes, Djuna, *Greenwich Village As It Is*. This was first printed in 1916, but a pirated edition was printed: (New York: Phoenix Bookshop, 1978), p.4.
100 Writing as Lydia Steptoe between c.1922-1930 for *Vanity Fair* and for *The Smart Set* between c.1918-early 1920s. For a biased account of the history of *The Little Review* see
appears ironic that many of Barnes's pieces, particularly those penned as Lydia Steptoe (steptoe, an apt pun on her perception of her role as an artist, as Gill Spraggs pointed out to me) and published in *Vanity Fair*, satirize the fashion conscious nature both of the magazine and its readership. If fashion is a system which codifies gender, then Barnes denies this codification by creating figures whose clothing implies one gender category but who remain androgynous and thus uncategorizable. Fashion plates contained within magazines are satirized in illustrations by Barnes which exist alongside them. The reader is, perhaps subliminally, provided with both verbal and visual alternatives to conventional images of women. This was doubly heightened in Barnes's early newspaper illustrations, where women appear in direct contrast to concepts of 'the feminine' which occur throughout the paper.

It might be argued that this technique, of satirizing a genre whilst working within it, is a form of artistic compromise. Yet, I would maintain that it enabled Barnes to create a 'border crossing' between two genres, namely those of popular fashion and high art. Again, this differs significantly from techniques employed by male 'modernists'. Barnes did not align herself with any of the movements (or 'isms') which became popular in the nineteen-twenties and thirties. She never became connected with imagism, vorticism, fauvism, symbolism (which had developed from the 1890s and deployed images such as masks as symbols of identity), cubism, surrealism (a genre which attracted many women artists), or Dadaism. She did not write about her technique, as did many male artists, such as Percy Wyndham Lewis, nor did she place works in large exhibitions. Unlike the Baroness Freytag Loringhoven, who was connected, albeit loosely, with Dadaism, Barnes stood alone as an artist. Perhaps this is why she was so fascinated with Marie Bashkirtseff, a woman who became isolated due to illness. Barnes crossed many artistic borders during the course of her career, the border

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between fashion and 'high' art representing only one such transgression.

If the reader returns to this area, it is possible to analyse one aspect of Barnes's aesthetic. As, if Barnes's work did not consciously emulate drawings by Beardsley, then it might be suggested that it parodied the magazines and newspapers in which it appeared. What needs to be studied is the aesthetic used by Barnes, and its development. Such an enquiry enables one to discover parallels between works by Barnes and contemporaries such as Loy, Thelma Wood, Romaine Brooks, Elaine Grey and Nina Hamnett. To understand these similarities it appears that one has to also appreciate the profound differences between works created by women existing in the same place during a similar time period.

**Drawings Which Defy Category: Barnes The Artist, 1913-1982**

As has already been suggested, early criticism of Barnes's artistic work link her to a fin-de-siècle tradition. Later criticism (such as that by Broe, Burke and Doughty) discuss Barnes's works in terms of both her lesbianism and the abuse which she reputedly suffered during childhood. Broe regards many of Barnes's drawings as encoding visions of childhood abuse and betrayal. Whilst this remains important, representing as it does a part of Barnes's career which was ignored for years, it can serve to reduce discussion of the works to a purely biographical basis. In linking Barnes's drawings closely to details from her biography, the critic runs the risk of pigeonholing Barnes, reducing her art to one which expressed a single theme. For example, Broe describes an illustration of 1917 'When The Puppets Have Come To Town' (fig 4) as representing an encoded vision of the:

- act of molestation (limbs configuring a phallus)
- thinly masked as an intricate, stylised turn,
- or 'death pang', of the female Bufano marionette.

105 Ibid.
Beardsley: Bon Mot: c. 1890s, 'Vignette'.

Desires: From 'The Ingling'.
'The Ingling Tengo As '7's Tipped
at Coney Island.' (1913)

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.
'Twirled a Mustache (6½) He Watches the Death Ray' "Barnes: 'When the Puppets Came To Town' New York Morning Telegraph" (1917) July 8.
'The Daughter' (1918)

New in the Maryland Collection

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'Mary Pyne' A Book (1923)

Now in the College Park Libraries Collection, Maryland.
'Portrait of Alice Robrez.' 1934, first exhibited at the Guggenheim Gallery in 1943, now at Maryland.
Madame Majeska: Portrait of Emily Holmes

German (undated), now at Maryland.

fig 8.

Barnes: 'Self Portrait.' Published in an interview with Guido Bruno in December 1919. Bruno thought it 'contemptibly bad'.

fig 9.
Whilst this interpretation points to a possible reading of the illustration, it erases the plurality of meaning which the technique enables. The drawing could be regarded as representing what Broe describes, but it also satirizes the fashionable world, where people are transmuted into marionettes. Costumes, such as those made fashionable by the Ballets Russes, Paul Poiret and Georges Lepape are signified by both hair and facial decoration. Thus the whole piece undercuts the viewer’s expectation of what a magazine illustration does, for (as Elizabeth Wilson’s work on fashion and modernity demonstrates) such images reveal fashion and ‘art’ to be connected.  

Mary Lynne Broe uses the same theoretical position as a basis for describing portraits by Barnes, commenting that depictions such as the self portrait, that of Helen Westley and the drawing of Mary Pyne can be regarded as ‘tantalizingly personal sketches, which she left anonymous’. Although Silence and Power contains some of the best existing criticism of Barnes’s work, it runs the risk of categorizing Barnes’s drawings by linking them explicitly to biographical details. It could be suggested that, as with many of her texts, Barnes’s drawings deliberately effect border crossings which elude such categorization. 

So, what terms of reference might one use to describe art works such as those created by Barnes without placing them within a single critical framework? One technique which might be applied is to cite the fluidity of Barnes’s working method, to chart not only the varied materials and styles which she deployed but also her refusal to stick to one method of publication or a single type of exhibition space. 

The artist Gluck (Hannah Gluckstein [1895-1978]) once described the personal vision of the artist as being all important noting that, in her mind, the artist resembled:

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a conduit open to any unexpected experience, a lightning conductor ... The vision dictates everything in a flash of reception. The entire composition is received as a whole in scale and content ... The vision once received remains a tyrant. The process of distillation is arduous, the temptations numerous and the discipline needed sometimes hard to endure.109

Rather like Barnes, Gluck was both an experimental worker and a harsh self critic. If one studies Barnes's career, one becomes increasingly aware of how many methods she employed and how she refused to develop a single stranded technique.110 As with works by both Gluck and Romaine Brooks, many pieces by Barnes are now lost or have been destroyed.111 The diversity of presses for which Barnes worked as an illustrator complements the way in which she placed her texts, as she published for well known publishing houses, small presses and also privately. Her exhibition spaces were, likewise, inconsistent.112 Whereas an artist such as Gluck might exhibit in well known galleries for most of her career (or, as Diana Souhami points out, while she was fashionable), Barnes, it might be suggested, to avoid the fickle nature of the art world, chose to exhibit diversely.113 Early in her career (c.1913-20) she exhibited in garret spaces, such as those rented by Guido Bruno.114 Later in her career, most famously in 1943 at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in Manhattan, Barnes was to exhibit in more opulent gallery spaces.115 A review in Time, of a portrait exhibited in the Art of This Century exhibition seems to reveal that critics were bemused by the work.116 Even though she had begun painting in about 1913 Time also suggested that the Portrait of Alice Rohrer (1934) represented the beginning of Barnes's artistic career and quoted her as

110 The McKeldin Library catalogue contains details of this.
111 The paintings listed by the McKeldin represent a fraction of those which are mentioned in memoirs of the period.
113 Souhami, 1988, p.12.
114 Field, 1985, illustrated section.
115 Anon, 'The Barnes Among Women' in Time (Jan 18, 1943), p.55.
116 Ibid.
saying:

I asked myself one day, why not paint a painting?...

I painted most of it on my knees, because I couldn't afford an easel. 117

The reviewer seemed at a loss to know where to place Barnes's artistic work and the piece concluded by discussing T.S. Eliot's introduction to Nightwood. 118 This response, it might be suggested, comes from Barnes's refusal to espouse one form and that this refusal was complemented by a diverse choice of gallery space. By 1943, as Barnes probably realized, figures like Guido Bruno were largely forgotten and the 'village' of the little galleries, teashops and the Provincetown Theatre had all but disappeared. Barnes's artistic career before the Portrait of Alice had, likewise, been forgotten, as had figures such as Mary Pyne, whom she had drawn. Although Barnes's career as an artist began in 1913, by 1943 it was being described as starting in the 1930s. Thus her early works remained buried until the early 1970s and, even then, were described in terms which related them to literary modes of production. 119

Due to this fact, until the late 1980s Barnes's work was regarded as being apolitical. 120 It is true that, unlike her contemporaries Nancy Cunard, Sylvia Townsend-Warner, Valentine Ackland and Tina Modotti, Barnes did not become involved in any form of party politics. 121 Yet it is interesting to note that until the publication of Silence and Power in 1991, political works by Barnes remained largely undiscussed. 122

Yet, paintings which were exhibited in 1915 by Barnes in the garret space of Guido Bruno were clearly intended to promote a pacifist message. 123 A picture entitled The Doughboy (fig 5) clearly illustrates this point. 124 This work was excluded from discussion until 1991, as

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117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Scott, James, Djuna Barnes (Boston: Twayne, 1973).
120 See Field, 1985, p.1, for an example of this perspective.
121 As far as can be ascertained from the McKeldin Collection, Barnes was never a card carrying member of any party.
122 See Broe, 1991, throughout.
123 Ibid, illustrated section.
124 Ibid.
it did not tally with past depictions of Barnes as an artist. The piece represents a striking nude figure, menacing yet at the same time strangely melancholy. It strides through a graphic no man's land replete with carnage and destruction. The background of the painting remains expressionistic, enhancing the gaunt, foregrounded figure. The fluidity of style is matched by the wash of paint which surrounds the figure. The painting, as with those in *A Book* which refuse to meet the onlooker's gaze, disquiets the viewer. 'The Doughboy'...
essentially melancholic. Because Brook's sitters are often alone (a common portrait technique, it might be argued) they are easily described as lonely. Brook's enigmatic and self-assured self portrait has been described by Gilbert and Gubar as hinting at a mysterious source of hidden anguish. Produced in 1923, primarily in a dark palette, the painting displays her wearing a black top hat, black jacket and grey gloves... Only the title and a faint redness of the lips give away the gender of the subject, who stands in front of a waste land composed of crumbling, charred buildings that... Meryl Secrest, sees as the 'aftermath of a holocaust'.

Similarly, Andrew Field has described Barnes's 'unknowable' portrait of Emily Holmes-Coleman (fig 6) as being so 'powerful in its radiant ugliness that it is difficult to stay in the same room with it for long'. In this painting Holmes-Coleman's head is depicted as a solid mass against a plain gold background. Her short hair is pulled away from her face, which is itself almost amphibian-like. Coleman's sweater is also plain, thus the face forms the focal point of the onlooker's attention.

What Field does not say, and what Doughty only touches on is the fact that by creating works such as her portrait of Coleman, Barnes revised existing concepts of the female form. Thus she explored a type of iconography which might, had it occurred today, be termed 'feminist'. Barnes once remarked that Holmes-Coleman, another creative woman whose career has been undervalued, resembled 'a divine monkey'. It is worth noting that in medieval art, the female monkey often represented fickleness and lust, thus by altering this image so that the monkey is connected with divinity, Barnes reversed another symbolic stereotype. Reactions to this painting at the research group, concentrated upon the immense

131 Field, 1985, p.207.
133 Field, 1985, p.207.
134 For a discussion of this figure see Benton, 1992, p.89.
strength of the image. Yet is it right to suggest that the image is a 'radiantly' ugly one? It might be suggested that what Barnes did with Coleman's image was to create a secular reversal of a religious icon in red and gold, colours which were, as Sara Mills notes, traditionally used in Byzantine iconographic painting.135

Barnes's portraits do not merely avoid formal categorization but openly defy existing gender stereotypes. Holmes-Coleman, a creative artist has been painted as a secular icon, a 'divine monkey'. The creation of such images created a revision of past forms, in this case the icon, and revealed a power of presence disconnected from conventional concepts of physical beauty.136 Barnes's art could therefore be regarded as a process of reclamation, and as refusing to depict women as pretty objects, but rather representing them as contained sources of creative power.

Time after time Barnes's sitters are portrayed as enigmatic and self-contained; Alice Rohrer stands alone, gaunt and strong; Emily Holmes-Coleman is as solid and as permanent as an aspect of a landscape; Mary Pyne stares past the onlooker with defiance.137 This solidity is important, as the women are represented as being permanently fixed, as opposed to being represented as transient signs of 'femininity'. Few of Barnes's portraits (unlike those executed by Brooks) look like existing photographs of their sitters. Barnes's posthumously published picture of Mary Pyne (fig 7) makes Pyne resemble a woman in her forties, even though we know that Pyne died in her twenties.138 Did Barnes recreate the dead Pyne as a living woman and thus by creating her portrait bestow upon her the years which she lost by dying young? Field regarded Barnes's representation of Pyne as being a drawing done by someone who could not forget how Pyne was ravaged by tuberculosis, yet an alternative could be suggested to this.139 In Barnes's picture, Pyne appears strong and intelligent, and therefore it could be

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137 Field, 1985, illustrated section.
139 Field, 1985, p.103.
argued that the picture creates a testimony of Pyne’s inner fortitude as opposed to a depiction of the ravages of the disease which killed her.  

In this depiction, Pyne has aged, and transcended the physical beauty for which she was to be chiefly remembered. Her face reveals dark lines around the eyes and mouth which could be interpreted as signs of age. Pyne’s red hair is short and does not form the focal point of Barnes’s depiction which instead concentrates on the intelligence of her expression. In anecdotes Pyne is described in terms of her beauty and her disease, and as with Thelma Wood, her creative work has been all but forgotten. In Barnes’s depiction, Pyne’s face is one which betrays wit as opposed to glamour and it provides an alternative to photographs of Pyne which present her as a beautiful bohemian. Barnes’s self-portrait (published in 1919, in an article on the writer by Guido Bruno) could also be said to achieve this effect (fig 8).  

Barnes did not choose to represent herself as the ‘glamorous’ writer of her Greenwich Village days, but as a woman whose face looks questioningly out of the frame. Bruno stated that:  


Of course, it could be suggested that what the self-portrait by Barnes does is to deliberately undercut descriptions of her such as that by Bruno. In this portrait, the face is depicted as serious in expression, and appears to be unadorned by cosmetics. The portrait is one of power and yet it lacks the conventional ‘prettiness’ described by Bruno. Perhaps this is why both

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120 Barnes, 1923.  
141 Ibid.  
142 As Andrew Field’s account demonstrates. Field, 1985, pp.103-4.  
143 Ibid.  
145 Ibid.  
146 Ibid.
Bruno and Margaret Anderson chose to define Barnes as essentially uncomfortable with her own beauty. What Barnes achieved in both her own self-portrait and that of Mary Pyne, was the implication that there was more to both of them than surface glamour. As with the pacifist message of The Doughboy, this painting politicizes the personal and has been ignored in representations of Barnes's career as a graphic artist. Barnes, Wood, Loy and Brooks, are all artists who have come to be described in terms of their physical appearance. Yet beneath the surface glamour, so beguiling to writers such as John Glassco, lay a desire to represent women as being more than feminine archetypes.

In portraits, in most of her newspaper drawings and in her illustrations to Ryder, A Book and Ladies Almanack, Barnes refused to objectify 'female beauty'. This was a significant political gesture on her part, as she was often typified by her looks. It might also be suggested that if Barnes's drawings have met with a better fate than those of Thelma Wood, this is only because critics have been able to connect them to her literary works. As has been described in the appendix to this thesis, Wood is primarily depicted in terms of her role as Barnes's lover and as the real-life counterpart of Robin Vote in Nightwood. I have endeavoured to trace where Wood exhibited but, apart from the appearance of her work in the magazine Gargoyle, mentioned by Field, have not found references to her work. Emmanuel Cooper could not tell me anything about where Wood might have found gallery space, nor had he come across any references to her work. As is argued in the chapter on Ladies Almanack, Wood's art and its influence on Barnes's work is difficult to outline as a full picture of her career cannot be drawn.

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147 Ibid, and Anderson, 1930.
148 Breskin, Secrest and Field all describe these women in terms of their physical appearance.
149 Barnes, Djuna Ryder (New York: Liveright, 1928).
150 Barnes, Djuna, Nightwood (London: Faber and Faber, 1926).
152 Emmanuel Cooper (letter 14/3/92) wrote to me saying that he was unable to trace Wood's work during his extensive research into gay artists.
Barnes’s art has itself been marginalized. Onlookers have found it disquieting, I would argue, because of its uncompromising nature. Women are redefined within Barnes’s work and both ‘femininity’ and the space which it occupies have been re-evaluated. Mary Pyne, Emily Holmes-Coleman, Alice Rohrer and Barnes herself do not appear as the glamorous figures which histories of Greenwich Village and Paris have portrayed. They are solid, self-contained symbols of female creativity which do not rely on prettiness or conventional concepts of beauty. Barnes appears to expose the ‘beauty myths’ of her time, whilst creating these alternative versions of ‘femininity’. In Mary Pyne’s case, as has already been suggested, this posthumous revision provided an alternative to the insipid portrait of Pyne which had begun to be created. Likewise, Bruno’s portrait of Barnes is undercut by Barnes’s self-portrait which does not rely on surface glamour. Many of the strategies which were outlined at the beginning of this chapter are concerned with just such revisions. Just as Sherman and Boffin counteract history by providing alternative images, Barnes was creating images which challenged a history of women and ‘modernism’ which was already being constructed. She therefore subverted both her own image and the images of women which were being developed around her ‘circle’ of friends. That the women whom she chose to depict still have the power to disturb the onlooker, reveals what Ecker might recognize as an early ‘feminist aesthetic’, a gallery of non-archetypal female figures or, to use a phrase from the work of Sylvia Plath, a series of ‘disquieting muses’.

'A Web About Her': The Storytellers of *Nightwood*

The prince on the white horse that we have always been seeking. And the pretty lad who is a girl, what but the prince - princess in point lace - neither one and half the other, the painting on the fan. We love them for that reason. We were impaled in our childhood upon them as they rode through our primers, the sweetest lie of all now come to be in boy or girl, for in the girl it is the prince, and in the boy it is the girl that makes a prince and not a man. They go far back in our lost distance, where what we never had stands waiting, it was inevitable that we should come upon them, for our miscalculated longing has created them.¹

This thesis seeks to argue that gender in Barnes's texts is represented as a series of social constructions. Characters in her texts who recognize this (Dame Musset, Doctor O'Connor in *Ryder* and the freed narrator of 'Cassation') adopt a variety of masks and gender codified clothing in order to express its shifting nature. Sources for works in which such characters appear are important both contextually and in terms of structure.

In previous chapters, I have discussed possible sources for Barnes's poetry, for the *Ladies Almanack* and for *Ryder*. Continuing this analysis, I now turn to examine sources for *Nightwood*, which condition the text's discourse of gender. In the monologue quoted at the beginning of this section, Dr Matthew O'Connor explains the roots of his 'gender trouble' to Nora Flood. For the Doctor, a man who feels himself to be a woman, such confrontation is painful and will cost him the facade which he has maintained for years. He might recognize that gender is mutable, but this does not make his life less painful, as I hope to demonstrate here. O'Connor's musings also represent Barnes's exploration of gender constructions and how these are both created and maintained. The Doctor blames folklore and the fairy tale tradition for human longings concerning an imaginary land where 'what we never had stands waiting'. This accusation is expressed by each of the novel's major characters and can be deployed as a

Images taken from fairy stories occur throughout the novel and emphasize the author's exploration of the destructive properties of folklore. Many interpretations of the novel ignore this aspect of the text, most of them preferring to concentrate upon the 'quality of horror and doom very nearly related to Elizabethan tragedy' which T.S. Eliot cited in his introduction to the work.² Broe and others concentrate on the problematic nature of a text which centres upon a doomed love affair between two lesbians.³ Yet, if one regards the text as one presenting the reader with an ultimately negative vision of lesbian love, then it can be interpreted as colluding with contemporaneous sexological studies in 'inversion'. Mariead Hanrahon perceives the text as representing

a tale of misery told in misery, a misery deemed inescapable, even the only identifiable characteristic of 'the human condition'.⁴

Whilst Ellen Moers regarded it as a presentation of degeneracy, Joseph Frank, writing two decades earlier than Hanrahon, called the novel 'an amazing book' going on to state that it 'combined the simple majesty of a medieval morality play with the verbal subtlety and refinement of a symbolist poem'.⁵ Critics have rarely connected Nightwood to chap-book publications, or fairy tales, nor have they discussed how the text explores the traditional role of women as storytellers. Yet, despite this, fairy stories, fables and folk tales provided sources which shaped Nightwood in both form and content.

In 'modernist' works by women, antiquarian sources such as folk tales provided recurrent images. One example of this is the image of the witch, which was explored both by Barnes

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and by Edith Sitwell. In *The Weaker Vessel*, Antonia Fraser discusses the links between seventeenth-century women and witchcraft, and this debate ranges from actual reports of women suspected of witchcraft, to witchcraft as represented in women's writing and in ballads about women. Witches are described as potent symbols, and these are present in the discussion of gender which shapes the text of *Nightwood*. Likewise, Barnes highlights the role of the storyteller in contemporary culture. By doing so she harks back to those sources later described by Mary Prior, who outlines the leisure roles of women from the sixteenth to the eighteenth-centuries, and describes leisure hours which might include story telling. Elaine Hobby's discussion of volumes such as 'housewives almanacs' by seventeenth-century women reveal their fabulistic qualities, and this tradition proved inspiring for Barnes, who created a pastiche which crosses borders between domestic spaces and fantasy. If the almanac of Hannah Wolley is taken as an example one recognizes, as does Hobby, that even her first book is made up of many such fanciful instructions for candy-making and for creating court perfumes. Even her medical remedies verge on the fantastic, in-keeping with Tudor and Stuart cookery book tradition calling for the use of 'seven grains of unicorn's horns'.

Links between Barnes's text and works such as Wolley's seem less slight when one considers that Barnes herself wrote using the almanac tradition, and that she also created a bestiary. If such forms influence other works, they also provide sources for *Nightwood*. *Nightwood'*s imagery of mythic beasts, witches and sleeping princesses can be linked directly to Barnes's love of chap-books, almanacs, and fairy tales.

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6 Indeed, as this chapter hopes to point out, Barnes and Sitwell (both considered 'modernists') have many images in common, although a critical comparison of works by the two has never been made.


8 See Prior, Mary, *Women in English Society: 1500-1800* (London: Methuen, 1985). This text focuses throughout on both women's work and leisure time.


In those seventeenth-century chap-books which survive, references to fantastic beasts and witchcraft are common. Barnes uses imagery from popular readings of the occult published during the seventeenth-century. Such tales of women executed as witches made their way into pamphlets and chap-books, and prejudices underlying these accounts have been discussed in works by both Elaine Hobby and Antonia Fraser. One such case, that of 'Joan Peterson, the Witch of Wapping', who was executed in 1652, entered into the folk tradition via the printed page. As I later point out, images of the witch pepper the speech of Dr O'Connor, who appears familiar with such sources. Another part of the chap-book tradition used by Barnes is astrology, which fascinated both herself and Mina Loy. Likewise, bestiary beasts also haunt the pages of Nightwood. As Field has noted, Barnes owned an album of almanacs and cuttings from old French chap-books (see both the section on Ryder and that on the Ladies Almanack for details of this) which profoundly influenced her work.

The folk tale interested Barnes both as a traditional method of recounting myth, and as a performance medium. Dale Spender's commentary on women writer's who drew on strengths they had been allowed and transformed their private literary indulgence into a paid public performance; and in the process ... gained for themselves a voice and helped to create a new literary voice. might be extended, as one might regard oral performance as finding its way into the written form and thus creating a significant border crossing between 'popular' and 'literary' culture.

Whilst critics are right to identify Jacobean and Stuart 'literary' influences on Barnes's work, one can extend the boundaries of such influences and also link her to the folk tradition. Likewise, imagery taken directly from folklore occurs in much twentieth-century writing by women, and is apparent in works by writers as diverse as Katherine Mansfield, Edith Sitwell, Eudora Welty, Stevie Smith, Anne Sexton and, more recently, Angela Carter, Emma Tennant.

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11 As it is the newer text, I have used Hobby's work to inform my analysis here, see ibid and also see Fraser, 1984, pp.113-31.
Suniti Namjoshi and Marina Warner. It might be argued that *Nightwood* uses these images to explore constructions of gender and to connect these with the influence of childhood tales upon the adult.

*Nightwood* deals with a type of mythology learnt in childhood, exploring how stories absorbed by the infant condition adult expectations. A Freudian interpretation of the novel might be reductive, as all of the novel's main protagonists are plagued by dreams and beguiled by fantasy, thus the novel might be 'interpreted' as a symbolic 'dream' text. Yet such an interpretation would reduce the text's plurality, excluding a contextual discussion of Barnes's use of her sources. Within the bars and dingy rooms against which the action of the novel is set, the oral tradition is well represented. The novel's structure relies on storytelling, characters are introduced to the reader and recount tales. For example, Felix Volkbein's story concerns his own fictional history and his invented aristocratic lineage. This 'his-story', based on aristocratic European records, is later undercut by stories recounted by Dr O'Connor, Nora, and Robin, as theirs are tales which form the sub-text of such histories. Felix's lineage is not his own, but has been culled from museums such as the Carnavalé. He has re-iterated his fake family history so often that he has come to believe it himself. Indeed, throughout *Nightwood*, truth and fiction become inextricably intertwined, thus the text blurs distinctions between fact and fiction. Felix punctuates his tale with aristocratic names, but such titles might themselves be invented. His stories cross the border between accepted 'heraldic texts' and invented 'family histories'. The fact that his 'lies' are accepted blurs the distinction between history and myth. The reader recognizes Felix as an impostor, yet does not imagine that his fraud will be exposed. History and his-story, in Felix's eyes, belong to kings, dukes and princes and have nothing to do with the proletariat. In George Steiner's exploration of twentieth-century culture, *In Bluebeard's Castle*, he describes a situation which could be

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13 No full account of the fairy story as a twentieth-century woman's aesthetic appears to have been written to date.

14 As the introduction to this thesis points out, such an analysis excludes the historical sources used to create Barnes's aesthetic and also makes for a reading which maintains a single critical focus, which the texts appear to be constructed to elude.
applied to Felix's view of history:

Most history seems to carry on its back vestiges of paradise. At some point in more or less remote times, things were better, almost golden. A deep concordance lay between man and the natural setting. The myth of the fall runs stronger than any particular religion. There is hardly a civilisation, perhaps hardly an individual consciousness, that does not carry inwardly an answer to intimations of a sense of distant catastrophe.¹³

This Proustian paradise, rooted as it is in a past flowering of the aristocracy, is what Felix wishes to leave as a legacy to Robin, his wife, and to Guido, his son and heir. Unlike his own father, who appears only at the comic opening of the novel, Felix alienates both his wife and his child precisely because of the story which he attempts to tell them. When Robin becomes pregnant she broods over her own passivity, just as she listened to Felix's stories in a resentful manner. During the course of the novel, she rejects both Felix's version of history and Guido. Thus, during her marriage, Robin remains aware of some 'lost land in herself', a world which remains unexplored in Felix's account of history.¹⁶ Later, when she is Robin Vote once more (as opposed to being Baroness Robin Volkbein), she will begin a lesbian relationship with Nora Flood.

Throughout the novel, Robin remains aware that his-story cannot describe her history. In the world picture outlined by Felix, women play subservient roles, either as courtesans or consorts. The lesbian is the absent centre of his text. Robin has to leave Felix, in order to transgress a border between an invented, socially sanctioned male lineage, and a buried (yet real) lesbian past. When studying actual lesbian histories one is made aware that lesbianism and homosexuality formed sub-texts to the courts of Europe as described by Felix.¹⁷

¹⁴ Barnes, 1936, p.10.
Likewise, anxiety over gender ambiguity hallmarkd this so-called 'golden age'. Historical evidence for gender anxiety is manifold. A popular example is an anonymous English pamphlet published in 1620 entitled *Hie Mulier or the Man Woman* which describes a female transvestite, who, the writer warns

will bee man-like not onely from the head to waste, but to the very foot and in every condition: man in body by attyre, man in behaviour by rude complement, man in nature by aptnesile to anger, man in action by pursuing revenge ... And, in briefe, so much a man in all things, that they are neither men nor women, but just good for nothing.\(^\text{18}\)

This female transvestite was designated as a source of fear, and this fear persisted well into the twentieth-century. Aspects of such anxieties can be perceived in both Havelock Ellis's theories of inversion and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, where Stephen Gordon gives up her lover, Mary, to a 'real man', thus choosing to recognize herself as an 'invert'.\(^\text{19}\)

The historical subtext of homosexuality was written out of histories such as those compiled by Felix. Jeanette H. Foster was to write of this subtext, outlining the concept of an 'underground' history:

It seems certain, then, that there have been women of variant inclination through the centuries who also possessed literary gifts, and it is probable that exhaustive research would reveal traces of variance in a surprising number of feminine authors from the Renaissance on.\(^\text{20}\)

In *A Woman Appeared to Me* (1904), Renée Vivien described the choices open to lesbian artists (who are embodied in her text by the character of San Giovanni) who faced a sense of isolation created by a 'buried' lesbian artistic and literary tradition.\(^\text{21}\) In writing of women and

\(^{20}\) Foster, 1985, pp.117.
creativity in the first half of this century, Gilbert and Gubar discuss a female tradition which forms the undercurrent to a male tradition, yet they do not discuss how this can be specifically applied to lesbian writing.²² Yet, as with Virginia Woolf's aforementioned concept of being 'locked into' tradition, Barnes presents exclusion from such tradition (and histories of tradition) as possessing advantages. For example, Felix has created a prison for himself, consisting of both objects and fables from the past:

His rooms were taken because a Bourbon had been carried from them to death.

He kept a valet and a cook; the one because she resembled Queen Victoria,

Victoria in another cheaper material, cut to a poor man's purse

thus here the reader is informed that Felix is familiar with 'edicts and laws, folklore and heresy'.²³ He is imprisoned by a persona which is self created. Despite his oddity, Felix is not the novel's most outrageous storyteller, as Matthew O'Connor (abortionist, transvestite, wit, and original Irish tenor) occupies this role. When the reader first encounters the Doctor he is engaged in his customary role of holding an audience captive. Yet he is also located within an oral tradition from which he cannot break free. Although a full account of the Doctor's role in the novel occurs in the following section, it is useful to consider his guise as a storyteller here.

The Doctor titles himself 'Doctor-Matthew-Mighty-Grain-of-Salt-Dante-O'Connor' and by so doing creates a fiction about his life.²⁴ He, as his second name suggests, describes both Paradise (the world of bars and sailors) and the inferno (a metropolis which is run by and for heterosexuals). His name also indicates the crossing of a border between a literary text (as created by Dante) and an oral tale (as O'Connor works within a verbal tradition). He is confined by fictions about himself, and his torment is doubled because, unlike Felix, he is aware of his confinement. Stories recounted by the Doctor vary from being outrageous to obscene. He is aware of his role as a storyteller and defines himself as such:

No one knows it as I know it, I who am the god of darkness. Very well, but know the worst then.25

During the text's progression, the Doctor is unable to maintain his role as an observer. As the above quotation suggests, he regards himself as an occultist, yet he concludes, as does Marlowe's Mephistopheles, by being himself hell.26

His tales become increasingly frenetic as he (who wishes that he had been born a woman) realizes that they do not apply to his private life. Whereas his stories have comforted both Nora and Felix, they offer little consolation to himself. Story telling, in itself a creative process and part of a long tradition, destroys O'Connor and his final tale deteriorates into a drunken ramble. He cannot fully tell 'her-story', much as he might wish to do so. As Sue Roe has pointed out, telling 'her-story' is often:

a painful and taxing experience demanding patience, restraint and courageous honesty.27

From an essentialist perspective O'Connor's tales might be regarded as being doubly painful as they cannot fully articulate her-story, as to do this the Doctor would have to occupy a female body, not merely 'pass' as female by using women's clothing. From a practical viewpoint, his stories are, likewise, 'tailored' to suit an audience who might reject him if his talk appears to be overtly 'feminised'. O'Connor uses the very imagery from fairy tales which Roe links to subversion (as she argues that in reviving such stories the woman writer turns an old form on its head in order to expose its ridiculousness).28 Likewise, he recognizes this ridiculousness but also acknowledges that he is the victim of such old traditions, a victim of stories which he, in turn, has helped to perpetuate.

Nora could also be defined as a victim of tales told in childhood. To tell her-story she has

25 Ibid.
28 Ibid, p.10.
to undercut tales such as those told by Felix. Thus, in order to counteract his-story Nora uses folklore, the text which underlies history. Imagery employed by her includes that from the fairy tale genre, and this becomes increasingly interwoven with symbolism which she has derived from her dreams. Nora's story does not provide solutions, it does not enable her to keep Robin, nor does it give her personal satisfaction.

As with Guido, Nora is better able to cope with fiction than with fact. When Guido is informed that his mother has left the family, the truth brings him close to tears, proving him to be more at ease with his father's stories. This is the first time that the reader is confronted by Robin's absence. Later, she will abandon Nora. After this second departure, Nora tries to seek Robin out and reclaim her. She is depicted as being unable to cope with the fact that Robin is gone and looks for comfort in the stories recounted by Dr O'Connor, and this deep desire to find solace in stories has been discussed by Mary Lynne Broe. Broe also describes how the mythical world which Zadel Barnes created in order to placate her granddaughter was reliant upon story telling. This might be one biographical link to the reliance on stories exhibited by both Nora and the Doctor. Broe points out that:

The mythical world Zadel created was a matriarchate similar to that of the original fairy legends, those old wives tales that celebrated matriarchal societies before the DWEMS (Dead White European Male Scholars) got hold of them, altering them so radically that Florence Rush could claim that these tales were made not born.

Broe likens this private world to the cities of Angria and Gondal created by the Brontë children, thus highlighting a possible link between Barnes's work and a visionary genre of women's writing.

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid, p.54.
Such a fairy-tale tradition is not merely reliant on the tellers who nourish it but also depends on those who collect the tales. Throughout the text, Jenny Petherbridge collects both possessions and tales which belong to others. Because these stories are stolen, they have greater meaning for their hearers than for Jenny herself:

The words that fell from her mouth seemed to have been lent to her ... Hovering, trembling, tip-toeing, she would unwind anecdote after anecdote in a light rapid lisping voice which one always expected to change, to drop and become the 'everyday' voice; but it never did. The stories were humorous, well-told. She would smile, toss her hands up, widen her eyes; immediately everyone in the room had a certain feeling of something lost, sensing that there was one person who was missing the importance of the moment, who had not heard the story; the teller herself.32

The description is one worth analysing. Words fall from her mouth, as toads and diamonds fall from women's mouths in many folk tales, her stories unwind, recalling to mind the legend of Ariadne. Jenny, with her 'continuous rapacity for other people's facts', also collates other people's fictions.33 She creates a labyrinth of tales and objects in hope of confining Robin within it but, as her tales unwind, Barnes makes it evident that it is Jenny who represents the captive. Fictions, in the end, confine Jenny as they hamper all of the major characters. Within the confines of this chapter, I wish to attempt to locate such fictions and to define the imagery through which they are expressed.

Nightwood, Fairy Tales and 'Modernist' Women's Writing

In discussing Carson McCullers' twentieth-century fable, The Ballad of the Sad Café, Gilbert and Gubar mention 'the inexplicable force that motivates people in fairy tales'.34 Such force is also discussed by Bruno Bettleheim in The Uses of Enchantment.35 While Bettleheim

32 Barnes, 1936, pp.100-1.
34 Gilbert and Gubar, 1987, p.106.
35 Bettleheim, Bruno, The Uses of Enchantment (London: S.R.C., 1976), see text
discusses the symbolic aspects of individual tales, charting their psychological importance, it is interesting to note the similarity between his ideas of the ‘action’ of fairy stories with those of Gilbert and Gubar. As Gilbert and Gubar write from an American feminist viewpoint and Bettleheim speaks from a white, male, European-Jewish perspective one would expect their readings to be distinct, yet they are linked by their ideas concerning the structure and meanings of the folk tradition. Likewise, the following statement by Humphrey Carpenter highlights the potency of the fairy story:

> as a reflection of the real state of the world, such stories are uncannily accurate.

Reward and punishment, happy endings and disasters, fall on people with just that degree of unpredictability and unkindness.  

The ‘inexplicable force’ spoken of by many critics of the genre, from Propp to Bettleheim, might also be applied to *Nightwood*. Robin’s reasons for leaving both Felix and Nora are inexplicable, as is Guido’s desire to enter a religious order. The plot is not the only part of the novel to be conditioned by fairy tales, as people who inhabit the novel could be interpreted as representing stock characters from the folk tradition. For example, Nora, Robin and Doctor O’Connor all perceive themselves as the prince who should have been a princess and the princess who should have been a prince. The Doctor says that these roles were granted to them in infancy and have been revived over the years by their own ‘miscalculated longing’. Contained within this concept is the idea of the fairy tale as a pantomime, a genre in which gender role swapping was a common tradition, a prince portrayed by a woman and a dame by a man.

Such ‘inversions’ of gender constructs could be used partly to explain Nora’s love for Robin and the Doctor’s desire to be a woman. In her biography of Ellen Terry, Nina Auerbach

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37 Another textual reading might suggest that this 'force' is biblical in origin as, like the citizens of Babylon, Barnes's characters see their lives destroyed.
discusses the freedoms of gender role reversal:

The assumption of male clothes was an immediate appropriation of male prerogatives. When at the turn of the century, cross-dressing became a political declaration through which women dramatized new selves and new privileges, male clothing signalled ideological changes.38

Women dressed as princes and men kitted out as women inspired, as Auerbach puts it, a 'confused yearning'.39 As with Marjorie Garber's definition of the effect of transvestite theatre upon an audience, where the presence of the transvestite 'titillates' and also provides the audience with a visual 'object of desire', this yearning for an image which is 'other' is similar to that which is expressed by Dr O'Connor in his definition of the appeal of fairy stories.40

Yet, using categories from the folk tradition, the Doctor is not only a prince who should have been a princess but also a magician. When Robin faints and the Doctor is summoned to her room, accompanied by Felix, Felix sees him perform the actions of a 'dumbfounder' or man of magic.41 From this viewpoint, the reader perceives him as a shaman. Yet, the Doctor refuses to fit into this role, as he prefers to be a female sage or crone, the storyteller or the 'old woman who lives in the closet'.42 This depiction also refers to his 'closeted' transvestism. In a different passage, the Doctor remarks that his wisdom is that of the 'nocturnal hag whimpering on the thorn'.43 As the 'old woman', the Doctor can bring forth this hag but in 'the grave dilemma of his alchemy' he cannot control her.

As was discussed earlier, the image of the hag was often employed by twentieth-century women writers. Edith Sitwell wrote of 'Three Poor Witches', one of whom was three footed

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39 Ibid, p.64.
40 See Garber, Marjorie, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.27-30, p.36. Here Garber argues that social dress codes throughout history have made cross-dressing appear more desirable.
41 Barnes, 1936, p.57.
42 Ibid, p.196.
43 Ibid, p.118.
thus betraying 'otherness' by her outward appearance:

When she walks
Turned to a wreath
Is every hedge.44

Sitwell recognized the hag as a potent symbol of female subversion, and this can be traced back to medieval tracts. Barnes's image of the 'nocturnal hag', is similar to Sitwell's 'three witches' who come to be described in terms of their physical difference:

Black and lean,
Are Moll and Meg,
And Myrraline.45

Throughout Barnes's novel, the Doctor seeks to subvert concepts of gender which imprison him, by using images such as that of the hag. Thus, in attributing the vision of the hag to him, Barnes attached to his character a recognizable symbol of subversion. In his guise of storyteller the Doctor says: 'Oh it's a grand bad story, and who says I'm a betrayer? I say, tell the story of the world, to the world'.46 He concludes by being 'drunk and telling the world' this story, a human being who is unsure of his role as alchemist, hag or old woman.47

If the Doctor identifies with both the necromancer and the storyteller, then Jenny Petherbridge connects herself to the role of wicked stepmother/witch/queen. In this she could be likened to Salome, the wicked stepmother in Eudora Welty's Mississippi re-telling of a classic fairy tale scenario, The Robber Bridegroom (1942).48 Rather like the witch who imprisons Hansel in the house made of sugar candy, Jenny will separate Robin and Nora, imprisoning the former within a house of opulent objects. This might also be regarded as a development of themes from Barnes's short fictions. As with Snow White's wicked

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45 Ibid.
46 Barnes, 1936, p.288.
stepmother, Jenny is associated with mirrors:

By weeping she appeared to be like a single personality who, by multiplying her tears, brought herself into the position of one who is seen twenty times in twenty mirrors still only one, but many times distressed.49

If Jenny is associated with the stepmother, then Robin can be aligned with Snow White. Snow White is, likewise, a story which has fascinated women writers. In Angela Carter's vigorous re-telling of the tale, Snow White's father bestows upon her the gift of beauty by a process of naming:

'I wish I had a girl as white as snow', says the Count. They ride on. They come to a halt in the snow, this hole is filled with blood. He says: 'I wish I had a girl as red as blood'. So they ride on again and here is a raven, perched on the bare bough. 'I wish I had a girl as black as that bird's feather'.50

In Carter's version, Snow White does not live to find her 'prince' but, on the whim of her jealous stepmother, melts back into the objects from which she was created. According to Carter, who edited two volumes of the *Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (and who outlined in her introduction to the first of these her view of the form as being a subversive one) Snow White is transmuted into a rose but even so the Countess fails to conquer her:

The Count picked up the rose, bowed and handed it to his wife; when she touched it, she dropped it. 'It bites!' she said.51

This modern re-telling of the story not only subverts the genre but also proves the power of the original tale. Gilbert and Gubar have described Snow White as a 'virgin prototype', regarding the text as a dramatized exploration of the struggle between the angel and the

49 Barnes, 1936, p.111.
monster which both reside within the 'female' psyche. In the archetype of the Queen they perceive a cycle of sexual jealousy, as with Salome in Eudora Welty's text. According to this reading, by killing Snow White the Queen overcomes her own rage. Barnes appears to be one of the first 'modernist' women writers to have adapted this tale and one can only speculate as to her influence on writers as diverse as Welty, Carter and Namjoshi. Just as Snow White, in Carter's positive reading, seems to be less powerful than she actually is, Nightwood's 'somnambule', Robin Vote, appears to act in a kind of dumb stupor. Yet, despite this, her actions condition the lives of both Nora and Jenny, just as Snow White, in Carter's tale, influences the actions of the Queen. Sleepers such as Robin, comments Doctor O'Connor, are the proprietors of an 'unknown land'. Stories such as 'Snow White' are re-enacted in the land of dreams, a land which is possessed by sleepers and 'somnambules'. Nora dreams of her grandmother:

There in my sleep was my grandmother, who I loved more than anyone, tangled in the grave grass and flowers blowing above and between her, lying there in the grave, in the forest, in a coffin of glass.

This image of the glass coffin might be described as being taken directly from 'Snow White', yet as Mary Lynne Broe has pointed out that the grandmother in the glass coffin is part of a dream-sequence which both affirms and interrogates the 'control authority of the grandmother who cross-dresses'. Broe connects such imagery with Barnes's relationship with her grandmother. In this dream, the grandmother neutralizes the 'violating father' by making him lie down in the coffin with her. Yet, Broe argues, the dream sequence delineates the suffering which Barnes felt, like Antonia White and Emily Holmes-Coleman, to have been a pattern in her own childhood:

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53 Barnes, 1936, p.127.
55 Broe, Mary Lynne, 1989, p.52.
56 Ibid, p.72.
Lack of control. Denial of agency. Denial of subject position. The dream exhibits considerable aggression toward the father and grandmother, who would seem to be in collusion, since Nora, the dreamer, exerts the authority of control by assigning them to the light space of the coffin. Again, what concerns Nora is the protocol of dream analysis: how one constructs a discourse to express the family collusion and the cruel disregard that leaves the daughter silenced yet with the task of engendering her script, her story.\textsuperscript{57}

Such an image, with its gothic associations, is similar to those used by both Welty in \textit{The Robber Bridegroom} and by Carter in \textit{The Bloody Chamber}. However, Barnes's vision is more negative than Carter's, and not as firmly rooted in the American folk tradition as is Welty's. Yet if, as with Welty, Barnes was one of the first twentieth-century women writers to use these images (thus also representing a foremother to writers such as Carter) the links between them have remained undiscussed.

As Dr O'Connor points out, grandmothers are responsible for passing tales such as 'Snow White' to grandchildren. Resultant dreams are, he says, 'our answer to what our grandmother's were told love was, and what it never cam to be'.\textsuperscript{58} Thus the glass coffin is an image of a beautiful, temporary death. It also suggests that the dead (or perhaps even a 'somnambule') might be awoken by love, as Nora hopes to wake Robin. Yet, Robin's sleeping state may have been artificially induced, by either drug dependancy or alcoholism. The grandmother's death, as opposed to this, is 'clean' and her body remains inviolate, and is protected by the forest.

Thus Robin Vote resembles Briar Rose, the Sleeping Beauty, as much as she appears to recall the image of Snow White. She is caught, says Barnes:

\begin{quote}
\textit{as if the past was a web about her, as there is a web of time about a very old}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, pp.72-3.
\textsuperscript{58} Barnes, 1936, pp.194-5.
Breaking the web appears to be impossible for Robin, as neither Felix or Nora is capable of saving her. The web extends to all of the text's characters, but only Robin does not realize that she is enmeshed.

This web can also be located as an image from fairy tales. In such tales, the prince always rescues the princess, usually overcoming tremendous odds. For example, in Perrault's tale of the 'Sleeping Beauty in the Wood', the prince who had the spirit of a hero, determined to find out the myth for himself.

Spurred on by both generosity and curiosity, he leapt from his horse and began to force his way through the thick wood. To his amazement the stiff branches all but gave way and the ugly thorns sheathed themselves of their own accord. In other versions of the tale, the prince is cut by briars but endures pain in order to win the princess. This story has been told and revised many times, whilst the myth at its core often remains essentially masculine. If the web recalls this image of thorns, then Nora, as the prince, breaks through these too late.

Edith Sitwell regarded the gothic tale as one to which the artistic imagination constantly returns:

> When we come to that dark house,
> Never sound of wave shall rouse
> The bird that sings within the blood,
> Of those who sleep in that deep wood:
> For in that house those shadows now
> Seem cast by some dark unknown bough.®

Resembling Christina Rossetti before her, Sitwell questioned accepted versions of the tale.

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where the woman is rescued by the man. The Prince, for example, is almost made redundant in Sitwell's poem and he is less memorable than the house within the wood. Indeed, in this 'modernist' reading the house is active, thus the 'sleeping' version of it is almost as vital as its original state. As with Robin Vote's life, Sitwell's house already existed in a dream state, thus when it 'sleeps' little has actually changed. It is a house built upon fictions, which control even the dead:

The palace housekeeper, cross Mrs Troy,

Who kept all the whimpering ghosts locked

In a cupboard.

As with Barnes, Sitwell recognized that the 'lost and terrible innocence' of the story was its most enduring feature. Sitwell's castle, as with Nora's dream of the grandmother in Nightwood, negates male power and establishes a feminine, if somnolent, hierarchy. Barnes's 'somnambule' cannot be rescued by Felix, as he is not a prince, but neither can she be rescued by Nora, who tries to take-on the prince's gendered role and fails. Barnes recognized the male focus of the original myth and revealed its limitations.

Although at the end of the novel Nora will brave briars that make her 'stumble', she will not be able to rescue Robin from her fate. This suggests that Nora is not an actual prince but a woman masquerading as a prince. The implication here is surely that the promise of fairy tales cannot be fulfilled, thus Nora proves incapable of fulfilling the mythological role which she has adopted. Robin, caught as she is in the 'web' of an essentially 'masculine' past, is driven insane. This may be why many feminists, such as Moers and Hanrahon, have regarded the novel as ultimately depressing. Yet, myths used to present the emotional battle between Nora and Robin resist simplistic interpretations.

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid, p.70.
64 Ibid, p.71.
65 A version of Perrault's tale by Angela Carter also describing such brambles can be found in her volume The Sleeping Beauty, (London: Gollancz, 1982), pp.9-20.
Indeed, the 'web' which surrounds Robin might also represent the enchanted confinement of Elaine of Astolat, the Lady of Shalott, who was trapped in a tower weaving the picture of a world in which she could not participate. Elaine wove a tapestry taken from a view which was reflected in the surface of a vast mirror and, by a final confrontation with the actual world, she engendered her own death. Although the most obvious visual and poetic citations of this myth are male (Tennyson, Waterhouse and Hunt providing famous visual and verbal versions of it) it has also inspired women artists such as the painter Elizabeth Siddall.® Like Robin Vote, Tennyson's 'Lady of Shalott' walks: 'Like some seer in a trance/Seeing all his own mischance-/With glassy countenance.'® Robin, Barnes's version of a recognized 'feminine' archetype, wanders towards her doom having left the imprisoning houses which, despite their confining nature, might have protected her. Nora's confrontation with Robin reveals her own failings, just as Lancelot Du Lac's confrontation with the dying Elaine signifies his personal fall from grace. Barnes, as with both Welty and Carter, revised a story originally collected by male authors.

*Nightwood* offers the reader a pastiche of fairy tale images and redefines the meaning of the original published tales. Images within it, similar to those used by Katherine Mansfield in her 'vignettes', deploy obscure symbols belonging to folklore, as well as the well known fairy tale images mentioned above.®® In one early 'vignette' published in 1907 (which provides a good example of how 'modernist' women writers used the genre) Mansfield wrote of a series of stories kept within a castle which existed, like Sitwell's sleeping house, in solitude:

High among the beech woods, stands the old castle, a mammoth skeleton, a vast, yawning forsaken tomb, in whose grey shadows the sweet body of

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66 See the first page of the chapter on Barnes's art for a discussion of Siddall. Also see Marsh, Jan, *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), pp.46-7.
Inside this castle stands the discarded paraphernalia of the folk tale, waiting, presumably, for a modern writer to develop it. In other vignettes (also published in 1907) Mansfield’s imagery includes faeries, sea-children, a rainbow shell which sings in the ocean and a woman who keeps her ‘singing thoughts in a little, silver cage’. These are similar to images which were used by Barnes in *Nightwood*.

A recurrent image used by Barnes is that of the heart. As well as being a Catholic symbol, hearts are a staple of the fairy-tale: a heart is all that is left of Oscar Wilde’s ‘Happy Prince’; a heart is discovered in the embers after Anderson’s ‘Steadfast Tin Soldier’ has been consumed in the furnace; and, in ‘Snow White’, the huntsman brings the wicked queen the heart of a young deer, instead of that of the Princess herself. By using an image of the heart in a more obscure fashion, Barnes, nevertheless, recalls the tone of a folk tale. Thus the text, once more, crosses a border between what is literary and what is popular, as her novel contains elements of both avant-garde fiction (composed for an elite ‘modern’ audience), and the folk tale (reaching a wide audience and going back to ancient times).

Barnes’s heart image punctuates O’Connor’s discourse. O’Connor says:

I tell you madam, if one gave birth to a heart on a plate, it would say ‘love’ and twitch like the lopped leg of a frog.

Thus the Doctor recalls the fairy tale image of the heart. The image of the eland, which is linked to characteristics which belong to Robin Vote, is harder to pin down. The eland is observed

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid, p.40.
72 Barnes, 1936, pp.59-60.
coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear, stepping in trepidation of flesh that will become myth; as the unicorn neither man nor beast deprived.\textsuperscript{73}

Despite harts and hearts providing common images in story books, this image remains obscure.

Furthermore, if, within the world of the text, it might be assumed that Nora, Jenny and the Doctor can be regarded as fairy tale characters, then Felix and Guido can also be outlined as being derivative of such. Felix is aware of Robin's status in the tale, he associates her with the eland and is also aware of the 'web' which surrounds her. Robin seeks 'the prince on a white horse', whilst Nora desires to be herself a prince. If this runs contrary to the fairy story and as it subverts the heterosexually defined fairy tale genre, then Robin and Nora cannot be happily united at the tale's finale. Is the fairy tale subverted because Robin marries the unsuitable suitor, rejects her prince and leaves with the wicked queen? Felix, as has been discussed, is a charlatan but, to heterosexual eyes, Robin and Nora also represent 'impostors'. There is, however, a flaw in such a textual interpretation, for unsuitable suitors are usually depicted as thwarted. Yet, Felix's courtship of Robin is successful and their union produces a child, Guido. As (using the criteria of the folk tale) Felix has married the princess he could be taken as one of the fairy tale hierarchy, either a prince or a baron. This seems to be appropriate, as 'Baron' is the title which Felix has chosen for himself. Like many of the folk hierarchy, Felix demands an heir of his wife. The masculine line being perpetuated is here ironic, as the aristocratic lineage is invented. Felix's son inherits a vast 'fairy tale' concerning his ancestry and birthright.

Due to this, Guido resembles a changeling, as he belongs neither to the aristocracy or to the Jewish ancestors whom his father has denied. Mary Lynne Broe believes that Barnes's use

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, p.46.
of this image of the 'betrayed child' is due to the author's own experiences of her father's incestuous behaviour.\textsuperscript{74} Children such as Guido Volkbein figure 'last, or more likely, not at all in the many invariable judgements of guilt and innocence which abound in incest discourse'.\textsuperscript{75} Whilst Guido is not a victim of physical abuse he appears, like Broe's 'daughters of incest', to have been rendered 'invisible and mute' by his father's presence.\textsuperscript{76}

Symbolically, Guido is as distanced from reality as the doll which Nora gives to Robin at the outset of their relationship. This doll has been said (by Faderman and others) to represent the child which she and Robin will never be able to have.\textsuperscript{77} The role of the doll in lesbian fiction is also mentioned in the findings of the lesbian history group.\textsuperscript{78} Yet, the doll might just as easily be said to represent the novel's many allusions to childhood fictions, or it could also resemble a 'changeling', a faery child which could be left in place of a human baby. A discussion of such images can be found in Maureen Duffy's \textit{The Erotic World of Faery}, whilst the old meaning of the changeling has been discussed by Brian Froud and Alan Lee in their volume \textit{Faeries}.\textsuperscript{79} Robin's doll resembles Guido, the 'changeling' of the text. She smashes the doll, echoing the earlier scene in which she held Guido aloft, as if she meant to dash him to the ground. The doll might be regarded as re-presenting Guido, the unwanted child. O'Connor has warned Nora that 'no myth is safely broken', thus when Robin smashes the doll she breaks the myth of her maternal role.\textsuperscript{80} Barnes appears to have been one of many 'modernist' women to recognize the doll as a potent symbol for women. Dolls often surface in twentieth-century works by women and usually represent unauthentic or invented lives. Examples of use of the image might include Katherine Mansfield's 'chinese doll' which acts as a mute witness to the

\begin{thebibliography}{80}
\bibitem{74} Broe, 1989, p.49.
\bibitem{75} Ibid, p.46.
\bibitem{76} Ibid.
\bibitem{80} Barnes, 1936, pp.59-60.
\end{thebibliography}
life of its owner. Later in the century, the fiction of Angela Carter utilized the doll as a symbol: in her novels *The Magic Toyshop* and *The Infernal Desire Machines of Dr Hoffmann*; in the film screenplay of *The Company of Wolves* and in the short story 'The Loves of Lady Purple'.

By undercutting a set of deeply rooted mythological images, Barnes reveals the damage done to adult minds by heterosexually based fairy tales learnt in infancy. Throughout the progress of the novel, characters attempt to mould themselves to images which they cannot possibly fit. Nora wishes to be a prince, but society will not accept her as such; Robin destroys herself by adopting the persona of a sleeping princess; Felix invents a heritage which he cannot truly claim; and the Doctor inhabits a 'twilight' realm replete with the trappings of a 'womanhood' which cannot be his. Nora, Robin and Matthew O'Connor wait in vain for the 'prince on the white horse', thus they are caught in a 'web of dreams' which was nurtured in infancy and from which they cannot break free.

A Nightwood Bestiary: The Human Circus

In *Nightwood*, imagery derived from folk tales is deployed alongside a catalogue of beasts. Beast fables which were explored by Barnes are encoded within the text, and are distinct from the folk symbolism discussed in the previous section. Early in the novel, impostors and aristocrats with whom Felix associates are described in bestial terms:

There was a Princess Nadja, a Baron Von Tink, a Principessa Stasero y Staseto, a King Buffo and a Duchess of Broadback: gaudy cheap cuts from the beast life, immensely capable of that great disquiet called entertainment.

Beasts and the world of entertainment are constantly linked in Barnes's text, and form an emblematic cabaret. Whilst this might be linked to the idea of 'transvestite theatre' outlined by

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83 Barnes, 1936, p.37.
Marjorie Garber, it might also be connected to her love of medieval bestiaries, where many of the animals listed, such as the Manticore, are part-animal and part-human.  

In her essay 'Laughing at Leviticus', Jane Marcus aligns these images to Bakhtin's notion of carnival, revealing the text's links with the circus epic, stating that 'its weapon is laughter, a form of folk grotesque derived from Rabelais and surviving in circus'. By equating Barnes's bestiary with those who were to perish in the Nazi holocaust, homosexuals and jews being among them, Marcus explores political aspects of the text. Yet, as she aligns the text to male models (Bakhtin, Hugo and Rabelais among others) she ultimately denies its power as a work based on the revision of gender expectations. As with most of Barnes's texts, Nightwood crosses borders between genres, as well as between elite and popular forms. If the 'human bestiary' with which it presents the reader is to be aligned to fairy-tales, then the characters who form that bestiary must be scrutinized.

King Buffo obviously represents 'the king of the opera comique'. He is also a regular member of the 'beast life'. This world, inhabited as it is by 'freaks', mountebanks, charlatans and impostors, is often described in animalistic terms and appears to suggest that the division between animals and human beings is a false one. We are told that Felix is drawn to the theatre and circus because 'in some way they linked his emotions to a higher and unattainable pageantry of kings and queens'. Besides this, he is also drawn to the human circus, where the individuals 'smell stronger than their beasts'. Such imagery was also employed by Carter who, like Barnes, populates her fiction with characters who reveal themselves to be, literally,

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86 Barnes, 1936, p.25.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
'bestial'. As with *Nightwood*, Carter's fiction explores old beast fables and creates a vision of mankind which is at once animalistic and enigmatic. In the following passage from 'The Company of Wolves' the influence of a writer such as Barnes appears to be strong. However, Carter's use of the folk tale as a means for subversion, it might be argued, is less negative than Barnes's, as here the rural girl gains ascendancy over her aristocratic lover and his kind:

> A witch from up the valley once turned an entire wedding party into wolves because the groom had settled on another girl. She used to order them to visit her, at night, from spite, and they would sit and howl around her cottage for her, serenading her with their misery.99

Separated by decades, Barnes and Carter touch on similar themes, despite using them to achieve different ends, namely the slim division between animal and human life, a division which both authors suggest to be a 'false construct'. In *Nightwood*, most characters find this divide disquieting, yet it is because of its existence that the Doctor can give voice to his decadent imagination. Questions raised by 'the beast life', include the implicit knowledge that 'humanity' is a masquerade. To disguise this fact, humans create specific gender codification through dress, thus establishing a set of power relations which 'disguise' the frailty of the divide between animals and human beings. The Doctor recognizes this and thus creates stories which expose the false nature of gender construction, and imply the frailty of human defences. O'Connor's is a world where nothing remains sacred, an environment where he is able to describe Luther 'as bawdy an old ram as ever trampled his own straw'.90

As with Felix, all of the novel's characters are drawn to the circus: Nora meets both Robin and the Doctor while doing publicity work for an actual circus; images of 'freaks' pervade the Doctor's conversation; Felix loves the circus; and Robin is described as half-beast, half-human, a twentieth-century Manticore. In linguistic terms, the Doctor's speech becomes a

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90 Barnes, 1936, p.37. This reference to Luther is important, as the phrase 'Watchman What of the Night?', repeated throughout the text, quotes a Lutheran hymn.
type of ringmaster's discourse, or perhaps the discourse of the cabaret M.C. He describes all manner of 'freaks' and charlatans and his speech is that of a mountebank, bringing an element of grande guignol to the text. Amongst his most memorable creations are a tattooed man, unnatural births and:

Mademoiselle Basquette who was damned from the waist down, a girl without legs, built like a medieval abuse. She used to wheel herself through the Pyrenees on a board.91

Surprisingly this image is based on fact, as a prostitute, similar to Mademoiselle Basquette, is listed by Brassai in his memoir of Paris during the 1920s and '30s.92 With tales embellished with such figures, the Doctor makes himself the 'great liar' who haunts Felix's imagination. He also reveals knowledge of the creatures who lie barely concealed behind human masks, and of the easily crossed divide between animal and human kingdoms.

The stories told by the Doctor form the currency with which he trades with the world. He recognizes that 'laughter is the pauper's money' and uses it to gull meals from his audience.93 Like Johnson's Volpone, he is a good mountebank.94 For example, he may well have invented both the tattooed man and Mademoiselle Basquette but he present them as a gift to those who are willing to listen. In return he receives invitations and free drinks in abundance. Felix recognizes the priceless quality of the Doctor's best stories:

So Felix was astonished to find that the most touching flowers laid on the altar he had raised to his imagination were placed there by the people of the underworld, and that the reddest was to be the rose of the Doctor.95

In order for his conversation to operate at the level of his audience, Doctor O'Connor peppers

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91 Ibid, p.45.
93 Ibid, p.53.
94 See Ben Johnson's play of 1607, 'Volpone: Or the Fox' in Three Comedies (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), pp.79-80. Here Volpone dresses as the mountebank, Scoto Mantuano, in order to win Celia's favours.
95 Ibid, p.50.
his speech with references to this 'underworld', and he also speaks frequently of human beings as 'beasts'.

Bestial images, such as those deployed by the Doctor, form a key to Barnes’s world view. Barnes used both beasts and birds to form a complex patterning of images. Birds often fill her characters’ conversations. For example, the Doctor mentions a wren, an owl, goslings, the birds of the air and an 'Adriatic bird' in his conversation, and he also describes Jenny as someone who is too mean to 'give her shit to the crows'.® The reader first encounters Robin Vote:

On the bed, surrounded by a confusion of potted plants exotic palms and cut flowers, faintly oversung by the notes of unseen birds.®

When Robin laughs, her laughter is described as being that of a person who 'looks up to discover that they have coincided with the needs of a bird'.® Like many caged birds, Robin is trapped in an alien environment, and is described as a woman transmuting into an animal or bird, in other words, as a 'freak' of nature or, more disturbingly, as a representation of the actual 'human condition'. Nora Flood recognizes her bird-like qualities as does Dr O'Connor yet, ironically, both of them try to entrap her, Nora by love, the Doctor by categorizing her. Earlier in the novel, as the Doctor takes holy water, he is described as resembling 'a single but beholden bird'.® It is worth recalling that birds, despite their small size, possess qualities of resilience which often mark them as nature's survivors. For example, country birds often survive in the city by feeding from the crumbs left by human beings, just as the Doctor feeds at the feasts of others. Less literally, most of the characters in the novel are reliant upon scraps from the conventional world (stories, clothing and history) which they either adopt as guises or subvert. The Doctor describes Jenny as 'moultling' in places, as opposed to living in

® Ibid, p.38, p.46, p.120, p.151, p.152, p.55.
® Ibid.
® Ibid, p.81.
® Ibid, p.49.
them.\textsuperscript{100} Just as birds create nests from found objects, so Jenny fills her home with other people's possessions. By using bird imagery, Barnes distanced her characters from conventional views of humanity and, by so doing, revealed their 'otherness', for example both Jenny and Robin are described as being nearer to 'birds' than to human beings.

When characters display their mental injuries these are described in animal terms. Guido, feeling the need for religion in his own soul, observes

\begin{quote}
the priests with the quickening of breath, in those whom concentration must take the place of participation, as in the scar of a wounded animal will be seen the shudder of its recovery.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

Animal and bird symbolism is likewise deployed when Barnes describes religious activity. For example, the Doctor is bird-like when taking holy water, and Guido resembles an animal when watching the priests and wishing to become an acolyte. In the text religion is rejected as being ultimately powerless. For instance, it does not aid the Doctor as he descends towards the inanities of his final, drunken ramblings; it weakens Guido when it should empower him; and it leaves Nora bewildered. As the church condones heterosexual union, there is little wonder that neither Robin, Nora or the Doctor can discover a haven there. Nora is haunted by convention as she attempts to tame the animalistic Robin. Her failure is prophesied by the Doctor before it occurs:

\begin{quote}
Nora will leave that girl some day; but though these two are buried at the ends of the earth, one dog will find them both.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

This fatalistic utterance prefaces the text's conclusion. Literally 'one dog' does find them both, but they are both still living. The dog might be interpreted as being symbolic of the failure of their union, for although it unites them, the two cannot connect. Such intensity of physical feeling as they experience is similar to the heated passions of Catherine Earnshaw and

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, p.141.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p.155.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, p.153.
Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Gilbert and Gubar have described Bronte's vision as 'a Blakean bible of hell', and this vision appears similar to Barnes's fictional world which also outlines a type of hell, and is peopled by bestial figures.

The novel culminates with the incident with the dog and reveals that Robin Vote has succumbed to madness, and thus the division between bestiality and humanity which has been transgressed throughout the novel, appears to destroy her:

Then she began to bark also, crawling after him - barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching.

Nora observes this scene, but remains unable to communicate with Robin, the Doctor's prophecy of 'one dog' finding them both having been realised.

*Night and The City: Clothing the Past*

He moved with a humble hysteria among the decaying brocades and laces of the *Carnavalé;* he loved that old and documented splendour with something of the love of the lion for its tamer.

In this passage, Barnes defines Felix's obsession with the past. His heightened emotions when looking at finery from the past, is similar to the fascination with clothing outlined by Elizabeth Wilson:

> There is something eerie about a museum of costume. A dusty silence holds still the old gowns in glass cabinets. In the aquatic light ... the deserted gallery seems haunted. The living observer moves with a sense of mounting panic, through the world of the dead ...

> We experience a sense of the uncanny when we gaze at garments that had a

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104 Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.265.

105 Barnes, 1936, p.238.

106 Ibid, p.25.
relationship with human beings long since in their graves. For clothes are so much a part of our living, moving selves that, frozen in display in the mausoleums of culture, they hint at something only half understood ... the atrophy of the body, and the evanescence of life.107

This dread conditions the present of most of the novel's major characters and they cannot shake themselves free of its influence. It is outlined using a variety of methods, the most obvious being the use of imagery concerning certain buildings and quarters of Paris and the iconography of clothing which Barnes carefully assembles during the course of the text. These also inform the author's description of the night, during which time her characters seem to feel most at home. To investigate the use of this imagery, it appears firstly necessary to regard the metropolis in which the novel is set. The city, a potent symbol in itself, is an 'urban inferno', as George Steiner pointed out,108 thus this 'inferno' as described by Barnes conditions O'Connor's discourse on 'the night'. Steiner described an urban megalopolis whose uncontrollable and cellular division and spread, now threatens to choke much of our lives.109

He also argued that the innate conflict of twentieth-century existence is the struggle between 'the individual and the stone sea that may, at any moment, overwhelm him'.110 Barnes uses this metropolis because, in such an environment, myth can exist unquestioned and fables may gather new meanings.

In fairy tales, characters often seek the city to make their fortune, finding instead displacement. For Steiner, the most potent version of the city was penned by Baudelaire, who described humanity as marooned in a vast city and described human beings in the process of becoming 'flotsam'. Although Steiner's representation of the city is innately patriarchal, it is

108 Steiner, 1971, p.23.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
similar to the urban wasteland which is described in *Nightwood*. Much of the text's action
takes place in bars, restaurants, cafés, clubs and hotels, locales which were carefully chosen
by the author. Both Noel Riley Fitch and Arlen J. Hanson have noted that Barnes drank at
*Deux Magots*, *Café de la Mairie du IV* (where much of the action of the novel takes place),
*Hotel d'Anglaterre*, *Hotel Recamier* (where many of the early scenes are set) and *Le Sphinx*, a
prominent lesbian bar in the Quarter.** Cafe de la Mairie du IV** was chosen for obvious
reasons, as it not only has those historical associations which Felix craves, but it is also a part
of the typically old 'Parisian' ambiance which is sought by the Doctor. It is against this back­
drop that the Doctor lives out his greatest scenes of triumph and humiliation. At the novel's
opening, the Doctor persuades Felix to buy him a meal, again using his stories in place of
coin. He is a regular customer at the Café, so much so that the proprietor hails him as a
relative.

The Café represents a microcosm of the Doctor's city and the streets which surround it are
his domain. He is at home in these streets as he is nowhere else, indeed, it is in this setting
that he takes on some of the social responsibilities which he possesses in *Ryder*:

> Here he had been seen ordering details for funerals in the parlour with its broad­
cloth curtains and mounted pictures and *petits Jesus* in the boutique ... He had
> shouted down at least one judge in the *Mairie du Luxembourg.*

This is not the grand Paris of the opera, or the shopping areas of the *Champs Elysée* or the
*Rue de Rivoli*. It is the old area of the city, the place where the Doctor can act with liberty,
and where he is free to tell his stories. The Doctor inhabits an old Quarter, full of intimations
of the past resembling those described by Wilson.

> When first taking Felix to the Café, the Doctor is confident because he is on his own

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111 Fitch, Noel Riley, *Hemingway in Paris* (London: Equation, 1989), Hanson, Arlen J.,
112 Barnes, 1936, p.48.
ground and thus certain of the appeal of his stories. Barnes signifies his downward spiral by
revealing an ebbing confidence and stories which become more obscure and confused as the
novel continues. The Doctor expresses the concept that any feeling of belonging are transient
and thus he remains an outcast. The most poignant example of this appears towards the
novel's conclusion, when Felix observes the Doctor from a distance.

The Baron was shocked to observe, in a few seconds before the Doctor saw
him, that he seemed old, older than his fifty years would account for. He moved
slowly, as if he were dragging water; his knees ... sagged. His dark shaved chin
was lowered as if in a melancholy that had no beginning or end.113

This figure is unfavourably contrasted with the necromancer of the book's opening who, while
capable of appearing 'pathetic and alone', could move at a 'smart pace'.114 The Doctor (as will
be discussed in the following section) is eternally exiled and, whilst valuing his reputation as
a local, he remains alienated within the city. Once separated from his powers as a story-teller,
his stories become fractured. Cafés provide a setting for his greatest moments of eloquence
and tale-telling, but increasingly they create a back-drop for moments of shame. A later scene
is described using images of epicurean pathos:

The Baron looked up. To his surprise he saw that the Doctor had 'deteriorated'
into that condition in which he had seen him in the street, when he thought
himself unobserved. In a loud voice the Doctor said to the waiter, who was
within an inch of his mouth: 'Yes, and with oranges, oranges!'115

The Doctor's economic poverty increases during the novel's progression, being contrasted
with the wealth of new quarters of the city and also with the opulence of buildings from the
past.

113 Ibid, p.158.
114 Ibid, p.49.
Such oscillations of fortune are symbolized by his eating and drinking habits. As in folk tales, food and drink are deployed as signifiers of social position. When the Doctor has money, or can attach himself to wealth, he drinks *Grande Marnier* and consumes *Chambery Fraise* and *Duc a l'Orange*. When poor he eats food prepared in garlic, the cheapest on the menu. His desperation is used by Barnes to signify spiritual destitution. Likewise, she uses Felix's discourse to draw attention to the importance of food and drink to European culture.

Food, as in fables where feasts form a focal point, is a tool of the elite who eat what is rare in order to indicate social position. It is not enough to eat for sustenance, one must eat socially 'correct' food. Food also features in the discourse and history of place:

In 1685, the Baron said with wry humour, the turks brought coffee into Vienna...

... Austria and tea could never go together. All cities have a particular beverage suited to them.  

Here, drink becomes a part of a city's mythology and also forms part of local folklore.

To complement the mythology of food, Barnes also depicts literal 'conspicuous consumption'. Nora spends much of the novel drinking from bar to bar in search of Robin and attempting to fulfill her role as the 'prince'. Although Elyse Blankley's discussion omits it, this behavioural pattern is similar to that of the narrator of Renée Vivien's *A Woman Appeared to Me*, who pursues an unhappy affair with an errant lover. At the outset of *Nightwood*, Nora and Felix are teetotalers but as the novel develops they both consume vast amounts of alcohol. The Doctor's final monologue is a slurred cry, uttered in a setting where his trials no longer appear magical but seem commonplace. In fairy tales, the city often proves the undoing of a hero, or heroine, who comes from the provinces. Barnes's vision of the city, brutal, gluttonous and secretive as it is, draws upon such images from the folk tradition.

Barnes's city remains a fascinating organic structure, resembling that later created by

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116 Ibid, p.54.
117 Vivien, 1904.
Angela Carter in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffmann*. In *Nightwood* the metropolis is depicted as both unknowable and corrupting. Barnes uses bars, cabarets and cafés, as microcosms of city life. Such places, as Marcus points out, form crucial signifiers in Barnes's text. Angela Carter once described the city as 'a gigantic metaphor for death' which keeps the spectator 'all agog' in a 'ringside seat' as it runs towards chaos. One can connect this to ideas expressed by both Marcus and Lisa Appignanesi who have written of the cabaret as forming the city's heart, Appignanesi describing it as 'walking the tightrope between the stage proper and the variety show'. Barnes's city rings with dissonant voices and, again as in Carter’s novel *Nights at the Circus*, her text forms an exploration of the relationship between the city and the night. However, Carter’s novel appears, at heart, positive, as Fevvers, her heroine, is triumphant at the novel's conclusion, whereas in *Nightwood*, the city remains enigmatic, and its sinister aspects thus condition O'Connor's final drunken ramblings. O'Connor, unlike Fevvers, becomes uncertain of himself as the text progresses, and thus concludes as a prophet of doom who, like Cassandra is fated not to be believed. Thus, if Carter's heroine concludes in triumph, O'Connor (as defined in the following chapter) ends with his life overtaken by chaos. Dr O'Connor and others walk the tightrope described by Appignanesi, creating a 'border crossing' between 'underground entertainment' and the official city.

It might be argued that Barnes did not create her gallery of nocturnal characters in order to create a fictional biography. Her characters are caught by the ‘web’ of the past. As with the ‘web’ of stories surrounding Robin Vote, this web is destructive and pervasive. As well as food being of historical significance, clothing also signifies a wider structure of history and

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120 Carter, 1987, p.15.
121 Films which linked cabaret, the city and somnambulism were surprisingly frequent in the 1920s. They include *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1926), *Der Golem* (1924), and many films starring Theda Bara. See Appignanesi, Lisa, *Cabaret: The First Hundred Years* (London: Methuen, 1984), p.14.
myth. George Steiner has discussed the need for the human being to trace its 'ancestors'.\footnote{Steiner, George, 1971, p.13.}

Steiner regards that nostalgia which is rooted in objects and possessions as being ultimately destructive. Garments, such as those admired by Felix in the *Carnavalèt* (where, ironically Natalie Barney's clothes are now kept), punctuate Barnes's text. Again, using Wilson's model, one can regard this as signifying a collision between past and present. Images of clothing are varied: Jenny wears a poke-bonnet and a hooped skirt; Robin's clothes are of a period which Felix could not quite place. She wore feathers of a kind his mother had worn ... Her skirts were moulded to her hips ... silks that made her seem newly ancient.\footnote{Barnes, 1936, p.66.}

These are old dresses cut to fit her and in them she resembles both a fairy tale princess and a historical figure, thus Felix becomes preoccupied with the historical aspect of her dress. This concept of borrowing clothing from the past could be interpreted using Marjorie Garber's notion of 'transvestite theatre' (as outlined in the introduction to this thesis), where the trappings of the past are used to indicate present chaos.\footnote{Garber, Marjorie, 1992, pp.3-17.} Clothing is the past worn by the present, thus brocades, laces, velvets and silks predominate and these vestiges question notions of fixed gender roles. One of the dangers of this collision between past and present is that when compared to past opulence, the present might appear tawdry.

Likewise, the night also reveals the true nature of O'Connor's human bestiary. Night is textually identified as Parisian, and it illuminates the absurd behaviour of those who cling to myth. When Nora asks the Doctor to explain the night to her, she condemns him to relive his fears. The night reveals the tawdriness of his room and also exposes the futility of Nora's search for Robin. Robin, a somnambule similar to the mythical golem, wanders at night. Also at night, the Doctor's role as raconteur becomes increasingly fractured during an alcoholic
In the world which he inhabits most people drink heavily. As Tom Dardis has noted, Barnes herself had alcoholic tendencies and her evenings were often spent drinking spirits.\footnote{Dardis, Tom, \textit{The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the American Writer} (London: Abacus, 1990), p.3, p.5, p.220.}

The novel’s final encounter also takes place at night:

The night was well advanced. She could see nothing. She began walking towards the hill.\footnote{Barnes, op.cit, 1936, p.237.}

Nora stumbles in the dark, and is increasingly aware that she has lost Robin. \textit{Nightwood} ends with the tragic sense that Nora has never quite relinquished a belief in fairy tales and that their allure persists for her. Meanwhile, Robin reverts to her beast-nature. Yet, despite this tragedy and its implications, the novel retains its intense \textit{grand guignol} humour, thus its view of the twentieth-century remains both chaotic and humorous. The 'invented lives' which are played out within its confines exist due to childhood promises which have proved fatal. Barnes’s text seems to argue that an intense longing such as fairy tales produce can only result in tragedy.
"The Other Woman That God Forgot": Gender and the Denied 'Womanhood' of Doctor Matthew O'Connor

Most critics of Nightwood agree that Doctor O'Connor is pivotal to the text's structure. The last section attempted to place him within the text as a 'border crossing' agent, a character who attempts to blur gender categories and ask difficult questions concerning human existence. Thus before one can discuss O'Connor's monologues from a linguistic perspective, it appears necessary to analyze how his 'voice' was created, as this highlights critical assumptions concerning Barnes's authorial technique. Once the sources upon which Barnes might have based O'Connor's character have been established, it is possible to begin a discussion of his speech patterns, his gender role playing, and his position in the text. T.S. Eliot once remarked that:

When I first read the book I found the opening movement rather slow and dragging, until the appearance of the Doctor, and throughout the first reading, I was under the impression that it was the Doctor alone who gave the book its vitality.¹

Eliot then went on to discuss a second reading, where many of his first impressions of the novel changed. He maintained that

while the focus shifted, the figure of the Doctor was by no means diminished, and he ... came to take on a different and more profound importance when seen as a constituent of a whole pattern.²

Eliot does not outline his concept of this pattern, but rather elaborates on the role of the Doctor. At first reading, Eliot decided that the Doctor resembled 'the brilliant actor in an otherwise unpersuasively performed play' and listed the Doctor's attributes as being 'a desperate disinterestedness and a deep humility'.³ He also cited a 'helpless power among the

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
helpless' as underlying the Doctor's wit and noted the Doctor's role as comforter. Yet, Eliot's discussion of the Doctor does not mention his transvestism, or his role as a great charlatan. As Kate Fullbrook notes, the Doctor's transvestism is central to the text's analysis of gender construction and transgression. I would also argue that his creation can be charted specifically and that to do so provides valuable insight into Barnes's working method.

Dan Mahoney and Other Magnificent Impostors.

Although not relying upon a totally biographical reading of O'Connor, this textual reading discusses how Barnes created the character's 'voice' by making a pastiche from voices known to her, in order to suggest that O'Connor, the 'great charlatan', resembles many figures from twentieth-century life. The most obvious model for O'Connor's 'voice' is that of Barnes's friend Dan Mahoney. In the McKeldin Collection, Mahoney is listed as having corresponded with Barnes once her stay in Paris was over, between 1935-58. Thus it is known that their friendship outlasted the publication of Nightwood. Insights into Mahoney's character and wit can also be found in Andrew Field's biography of Barnes, in the fiction of Robert McAlmon and in memoirs by John Glassco. Thus one can begin by comparing Barnes's sympathetic portrayal of O'Connor with representations of Mahoney by McAlmon and Glassco.

According to Field, Mahoney's wit was 'legendary' in Montparnasse. Field's reading of Mahoney as the 'basis' for O'Connor comes from previous accounts, and remains anecdotal in emphasis, naming him 'Doc Mahoney, the Wittiest man in Montparnasse'. For example, this statement can be located in This Must be the Place the memoirs of James Charters, or 'Jimmy

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4 Ibid.
5 Fullbrook, Kate, Free Women: Ethics and Aesthetics in Twentieth-Century Women's Fiction (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1990), pp.124-5.
6 Catalogue University of Maryland Special Collection un-numbered.
7 Ibid.
10 Ibid, p.142.
the Barman' of The Dingo (a bar frequented by Barnes).\textsuperscript{11} In Being Geniuses Together Mahoney goes un-named, whilst in Glassco's memoir he is titled Maloney.\textsuperscript{12} This may be because, as Field believes, Glassco knew what a 'litigious person Mahoney was' but this seems unlikely as Mahoney revelled in publicity of any form and was delighted with the portrayal of 'himself' in Nightwood.\textsuperscript{13} As with Frank Harris and Guido Bruno, who will both be discussed with regard to O'Connor, it is difficult to talk about Mahoney's life with any certainty as much of the content of his 'stories' was fabricated. Although what is known of his life remains uncertain, anecdotes surrounding him are worth repeating in this context, as some of them are duplicated in Barnes's depiction of O'Connor.

According to Field, Mahoney was born c.1895 into a large Catholic family in San Francisco, who belonged to a working class immigrant Irish Community.\textsuperscript{14} He attended St. Ignatius school in the city and was certainly at the school in 1914, as he was remembered by U.S. Vice Admiral William M. Callaghan, a schoolfriend, as being older than other boys in his class.\textsuperscript{15} In memoirs by Callaghan and others, Mahoney is recalled as being 'eccentric' and as using implicitly feminised gestures.\textsuperscript{16} At an unspecified date he travelled to Paris, and lived (in 1937 at least) in a flat at number 40 Rue De Seine.\textsuperscript{17} Friends list being bilingual amongst talents which include playing the piano, being extremely well-read and having written an article on the glories of perfume, published in The Ignatian.\textsuperscript{18} Both Broe and Field doubt the accuracy of 'facts' concerning Mahoney's life:

We are on the slipperiest side of reality when speaking of Daniel A. Mahoney.

He is said both to have been always short of money and also to have had an independent income and to have performed his abortions without fee. I tend to

\textsuperscript{11} See Charters, Jimmy, \textit{This Must Be the Place} (New York: Lee Furman, 1937).
\textsuperscript{12} McAlmon, 1970, p.31; Glassco, 1973, pp.24-5.
\textsuperscript{13} Field, 1985, p.141.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p.142.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p.143.
believe the former story because Robert O'Connor said that during one period of his life Mahoney lived in a servant’s room at the top of a Left Bank apartment house, and there is Dr O'Connor surreptitiously filching money left on a dresser top while treating Robin Vote in Nightwood. No one ever questioned his story that he practised in a French hospital.¹⁹

Mahoney may have performed an abortion on Barnes, but there are no non-anecdotal sources for this. Mahoney therefore remains an elusive figure, a fact which he would have no doubt relished. Broe and Field, whilst providing the most comprehensive documentary evidence, often appear to confuse Mahoney with Matthew O'Connor. As with Dame Musset, this blurring of fiction and fact appears inevitable, as a letter from Mahoney to Barnes quoted by Field and signed ‘Minty Manure’ reveals.²⁰ As Field notes, the letter concerned a woman who was distributing copies of Nightwood in order to discredit Mahoney and comes close in tone to the ‘voice’ of the Doctor.²¹ From such ‘evidence’, Mahoney appears to have welcomed attempts to slander him, thus Field contradicts his own idea that Glassco thought Mahoney ‘litigious’.

In Memoirs of Montparnasse Glassco recalled:

A curvaceous, squat man in black, with blue shaven jowls covered in talcum powder and eyes loaded with mascara, he held his hands in front of him like a dancing dog.

'Dan! Dan!' Everyone shouted.

This was the famous Dan Maloney, the most quoted homosexual in Paris, a man who combined the professions of pathic abortionist, professional boxer and confessor to literary women. He waddled forward and a place at our table was made for him at once.²²

¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Ibid. See the chapter on Ladies Almanack for details of Dame Musset’s origins.
²¹ Field, 1985, p.143.
This passage demonstrates Glassco's obvious bias against 'literary women', and an innate homophobia, factors which condition his account. Likewise, he described Barnes as 'lacking any response of manner' and has her wearing purple, a colour which she 'detested'.

Maloney speaks quickly and with great force. His discourse concerns his sexuality but, as with O'Connor, he ridicules concepts of depravity:

'I have just had a marvelous experience', he murmured to the old woman in the purple velvet hat who was our hostess. 'Such a divine piece of rough trade, my dear, with wooden shoes, velveteen trousers, and a gorgeous three day beard. Not until our encounter - if you will pardon the expression - was over did I learn he was a genuine grave digger. I was furious! If I had only known ...' He snapped his fingers and two waiters came running. 'Champagne, champagne! To celebrate the victory of vice over the grave'.

Dr Maloney then treated us to an astonishing harangue revolving around unmentionable subjects and indescribable practices ... 'while there is yet time', roared Dr Maloney. 'But in the hour of your utmost abandon think of me, Dr God Almighty Maloney, the irrepressible back-woodsman, the original Irish tenor'.

The Glassco piece is so close to O'Connor's speech at the beginning of Nightwood, that one recognizes the pitfalls of blending the fictional O'Connor with the actual Mahoney. As with O'Connor, in this extract Maloney interrupts his own discourse and uses inflated invective. Like the Doctor, he needs a specific audience:

Once the Doctor had his audience - and he got his audience by the simple device of pronouncing at the top of his voice (at such moments as irritable and

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23 Field, 1985, p.143.
25 Barnes, 1936, p.40. Here Barnes names O'Connor as being celtic, also throughout the novel he refers to his Irishness and his operatic abilities and, on page 139, names himself 'The Lily of Killarney'.

possessive as a maddened woman's) some of the more boggish and biting of the
shorter early saxon verbs - nothing could stop him. 26

What Barnes creates (and what Glassco ignores) is a speech pattern which reveals speech
itself as being connected to vitality. Through speech, gender roles can be questioned.
Glassco's 'Maloney' is a homophobic recollection of the actual Mahoney, revealing Glassco's
perception of him as an 'insincere' actor. Barnes, who regarded all human beings as actors,
regarded such discourse as a type of 'honesty'. Glassco depicts Maloney's role as a 'confessor'
to literary women as another performance, Barnes regards O'Connor's role as confessor as his
'connection' with Nora. In her text O'Connor describes tale-telling as a redemptive process,
and also as linked to his early shamanism:

Do you know what has made me the greatest liar this side of the moon, telling
my stories to people like you, to take the mortal agony out of their guts, and to
stop them from rolling about, and drawing up their feet and screaming, with
their eyes staring over their knuckles with misery which they are trying to keep
off, saying 'Say something, Doctor, for the love of God!' And me talking away
like mad. Well that, and nothing else, has made me the liar I am. 27

Such a speech is crucial, as it highlights the comfort which O'Connor's tales offer.

If Glassco's attitude to Mahoney's 'confessional' abilities contains thinly disguised bias,
then Robert McAlmon's viewpoint was much more aggressive. McAlmon used Mahoney as
the basis for his short story 'Miss Knight'. 28 McAlmon said that he hoped that his stories
would
deal with variant types with complete objectivity, not intent on their souls and
not distressed by their morals. 29

This attitude to 'variance' is similar to statements made by Radclyffe Hall on 'inversion', and

26 Barnes, 1936, p.31.
29 Ibid.
distances McAlmon (himself bisexual) from his text and from the character of the 'Queen'

Miss Knight, who is supposedly based on Dan Mahoney

Andrew Field noted the disparity between 'Miss Knight' and Doctor O'Connor in
_Nightwood_, whilst Sanford Smoller, McAlmon’s perceptive biographer, has detailed
McAlmon’s attitude towards his own sexuality, remarking that effeminacy troubled him.30
Smoller also charts the public reaction to 'Miss Knight', recording that John Glassco was
biased in his view of _Distinguished Air_, the volume in which the story appeared:

No one has gotten that type of fairy down on paper before. In fact McAlmon’s
pretty good when he’s writing about fairies.31

This offensively worded statement is not only dismissive as regards McAlmon, but raises the
question of the text’s uncomfortable narrator/reader relationship. McAlmon has many
homosexual relationships but, as he confessed at the end of his life, he was unhappy to be
defined as gay, whilst believing that gender roles created prejudice:

There are no real homos, male or female, but there is a bi-sex and more people
than know it about themselves. Personally, the types I object to are the female
who drips female sex-appeal or the male who swaggers with virility. They are
the real abnorms.32

Such Freudian notions of a ‘third’ sex condition McAlmon’s view of Mahoney. 'Miss Knight'
represents a caricature when compared to Mahoney or Dr O’Connor, his fictional
counterpart.33 As Field points out, the story is set in Berlin and Mahoney’s voice is depicted at
its most coarse, being conditioned by the use of stock, vulgar phrasing:

‘I’m so glad I’m a real man!; she shrieked across the room or Café every now

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20 Smoller, Sanford, _Adrift Amongst Geniuses: Robert McAlmon, Writer and Publisher of
21 Ibid; see also Glassco, 1970, pp.24-5.
22 Smoller, 1975, p.216.
23 The extracts from 'Miss Knight', are taken from Field, 1985, p.138. Although I have
traced the story to its original source, a copy could not be located by either the British
Library or the Library of Congress.
and then to relieve the tension of ennui that might, and does, settle upon all atmosphere at times. Properly she believed herself appointed as a camping
comedian, ready to earn a right to her presence by keeping seriousness from making dullness exist through an overlong period.®
'Miss Knight' presents a simplistic view of a 'Queen', denying the figure's complexity. The figure appealed to Barnes because it enabled a plural gender reading to take place. She uses O'Connor to cross borders between night and day, 'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotypes (at times he embodies both sexes), and the circus and the city. Yet before one can discuss her descriptions of O'Connor, the creation of his 'voice' must be analyzed, as Mahoney was not the only great impostor to have influenced Barnes's depiction of the Doctor.

If traces of O'Connor's 'voice' are evident in the fragments of speech which are left of Mahoney's discourse (for instance, he was known to have said 'goody' on hearing of a friend's death), then the voice of Guido Bruno can be cited as also inspiring Barnes's creation of her 'great liar'.® Barnes met Bruno c.1914, and Field cites his probable dates as 1884-1942.®
Bruno probably arrived in Greenwich Village in 1906 to become an indigent, bohemian patron.® He published many chapbooks and magazines under his own name, few of which ever lasted more than a month. As Field correctly notes, his self-created title and persona are reminiscent of Felix Volkmann.® Yet, his love of publicity is very much a trait bestowed upon Matthew O'Connor. If one goes by Field's account, Bruno was arrested in 1916 for publishing Alfred Kreymbourg's novel Edna: A Girl of the Streets but was released shortly after.®

Bruno was against censorship of any form (I suspect more on personal than on deeply moral grounds) and he was pro-contraception. Field's is a picture of a theatrical man, a bon

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35 Field, 1985, p.65.
37 Ibid, p.69.
38 Ibid, p.72.
39 Ibid.
vivant, who was in part responsible for the commercialization of Greenwich Village. He referred to himself constantly as 'I, Bruno'. This recalls Dr O'Connor's form of address: 'I, Doctor Matthew Mighty O'Connor'. Also, Bruno's age at the time Barnes knew him was closer to O'Connor's than was Dan Mahoney's. Field and others describe Mahoney as being close in age to Barnes whereas, in 1916, Bruno was in his fifties, acknowledging thirty. Bruno is also known to have taken money from women, just as O'Connor filches money from Robin Vote:

Felix watched the hand descend, take up the note, and disappear into the limbo of the Doctor's pocket.

Records reveal that Bruno attempted to pilfer money from female patrons. This is documented because one of their number, Mary Fleming, brought a case against him. It is worth noting similarities between Bruno's speech, age and habits and those of O'Connor. Ultimately, both share a type of dishonest pride in their work. Here, however, the resemblance ends, as Bruno was heterosexual.

Given his record, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bruno regarded the legendary charlatan Frank Harris as his mentor. Harris (1856-1931), it can be argued, also played a part in O'Connor's creation. He was a practised and erudite liar and his most noteworthy achievement is his 'unreliable multivolume', My Life and Loves (1922-7). It is difficult to distinguish the facts of his life from the stories which he created. Barnes met Harris c.1916 and published an interview with him on February 4th, 1917. As with O'Connor, Harris was Irish by descent and regarded the telling of stories as part of a Celtic heritage:

40 Ibid.
41 Barnes, 1936, p.123.
42 Ibid, p.58.
When he spoke one became startled: the voice was the deep and rich voice of a
large man; let me call it the echo of those who passed.\textsuperscript{46}

This passage appears similar to Barnes's description of O'Connor's speech. As with O'Connor, what Barnes admired in Harris was his appetite for life and the fact that he still maintained a
zest for it:

What more expressive thing can I say to describe him than that life had used
him. I like this better than the phrase, he had used life.\textsuperscript{47}

Barnes respected Harris as a British 'man of letters' but also as a mountebank:

A fine strain of piracy runs through the veins of Harris. Like Benvenuto Cellini,
he cannot help seeing the beauty of force.\textsuperscript{48}

This 'fine strain of piracy' is also possessed by Matthew O'Connor, who offers illegal,
unconventional solutions to the problems which life presents. The Doctor's bitterness at the
climax of the novel, when he feels the world to have used him far more than he could ever
have hoped to use it, seems to have been shared by Harris. Barnes described Harris as:

so human, often brilliant, so caustic, at times so bitter. Undying hate for his
enemies and for those who have caused him trouble; such high wrath blazing
always for pains brought to the artist's soul by the vulgar bourgeois; such
dynamic contempt for all who cramp and spoil.\textsuperscript{49}

This is similar to O'Connor's final, shattered discourse in which he describes those outside
society as being bludgeoned by convention.

The people in the café waited for what the Doctor would say; knowing that he
was drunk and would talk; in great defaming sentences his betrayals came up;
no one ever knew what was truth and what was not.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, p.203.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Barnes, 1936, p.223.
An inability to tell truth from lies colours the life histories of Bruno, Mahoney and Harris. As Stanley Weintraub has said of Harris, he was an 'ever unreliable' man with large ego requirements and buccaneering instincts which made it difficult to trust him or even tolerate him.\footnote{Weintraub, 1979, p.85.}

As with the Doctor, Harris was admired and fellow bohemians were eager to hear him speak. During the course of the Barnes/Harris interview, Harris's sense of desolation appears similar to her account of O'Connor's mounting despair in \textit{Nightwood}. Here is the Harris interview:

\begin{quote}
He turned suddenly to the mantelpiece and dropping his lower lip, said, 'Ah,' as only he knows how to say it. The ejaculation of a man who will not weep when his heart is full, the desolate sound of a man who will not permit himself to be disillusioned; a half sound between a truce and a challenge.

'It's dreadful! Dreadful!' he said, clasping his hands behind him, walking to the window ...

I asked him 'what', softly.

'The way they treat a man; the way they treat men of real talent and worth.\footnote{Barnes, 1987, p.209.}

All the elements of despair at the lot of the creative outsider (whether performer, writer, lesbian or homosexual) are fused in \textit{Nightwood}. Dr O'Connor's despair resembles Barnes's depiction of Harris's desolation:

'My God', he said, turning around, 'when I think'.

He began to pound the table with his glass. 'May they all be damned! The people in my life who have made my life miserable, coming to me to learn of degradation and the night.\footnote{Barnes, 1936, p.227.}

Others who may have influenced Barnes's creation of Matthew O'Connor are James Joyce, Ford Madox Ford and Wald Barnes. As I suggested in discussing \textit{Ryder} (1928), Wald Barnes
figures chiefly in his daughter's work as a fraud and a libertine to whom nothing was sacred. As with O'Connor's lies, Wald Barnes 'adopted so many names that a great many number of them slipped his mind in later years' and, like Barnes, in chapter seven of the novel, O'Connor hints that, had he been heterosexual, he might have fathered illegitimate children. As with O'Connor, Wald Barnes cared little for public opinion, yet also sought an audience. Although such links appear slight, they are worth mentioning. If O'Connor had been heterosexual, creating children as well as lies, he might be closer in spirit to Wendell Ryder than to the compassionate liar whom Felix finds so fascinating.

What this discussion hopes to demonstrate is that a literary creation is seldom a fictional representation of a single person. Paris was rife with literary charlatans (such as Ford and Frank Harris) who shared a need for piracy. Ford Madox Ford, as Alan Judd's recent biography points out, told so many tales about himself that the distance between truth and fiction often blurred in his mind. Ford was a large, shambolic figure with a capacity for unbelievably tangled relationships. Complications also hallmarked Joyce's life, and Joyce, throughout his career, relied on the patronage of women such as Harriet Shaw Weaver, Sylvia Beach, Nora Joyce, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap who all helped him financially, emotionally and creatively. Both Bonnie Kime Scott and Brenda Maddox have charted this dependency and this reliance on female patrons is shared by the fictional O'Connor. For example, O'Connor's conversations with Nora Flood are mutually sustaining. Nora comes to the Doctor for advice and comfort, and by advising her, the Doctor affirms his role as wise 'woman'. The reader is presented with a scene of the Doctor eating dinner with Frau Mann. When he leaves he informs the waiter that 'the lady will pay'. The Doctor, like Joyce, relies

54 See Field, 1985, p.25, for an account of Wald Barnes's promiscuity. Also see Barnes, 1936, pp.189-90.
55 Barnes, 1936, p.225.
58 Ibid.
59 Barnes, 1936, p.47.
upon financial support from women. His method in obtaining this aid may differ from Joyce's, but his basic dependency is unaltered.

Barnes appears to have used aspects of all these men to create the composite portrait of a twentieth-century mountebank. Thus, discussing O'Connor after exploring this background detail appears to be more satisfactory than regarding him solely as the literary incarnation of Dan Mahoney.

The Language of 'The Girl That God Forgot': Doctor O'Connor's Discourse of Gender

Dan Mahoney possessed a ribald tongue, and in the mouth of Matthew O'Connor obscenity is transformed into poetry. If one reads the text as one which links the personal with the political, then Barnes creates a 'voice' which articulates a discourse that attacks notions of gender fixity, as O'Connor describes oppositions between fixed gender roles and those desires which are at variance with them. By so doing, Dante O'Connor both defines his personal inferno and makes statements which might be regarded as political. Thus Barnes's depiction of O'Connor in Ryder suggests complexities to come. A drawing from Ryder presents him seated on a barrel in a bar room, as tiny sailors dance around him. The inscription on the piece (carefully written on the bar-room wall, behind the Doctor) tells of a 'confession' to 'Father Lucas' (who is also mentioned in Nightwood), and such mock confessions can be identified as types of 'transvestite theatre', as outlined by Garber and described in the introduction to this thesis. Here, O'Connor parodies despair:

Yes Father, I've been and done it again and this time with Fat Liz, him as keeps

60 Barnes, Djuna, Ryder (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1928), pp.153-304. Also see the section on Ryder in this thesis.
61 Ibid, illustrated section un-numbered.
62 Garber outlines 'transvestite theatre' as both transgressing and re-drawing boundaries, as both the performer and the audience recognize that 'all the figures on stage are impersonators' and that such theatre 'is the symbolic on stage'. See Garber, Marjorie, Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (London: Routledge, 1991), p.40. O'Connor takes both the public and the private world as his stage, and has audiences for each of them, as this chapter demonstrates.
bar in a gophered boudoir cap'.

Such discourse was later developed in the pages of *Nightwood*.

In *Nightwood*, O'Connor uses the muscular discourse of the charlatan. As Fullbrook points out, his speech echoes both the priest and the oracular figure:

They were listening, at the moment of the entrance of Felix and the Duchess of Bradback, to a middle-aged 'medical student' with shaggy eyebrows, a terrific widow's peak, over-large dark eyes, and a heavy way of standing that was also apologetic. The man was Dr. Matthew O'Connor, an Irishman from the Barbary Coast (Pacific Street, San Francisco), whose interest in gynaecology had driven him half around the world.

As Fullbrook also notes, he is both 'dirty saint and holy sinner', and if he is a representation of Mahoney, then it is Mahoney politicized. By contrast, 'Miss Knight', Robert McAlmon's screaming caricature of a Queen, possesses a stereotypical voice:

Come, get your supper, dearie, now come on ... I was talkin to a guy - one of these high brows, you get me, just scientifically interested and all that, you know - and he sez to me, 'did you get queer in the army?' and I sez to him, 'my God Mary, I've been queer ever since you wore diddies'.

McAlmon's 'Miss Knight' speaks in stereotypical 'gay' jargon. His language is crude, biting and largely unfunny. O'Connor is eloquent and, while Barnes allows him to be crude, vulgarity is balanced with a profound insight into human frailty.

His first appearance is at a party, when he is 'taking the part of host' although the party is not his. This verbal role is one which he adopts throughout the text. Not until the novel's

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63 Barnes, 1928, illustrated section.
65 Barnes, 1936, p.29.
67 Field, 1985, p.139.
conclusion is the Doctor alone with a hostile audience. Even then, he is not silenced. The 
Doctor remains a successful speaker, one who can hold his audience spellbound. Barnes's first 
description of him sets the scene for his oral self representations:

He was taking the part of host, the Count not having yet made an appearance, 
and was telling of himself, for he considered himself the most amusing 
predicament.68

The words selected by Barnes are crucial, as the Doctor does not consider himself 'to be in' 
the most amusing predicament but rather 'to be' the most amusing predicament. He defines 
himself as being at the centre of chaos. Thus his speech defines him as the focal point of 
attention, and such gendered discourse enables him to cross the border between stereotypes of 
'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Also the Doctor's grandiose sense of self is his way of fending 
off criticism of his sexuality. He uses self aggrandisement to create a barrier between himself 
and his audience. Thus, it is his way of winning favour with 'the crowd' whilst masking his 
private world and his emotions.

In Garber's terms, the Doctor creates a type of personal theatre which only provides the 
information which he wishes to impart, and this technique benefits him with many free meals 
for, as he later remarks to Felix, 'laughter is the pauper's money'.69 He employs fine speeches 
to gull meals from the crowd, knowing that those who laugh will not mind paying for 
entertainment. Border crossings in the text (between poverty and riches, high and low art 
forms, heterosexual and homosexual discourse) are initiated by the Doctor whose speech 
contains the novel's best poetry. His words also create momentary security. For example, his 
first statement 'we may all call ourselves nature's noblemen' gives Felix a sense of happiness 
because it contains a word which he loves.70 In picking a word which imparts security to 
Felix, the Doctor secures his ear. O'Connor recognizes that in order to make his life 
legendary, a poor man must tell stories, as he has no other coin. Personal legend is 'the best a

68 Barnes, 1936, p.30. 
69 Ibid. Also see Garber, 1992, p.40. 
70 Barnes, 1936, p.53.
poor man may do with his fate'. Even individuals of noble birth will die obscure if they do not create their legends. Thus, in Humm's terms (as defined in the introduction) the Doctor transgresses the border between upper and lower class structures, creating a new economy, the economy of verbal art.

Once the Doctor has established his role as the text's main speaker, he launches into his speech in the manner of Frank Harris, mixing ribald language, fantastic tales and obscene details. His talk is full of bestiary figures, as he realises that 'freaks' fascinate 'the crowd', not only due to their 'otherness' but because they mirror the crowd. Wilde's 'rage of Caliban seeing his own face in the glass' is evident here, as is an obsession with difference which is the mainstay of much 'modernist' fiction from Ronald Firbank to Jane Bowles. Characters who people the Doctor's stories are memorable in themselves: Mademoiselle Basquett; a negro bear fighter from the Cirque de Paris, who is tattooed obscenely from head to toe; a mad old woman and her cow (glimpsed during a war-time air raid); a headsman from the guillotine who wore a red carnation in his button-hole; and a tuppenny upright, a prostitute at her most degraded, glimpsed upon London Bridge. Whether any of these characters have their basis in reality is not important to the Doctor's audience. What is valid is the fact that his stories keep his listeners sane, as he realizes. Tales are a diversion from poor and desolate lives. The Doctor markets his talent to amuse, realizing the price which people are willing to pay for it. What he does not count is the ultimate cost to himself. Stories fend off the misery of those who hear them, they come away feeling that someone's life is more ridiculous or painful than their own. The Doctor is powerful as long as he remains an 'entertainment', and does not reveal his own knowledge of the night.

In keeping with his time, much of the Doctor's speech is laced with the vocabulary of the

73 Barnes, 1936, p.186.
occult. For example, the tattooed man’s body is reminiscent of a living page from a text by Crowley:

On each buttock, half-public, half-private, a quotation from the book of magic, a confirmation of the jansenist theory I'm sorry to say and here to say it. 74

Thus the body echoes Garber's notion of 'transvestite theatre', as it presents a series of stories, and represents a visualization of a 'world-turned upside down', displacing and re-making meaning. 75 Each story on the body links the everyday world with the symbolism of occultist text. Thus it connects both everyday 'ritual' with ritualized magic. Likewise, the Doctor as a magician, hag and dumbfounder uses cabalistic imagery, manipulating the iconography of gurus, sabbaths and rites. This imagery is a by-product of Barnes's metropolitan vision, and in discussing it one must remember the popularity of the occult in the 1920s. Figures such as Alistair Crowley and George Gurdjeff were a part of city life, enthralling the wealthy and the bohemian in their schemes. The writer Harry Crosby (husband of Caresse Crosby, a compatriot of Barnes's) killed both himself and his lover, Josephine Bigelow, in 1929, in a bizarre incident related to Crosby's belief in the sun as an occult god. 76 Barnes used images of the occult to indicate displacement, and to articulate a sense of gender chaos, and O'Connor's occult speech echoes this chaos. Also, many men connected with bizarre practices were described as impostors and, as with Dr O'Connor, denied their trickery.

A close textual analysis may suggest that O'Connor is no more than a clever mountebank, yet he denies the charge:

I'm no tumbler, neither a friar, nor yet a thirteenth-century Salome dancing arse
up on a pair of Toledo blades. 77

This passage reveals O'Connor's self definition as reliant upon descriptions of what he is not.

74 Ibid, p.32.
75 Garber, 1992, p.92. Garber takes as her example the Shakespearean transvestite figure who comes between 'demand and desire'.
76 The best account of this can be found in Wolfe, Geoffrey, Black Sun: The Brief Transit and Violent Eclipse of Harry Crosby (New York: Random House, 1976).
77 Barnes, 1936, pp.35-6.
What is not permissible is a discussion of what he is, thus his transvestism remains an essentially private act. Language is used both to entertain and as a form of disguise, similar to language used in historical accounts of cross dressing, such as in the cases of D'Eon and Charlotte Charke listed in the volume edited by Straub and Epstein. Thus speech, as much as the black suit which O'Connor wears, can be regarded as a type of masquerade.

Due to this, one can credit the Doctor with two speech modes, the public voice (of the orator and master story-teller) and the private voice (which is used in his chambers and when talking with Nora Flood). The latter is only dangerous when it breaks, as in the later part of the text, into his public performance. Once this occurs, intimating that the Doctor no longer controls his speech, the public performance is shattered. O'Connor's story is ultimately one of disguise, and a public performance which can only be maintained by the existence of a private world. When the two spheres collide, the Doctor's sanity begins to collapse. Thus a reading of the text must include analysis of the disparities between the Doctor's private and public use of language. In both spheres, the Doctor often begins his speech in the first person singular. In public, this is grandiloquent and in private it is often self-mocking. As with 'I Bruno', his 'I, Doctor Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor' is a public statement of self. Coupled with this is a public assertion of his own origins (his Irish ancestors and his American boyhood). On several occasions he cites a Celtic oral heritage, a trait which was shared by Barnes:

'This Irish may be as common as whale shit - excuse me - on the bottom of the ocean - forgive me - but they do have imagination and,' he added, 'creative misery which comes from being smacked down by the devil and lifted up again by the angels.'

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79 Barnes, 1936, p.118.

80 Ibid, p.51.
Once more, the Doctor's speech contains elements of both Paradise (the angels) and inferno (the devil), and appears to cross a border between the two, as both are contained within a single image. His use of Celtic and Christian conceits is also a crossing agent:

The Irish are important for eternity, they lie to hurry it up, and they maintain their balance by the dexterity of God.®

This assertion of Irish characteristics, with its implicitly hierarchical stance, distances the Doctor from being thought of as wholly Irish. Yet it also maintains his role as an immigrant. Using a stereotypical brogue, he apologises for his obscenity throughout his conversation. This trait was also accredited to Dan Mahoney. The Doctor names 'blarney', and gets away with obscenity because he plays upon popular prejudices against the Irish.

Likewise, he also asserts his American origins with much zest, stating: 'because I'm an American I believe anything, so I say beware'.® By stating his origins thus, the Doctor masks inner confusion. He repeatedly affirms a heritage which has denied his sexuality. In public he identifies himself as a 'black sheep', yet cannot admit the effect which this public denial has on his private persona.® The Doctor is not a 'somnambule' as is Robin, yet he exists within two spheres (the public and the private) which constantly threaten to collide. This collision results in a border crossing between the 'magic realism' of the Doctor's public pronouncements and the 'realism' of his private despair.

Likewise, at the novel's outset, the man in black (the Doctor's public persona) and the transvestite O'Connor (who is the private 'self'), have separate methods of naming. Just as Dan Mahoney addressed himself as 'Minty Manure' when writing to Barnes, Matthew O'Connor, in the privacy of his chambers, gives himself a series of female *nom de plumes*: 'I'd be the girl found lurking behind the army'; 'am I not the girl to know of what I speak'; 'the bearded lady'; 'the uninhabited angel'; and 'the girl who God forgot'.® At night this manner of address

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® i Ibid, pp.53-4
® ii Ibid, p.63.
® iii Ibid.
complements his transvestism. In asking him to define the night, Nora Flood asks him to
describe his sexuality. The Doctor remains aware that the process of naming defines him, as
much as do the references to his origins. Thus, at night he adopts female clothing and a
woman's name. It is when Nora shares his private life that the collision between night and day
begins.

He confesses his transvestism to Nora, yet confession also represents a type of theatre.
This confession also blends images of gender difference with images taken from the occult
(crossing between the Doctor's life and the supernatural). This time the concept of
reincarnation is used to define the Doctor's misery:

In the old days I was possibly a girl in Marseilles thumping the dock with a
sailor, and perhaps it's that memory that haunts me. The wise men say that the
remembrance of things past is all that we have for the future, and am I to blame
if I've turned up this time as I shouldn't have been, when it was a high soprano I
wanted, and deep corn-curls to my bum, with a womb as big as the King's kettle
and a bosom as high as the bowsprit of a fishing schooner? And what do I get
but a face on me like an old child's bottom - is that happiness, do you th
As with Dame Musset, the Doctor's construction of femininity is based upon a series of
'feminine' archetypes, such as the whore, the mother, the *femme fatale* and the angel in the
house. Objects of desire which appeal to him are curls resembling those of film-star Mary
Pickford and the bosom of an earth-mother. The Doctor fervently longs to 'boil some good
man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months of the calendar'. The Doctor's
'yearnings' are for precisely that type of 'femininity' that Robin and Nora ('new' women both)
have tried to escape. He appears aware of this, yet longs to embrace the stereotype of
womanhood which he describes:

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85 Ibid, p.132.
86 Ibid, p.133.
The Doctor's head, with its over-large black eyes, its full gun-metal cheeks and chin, was framed in the golden semi-circle of a wig with long pendant curls that touched his shoulders... He was heavily rouged and his lashes painted.87

Using Garber's terms, this cross-dressing would make him resemble neither 'female man' nor 'masculine woman'.88 The private performance of fantasy only becomes dangerous when Nora enters his room.89 Crucially, as Nora does so, he snatches the wig from his head. As Garber notes, such transformations displace both social rules and dress codes.90 The reader's image of the Doctor as the self-defining man in black of the previous chapters is also displaced, leaving the reader to ask which is the real O'Connor. Collision, in these terms, means revision, for, as with the actual case of D'Eon, O'Connor knows his design for living to be impossible: he might dress as a 'woman' in the privacy of his own chamber but has been too long constructed as 'male' for him to successfully assimilate 'womanhood' outside his rooms.91 If the Doctor tried to command a public hearing 'in drag' he might well lose his audience also. For him, cross-dressing will always be a poor second to desired 'femininity'.

Both Garber, and Gilbert and Gubar, have discussed the implications of 'drag' and connections between cross-dressing and 'masculine' and 'feminine' codes of language.92 Descriptions of the need to codify gender through dress and language (apparent in much writing by 'modernist' women) can be applied to Barnes's portrayal of the Doctor. In

87 Ibid, p.117.
89 By doing this Nora becomes both his audience and his accomplice. Barnes, 1936, p.117.
90 Garber, 1992, p.132.
91 Chevalier D'Eon de Beaumont, a male French aristocrat began, in the 1770s, to dress in female clothes, declaring himself to be a woman. The resulting confusion was never wholly dispelled, as even D'Eon's family could not decide on his 'real' sexuality. See Kates, Gary, 'D'Eon Returns to France: Gender and Power in 1777' in the volume edited by Epstein and Straub in 1991, pp.167-94. Also see Garber, 1992, p.3, p.17, p.48, p.67, p.69, p.153, p.189, p.203, p.256, pp.259-66, p.375.
describing Gertrude Stein’s *Lifting Belly* (1915), Gilbert and Gubar argue that Stein’s verse dramatically depicts the lesbian couple taking or relinquishing the roles provided by heterosexuality.\(^93\)

O’Connor also takes and relinquishes roles, but the difference between himself and Stein’s lesbian couple is that he cannot drop certain stereotypes, even though he knows them to be destructive to himself. Also, unlike ‘Miss Knight’ in the story by McAlmon, the Doctor is not constantly referred to as ‘she’. Rather he reserves a feminine title for the privacy of his room. Descriptions of sexuality often form a comic part of the Doctor’s public performance but transvestism remains an endemically private topic.

In connection with Stein, Gilbert and Gubar comment on links between the love of language and the language of love, recognizing the two to be indistinguishable.\(^94\) This idea can also be used in a textual reading of *Nightwood*. When the Doctor speaks of his desire to be a woman, he speaks using a lover’s discourse. When Nora enters his private sanctum, he is disappointed and it is hinted that he was expecting a lover: ‘he was extremely put out, having expected someone else’.\(^95\) Thus, the expected lover is replaced by a discourse of love which defines the night. The Doctor’s love of language cannot be doubted and many of the allusions which he uses, rooted in history as they are, are tenderly poetic.

O’Connor recognizes that he cannot be an actual woman but continues to regard his attributes as ‘feminised’. Compassion, which he regards as his most ‘feminised’ attribute, is evident in his relationships with Felix, Robin and Jenny and is most pronounced in his relationship with Nora. The Doctor can affect callousness, as when he takes the money from Robin’s dresser yet, even in the same scene, he is also kind. It is in this scene that he articulates his ‘feminised’ desires:

> His hands (which he always carried like a dog who is walking on his hind legs)
seemed to be holding his attention, then he said, raising his large melancholy
eyes with the bright twinkle that often came into them: 'Why is it that whenever
I hear music I think I'm a bride?’

Although he attempts to revive Robin by throwing water into her face, when she wakes he
speaks softly to her:

She struggled to place him now that he had moved out of his frame.

'Café de la Mairie Du V', said the Doctor, taking a chance in order to have a
hand in her awakening.

It is in the scene after this, as they walk home, that the Doctor recognizes Felix's love for
Robin. Also, he himself inspires his loyalty by using words such as 'nobility' which Felix
loves. Belatedly, Felix discovers that payments for the Doctor's stories are paltry, for what the
Doctor's audience enjoy is a masquerade which destroys him. Thus, as Felix develops this
realization he recognizes the Doctor's frailty. O'Connor's maternal longings appear to be
responsible for his role as comforter. Barnes could have portrayed in O'Connor a savage
performer who could easily scorn Jenny Petherbridge, who steals the possessions of others.
Yet if the Doctor plays the comedian, he is not one in the tradition of Bruant.

The Doctor observes the worst of humanity but reserves judgment. For example, Jenny
beats Robin before his eyes:

Then Jenny struck Robin, scratching and tearing in hysteria, striking, clutching
and crying. Slowly the blood began to run down Robin's cheeks and as Jenny
struck repeatedly, Robin began to go forward as if brought to the movement by

96 Ibid, p.53.
97 Ibid, p.59.
98 Aristide Bruant, now best known for Lautrec's depictions of him, had an act which
involved haranguing the audience with comments on their looks and obscene phrases. See
Pessis, Jacques and Jacques Crepineau, The Moulin Rouge (London: St Martin's Press,
1989), for a description of Bruant's Milieu and Appignanesi, Lisa, Cabaret: The First
Hundred Years (London: Methuen, 1984), pp.26-30, p.35, p.64, p.70, p.76, p.79, p.138,
for an analysis of Bruant himself.
the very blows themselves, as if she had no will. 99

The Doctor refrains from despising Jenny recognizing that, like himself, she is one of life's survivors. He also concludes that, after her own fashion, Jenny loves Robin Vote: 'Ah,' he said, 'Love, that terrible thing'. 100 In describing Jenny to Nora he notes that she has the 'strength of an incomplete accident'. 101 This description is similar to Fitzgerald's description of Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*. 102 Again, using Garber's ideas, Jenny provides a type of theatrical display and the Doctor is her audience. 103

Jenny's behaviour also complements the Doctor's philosophy of the night, as she is violent at night, just as during the night the Doctor dons the dress of a woman. O'Connor begs tolerance of her from Nora, admitting that he recognizes her despair:

But for one like Jenny, the poor ruffled bitch, why, God knows, I bled for her, because I knew in an instant the kind of woman she was. 104

'The kind of woman she was' is the kind of 'woman' that the Doctor knows his 'female self' to be. Although he wishes to be a beautiful figurehead with golden curls, he is actually a 'poor ruffled bitch' the embodiment of 'the girl that God forgot'. 105 As was mentioned earlier, the Doctor's talk is punctuated by the image of a 'tuppenny upright', a prostitute on her last dreadful journey. This is a key image in Barnes's novel and its textual appearances are worth listing. Firstly, the Doctor uses it as a curse in conversation with Nora: 'May you die standing upright! May you be damned upward'. 106 This also recalls the image of the 'tuppenny upright' which he uses when despair controls his speech, and such an image is also reminiscent of the

99 Barnes, 1936, p.113.
100 Ibid, p.112.
101 Ibid, p.142.
102 See Fitzgerald's novel of 1926, where Nick Carraway remonstrates: 'they were careless people, Tom and Daisy, they smashed up things and people and then retreated back into their money or vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made ...' In Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Great Gatsby* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p.186.
103 Garber, 1992, p.40.
104 Barnes, 1936, p.147.
Doctor's own vision of himself as 'a girl in Marseilles, thumping the dock with a sailor'.

Barnes connected the 'tuppenny upright' with imagery from the sixteenth-century underworld, an underworld glossed over in 'modernist' fictions such as Bryher's *The Player's Boy.* In Barnes's text, as with her image of the 'walking mort', this figure can be located as a historical archetype. If Dr O'Connor resembles such a 'feminine' archetype, then so does Jenny Petherbridge. Jenny is childless, yet she is seen in the company of a child during the carriage scene, she steals possessions and yet fears theft. Dr O'Connor describes a tuppenny upright as:

A tuppenny is an old-time girl, and London Bridge is her last stand, as the last stand for a grue is Marseilles, if she doesn't happen to have enough pocket money to go to Singapore. For tuppence, an upright is all anyone can expect. His description then moves from the factual to the fantastic. The description of an upright is one of a woman dressed in rags, whose good clothes have been taken from her and 'worse given' in replacement of them. Dr O'Connor speaks of how they

used to walk along slowly, all ruffles and rags, with big terror hats on them, a pin stuck over the eye and slap through the crown, half their shadows on the ground and the other half crawling along the wall beside them; ladies of the haute sewer taking their last stroll, sauntering on their last rotten row, going slowly along in the dark, holding up their badgered flounces or standing still, silent and as indifferent as the dead, as if they were thinking of better days, or waiting for something that they had been promised when they were little girls; their poor damned dresses hiked up and falling away over the rump, all gathers and braid, like a crusader's mount, with all the trappings gone sideways with

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108 Barnes, 1936, p.186.
misery.109 (My italics)

Earlier, he identified himself with a grue in Marseilles, and here he identifies a 'grue' with a 'tuppenny upright'. The conclusion is shocking, as this is the Doctor's actual perception of his 'womanhood'. He desires to be a beautiful symbol of 'femininity', but what he is is a prostitute down on her luck. He too saunters on a 'last rotten row'. If he sympathizes with women such as Jenny, it is because he recognizes that, like him, they are desperate to embody a myth. The description of this myth (see my italics) recalls the description of the effect of fairy tales upon children. Also, the image of the 'crusader's mount' suggests that the figure has medieval origins. Even the 'terror hat' is reminiscent of female dress during the French Revolution.

If the Doctor represents this figure then he also embodies the displaced 'family' of Nora Flood, as his speech encodes both maternal and paternal phraseology. This speech is combined with pantomimic gestures:

Suddenly he struck his thigh with his open hand. 'Flood, Nora, why sweet God, my girl, I helped to bring you in to the world!'110

Once he has placed Nora, he establishes a link between the two of them which remains unbroken throughout the text. When Nora seeks comfort, it is the Doctor to whom she turns. In return, he is often in her company. Nora regards him as maternal, and she is the only character who is permitted to enter his rooms. It is pertinent that she returns to him despite having witnessed the squalor of the chamber in which he lives: 'she had not known the Doctor was so poor'.111

The Doctor's room, which resembles 'the grave', provides an inventory of his masquerade, a list of objects connected with constructions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity':

A pile of medical books, and volumes of miscellaneous order, reached almost to

109 Ibid.
110 Barnes, 1936, p.34.
111 Ibid, p.115.
the ceiling, water-stained and covered with dust. Just above them was a very small, barred window, the only ventilation. On a maple dresser, certainly not of European make, lay a rusty pair of forceps, a broken scalpel, half a dozen odd instruments that she couldn't place, a catherer, some twenty perfume bottles, almost empty, pomades, creams, rouges, powder boxes and puffs. From the half-open drawers of this chiffonier hung laces, ribands, stockings, ladies under-clothing and an abdominal brace, which gave an impression that the feminine finery had suffered venery.\textsuperscript{112}

The Doctor's career, his American origins (symbolized by the non-European dresser) and the aspects of a life of private cross-dressing are all on display. Like Bluebeard's wife, Nora, once she has entered them, occupies a unique position among his friends and acquaintances. Exchanges between Nora and O'Connor are thus crucial to readings of the novel. Nora is witness to the Doctor's transvestism and provides his only audience. This role is repeated as only he can provide ear to her 'confession'. As with Bluebeard, O'Connor's private room is sordid:

\begin{quote}
A swill pail stood at the head of the bed, brimming with abominations. There was something appallingly degraded about the room, like the rooms in brothels, which give even the most innocent a sensation of having been accomplice.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

Nora remains in this room, despite its 'abominations', and thus becomes the Doctor's 'accomplice'. In return, he is her audience and he addresses her wearing the garments of 'the girl who God forgot'. In Garber's terms, both Nora and O'Connor are performers.\textsuperscript{114} As with Barnes and Dan Mahoney, the two remain friends despite their implicit knowledge of each other's failings, or perhaps because of that knowledge.

The Doctor faces Nora 'woman to woman', thus his relationship with Felix Volkbein

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, p.116.
\textsuperscript{114} See Garber, 1992, pp.128-31.
(felicitous good person?) never attains the same intimacy. Unlike Nora, Felix never sees O'Connor dressed as a woman, nor does he visit his rooms. Nora recognizes that much of the Doctor's room signifies 'masculinity':

This room was also muscular, a cross between a chambre à coucher and a boxer's training camp.  

The same room likewise encodes 'feminine' objects of desire. The 'maleness' of the room is displaced by the 'femininity' of objects such as perfume bottles and powder puffs. Nora recognizes the fact that she is probably the only woman to have entered the Doctor's chambers:

There is a certain belligerence in a room in which a woman has never set foot; every object seems to be battling its own compression - and there is a metallic odour, as of beaten iron in a smithy.

This passage also satirizes descriptions of 'maleness' penned by writers such as Hemingway and McAlmon. Nora's entrance both threatens and confirms the Doctor's transvestism.

As Sandra Gilbert has pointed out, female dress is closely connected with the pressures and oppressions of gender. She cites Barnes as a writer who, like many 'female modernists' did not differentiate between 'true' garments and 'false' costumes, and also argues that to make such differentiations would be to bow to popular stereotypes. Thus, what Nora observes is O'Connor's expression of the female part of his persona, rather than the Doctor putting on a 'guise'. O'Connor's dress articulates his desires, as opposed to making him 'look feminine'. According to Gilbert's theory, O'Connor speaks not as a man dressed as a woman, but as a man speaking from the 'feminine' part of himself. Yet this argument fails to address the

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115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.

Doctor's feeling of being a woman trapped in a male body. For, as was stated earlier, the Doctor's private masquerade remains particularly unsuccessful.

As with Radclyffe Hall's Stephen Gordon, Dr O'Connor speaks of how nature has cheated him. By so doing, he reveals the failure of his own times to address such 'gender trouble'. Also, neither Nora nor Matthew are free from powerful gender constructions created by what Caroline G. Heilbrun and Margot R. Higgonet have termed 'the tacit assumptions of a dominant culture', a culture which created the sexological theories of Havelock Ellis and Kraft Ebbing. The Doctor cannot pass as a woman but remains 'female' in the sense that he re-makes language to fit his gender needs and speaks as a 'girl' cheated by nature and rejected by society.

If one uses the ideas on cross-dressing outlined in works by Garber, Straub and Epstein, and Sandra Gilbert, one can place the Doctor using both historical and textual perspectives. The Doctor performs to the public during the day and early evening, and 'acts' privately at night. Indeed, some of his most remarkable expressions of self are arrived at during his discussion of the night. After the part of the novel which contains his main discourse on this topic, the Doctor's language suffers a breakdown and the silences which begin to creep into his conversation indicate this. The Doctor's discourse of the night is analyzed in the following section, as Barnes uses it to chart his descent. For, once O'Connor has articulated his ideas on the night to Nora Flood, he has revealed that part of his identity which was deeply hidden. This is similar to the moment when Nora entered his room, as it represents a small violation of the self. Such violations, however small, have far-reaching consequences. The Doctor becomes less sure of his ground as the text concludes, no longer being the enigmatic man in black of the novel's opening chapters. His analysis of the night reveals his bitter belief that he has been cheated of his 'femininity', even though he is aware that his desires represent a

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131 As this thesis points out, both perspectives are equally important to an understanding of Barnes's works.
female stereotype.

"Watchman What of the Night?"

Thus begins the chapter in which Nora begs O'Connor to define the night. By so doing, Nora hopes to understand Robin Vote's nightly wanderings. The title of this piece is crucial to a textual reading of it. "Watchman, What of the Night?" is derived from the Old Testament (Isaiah, xxi, ii), and, in turn, provided the lyric of a Lutheran hymn. The watchman addressed thus is a prophet. If O'Connor is Barnes's 'watchman', as the text implies, then he crosses the border between the secular, irreverent figure of the mountebank, and that of the biblical patriarchal orator. In Isaiah, the prophet awaits news of the fall of Babylon. As the metropolis in Nightwood is defined as almost biblically hellish, this can be regarded as a vital textual metaphor. Also in Isaiah, night engenders the fall of Babylon and is eternal:

"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman says: 'morning comes and also the night,

if you will inquire, inquire; come back again'.

Nora enquires of the night from Dr O'Connor, and 'come back again' is what she does when she seeks him out. In Nightwood, the watchman observes a heterosexual world and attempts to create a private sphere within the confines of it, yet both spheres are involved in a Babylonian collision. O'Connor's fall (as with that of Wendell Ryder) is one of biblical proportions. Like Dante he observes an inferno, but (like the watchman) he prophecies descent. Thus, he literally represents 'the girl who God forgot'. By asking 'what of the night?' Nora makes him define his own damnation. In answering her, he speaks of the nature of his personal hell.

Ironically, T.S. Eliot described Nightwood as a novel in which Barnes 'caught up with her

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122 This is listed in the volume edited by Stevenson, E., Quotations (London: Cassell, 1935), pp.846-7. A good description of it occurs in Leonard Marcus's sleeve notes to Charles Ives's Symphony No.4 (BS. 72403). Ives used the hymn in his 1916 symphony, which includes the lines 'Watchman, tell us of the night/What the signs of promise are' and 'Watchman, aught of Joy and Hope?'

123 Ibid.
own sorrow, identified it and tapped it on the shoulder. This biographical interpretation precisely echoes the way in which Dr O'Connor identifies his own despair. In reading the novel via Barnes's life, Eliot appears to make O'Connor Barnes's fictional representative. Yet O'Connor does not represent the author's world view, any more than does Nora. his eventual disintegration, as observed by both Felix and the defrocked Priest, is in keeping with both Barnes's biblical sources, and her use of folk tales. Eliot's interpretation identifies the doctor as a Tiresian figure, who only defines his despair because of Nora's questions.

Yet, Eliot failed to recognize that the Doctor's speech can be linked to nineteenth-century French writings, as much as it can be connected to classicism. During his discourse on the night, the Doctor's speech becomes expansive. He regards the night as opening a 'dark door' into the soul, and asks Nora to 'beware' of 'opening the door'. By literally opening his door, Nora has already opened part of the metaphorical 'dark door'. As with a vampire, who has to be ushered in by its victim, Nora proves the Doctor's nemesis. The Doctor describes this by also recognizing the night as embodying a 'fabulous reconstruction of fear'. It is ironic that he also outlines the means by which his composure will be destroyed.

Let a man lay himself down in the great Bed and his 'identity' is no longer his own, his 'trust' is not with him and his 'willingness' is turned over and is of another permission. His distress is anonymous. He sleeps in a town of Darkness, member of a secret brotherhood. He neither knows himself, nor his outriders, he besmocks a fearful dimension and dismount, miraculously, in bed.

This section, with its riding imagery, is similar to descriptions of death contained in Barnes's poetry. Such descriptions maintain Barnes's critique of patriarchal norms. For example, the secret societies mentioned recall images of masonic 'brotherhoods', organizations into which

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124 Eliot, Valerie, 'Djuna's Sorrow' in Financial Times (Sat, Aug 1, 1987).
125 Ibid.
126 Barnes, 1936, p.119.
127 Ibid, p.117.
only men of a certain class are allowed. Such societies use occult imagery and are defined as 'masculine'.

The Doctor's exploration of the night is also worth comparing to the vision of the poet Charles Baudelaire. Walter Benjamin once remarked that Baudelaire's descriptions of the city of Paris were visions of a city 'in the era of high capitalism' which preceded and pre-empted many works of 'modernism' and how, in Baudelaire's poem 'the Ragpicker's Wine', the poet speaks of the Ragpicker as

Stumbling like a poet lost in his dreams,

He pours his out in stupendous schemes.129

The Ragpicker is a figure associated with the underbelly of city life, and is also equated by Benjamin with dreams and disquiet.130 As Janet Wolff points out, Baudelaire was considered a *flâneur*, thus if one associates Barnes's creation of the Doctor with works by him, then one must again pose the question, raised in the chapter on her poetry, as to whether Barnes and women like her represented modern equivalents of the *flâneur*, the *flâneuse*.131 I would suggest that Barnes's novel re-writes the rules of the *flâneur* as outlined in Baudelaire's work, by employing similar images to him, and then turning these upside-down.

The Ragpicker is an example of this for, if he can be associated with dreams, he can also be connected, as can Matthew O'Connor, with the nightmares of the bourgeois. Benjamin regarded the Ragpicker as asking 'the mute question as to where the limit of human misery lay' and this is precisely the question which the Doctor tries to answer in his anatomy of the night.132 This image is also discussed by Benjamin in his exploration of the influence of the writings of St Beuve on Baudelaire. St Beuve regarded the night and sleep as deadening forces to which man had contributed the nonpermanent Lethe of alcohol. Likewise, the

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130 Ibid.
Doctor also perceives this aspect of sleep, saying:

We sleep in long reproachful dust against ourselves. We are full to the gorge
with our own names for misery.\textsuperscript{133}

Like both St Beuve and Baudelaire, Dr O'Connor links the night to his city, the city of Paris.

Was Barnes creating a gendered exploration of the world of Baudelaire? Certainly, the
Doctor's great topic is 'the night', Baudelaire's most prominent Parisian theme:

Have you thought of the night, now, in other times, in foreign countries - in
Paris? When the streets were gall high with things you wouldn't have done for a
dare's sake, and the way it was then; with the pheasant's necks and goslings
beaks dangling against the hocks of the gallants, and not a pavement in the
place, and everything gutters for miles and miles, and a stench to it that plucked
you by the nostrils and you were twenty leagues out.\textsuperscript{134}

Of course, this is historical Paris, and perhaps it is also a past which is foreign and which, like
Barnes's Greenwich Village, forms the underbelly of the modern city. It is similar to
Baudelaire's city of ragpickers and human detritus. The Doctor regards the old city as a
charnel house, where gallants acted as poultry carriers and the nature of the city was
manifested in its smell. This runs counter to Felix's notions of both nobility and aristocratic
history. To the Doctor, the old Paris remains visible beneath the shining surfaces of the new
city. It is most visible at night. This creates a subliminal image of the Doctor strolling the
actual city but observing a city of his own creation, just as Benjamin describes Baudelaire's
strolls around Paris.\textsuperscript{135} As with Baudelaire's poet, the Doctor perceives the city through the
veil of his poverty, and is always outside the city of the Bourgeois.

In his 'Salon de 1845' Baudelaire notes that the 'modern hero' should wear black, as this
garb is 'the symbol of constant mourning' and is 'worthy of the poverty of modern life'.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{133} Barnes, 1936, p.122.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, p.120.
\textsuperscript{135} Benjamin, 1973, p.70.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, p.77.
Throughout *Nightwood*, when not dressed as a woman, Dr O'Connor wears black and thus echoes Baudelaire's concept of a modern protagonist:

The black suit and the frock-coat not only have their political beauty as an expression of general equality, but also their poetic beauty - an immense cortege of undertakers, political undertakers, bourgeois undertakers. We all observe some kind of funeral.\(^{137}\)

During the course of *Nightwood*, the Doctor arranges funerals and this too identifies him with Baudelaire's 'hero'. Barnes might, at this juncture, have been satirizing Baudelaire's symbolism. Indeed, her 'hero' wears black as a masquerade, as he desires to be a 'heroine' in the Mary Pickford mould.

The Doctor acts as an initiator both into the world of night (just as he often arranges funerals) and the charnel houses of Paris. The knowledge that sleep is connected with death, is what threatens to unhinge him. He walks a mental tightrope, fraught with conflicting gender images in order to survive. He regards sexual activity as no more than representing an avoidance of death, as the individual avoids death when he or she is not alone. Nora is told that, during the night, she must fix her attention on the day.\(^{138}\) This is a half-hearted suggestion, as the Doctor immediately plunges back into his own exploration of the night. Resembling Baudelaire's 'hero', he recognizes that 'the French have made a detour of filthiness' whilst the Americans and the English try to wash the night away as if it were dirt.\(^{139}\) His theory is illustrated as the French with whom he lives are poor, whilst Nora, who connects herself with money, discovers greater misery in her own fall:

Be as the Frenchman, who puts a sou in the poor box at night that he may have a penny to spend in the morning.\(^{140}\)

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\(^{137}\) Ibid.
\(^{138}\) Barnes, 1936, p.123.
\(^{139}\) Ibid.
\(^{140}\) Ibid, p.124.
The Doctor also designates anger as a property of the night, and this is also borne out during the course of the novel: Jenny beats Robin at night; at night Nora seeks Robin; Robin wanders at night; in the evening Felix attends soirées at which he feels vaguely uncomfortable; and at night the Doctor dresses in the trappings of 'the girl who God forgot'. The Doctor states that the human condition is such that:

We will find no more comfort until the night melts away;
until the fury of the night rolls out its fire.\(^\text{141}\)

Nora realizes that if this is true, she will never attain a 'happy ending'.

The Doctor advises Nora to seek 'difference' at night and to recognize that the night distorts both objects and motives which would be clearer by day, and this leads her to ponder the sleep of animals. She equates Robin with an animal and thinks that this knowledge will bring her closer to the woman she loves. The Doctor, however, speaks in biblical terms, linking his speech to the idea of the fall. This notion forms the basis of the entire chapter. he cites Sodom as a city:

given over to the shades, and that's why it has never been countenanced and understood to this day.\(^\text{142}\)

Barnes uses Baudelaire's recognition that human beings exist with basic fears, fears which cannot be reduced by possession or security in domestic life. Baudelaire's crowd jostle in darkness:

In that hideous dream, night arrived together with the crowd, and both grew even thicker; indeed, in those regions which no look can fathom, the more numerous were the people, the deeper the darkness.\(^\text{143}\)

The Doctor's vision of the sleeper reveals a 'proprietor of an unknown land'.\(^\text{144}\) When

\(^{141}\) Ibid, p.125.  
\(^{142}\) Ibid, p.126.  
\(^{143}\) Benjamin, 1973, p.61.  
\(^{144}\) Barnes, 1936, p.127.
awake, this everyman/woman diverts himself/herself with visits to the Opera, to Cafés and in
conversations with friends. Baudelaire's 'crowd' is present in the Doctor's description of a
ghastly sleep, from which the sleeper awakes sweating:

We awake from our doings in a deep sweat, for that they happened in a house
without an address, in a street in no town, with people with no names with
which to deny them.145

The horror embodies the fear of displacement and is similar to that experienced in other
works by Barnes and in works by both Victor Hugo and Baudelaire. It is ironic that Emily
Holmes Coleman suggested Anatomy of The Night as the novel's original title, and that this
was rejected by Eliot in preference to Nightwood.146 For the former title outlines the novel's
exact subject, as it is the Doctor's dissection of the night which leads to his own
disintegration. Here, using Garber's terms the Doctor's 'personal theatre' changes from one
which he controls (where people laugh with him), to one where he is rambling (where his
audience laugh at him). He finally realizes that he cannot hope for 'children and knitting', the
heterosexual role which he desires.147 This increasing knowledge, it might be suggested,
begins when Nora questions him. He says 'and do I not know my Sodomites?', and by stating
this, he not only refers to the sexual mores of the 'crowd', but to the Babylonian metropolis.148

As the 'watchman' the Doctor observes the crowd and it can be suggested that this is why his
veneer will ultimately crack, despite his efforts to maintain it. He provides an interesting
statement on writing which, again using Garber's terms, imagines an audience:

And, must I, perchance, like careful writers, guard against the conclusions of
my readers?149

Yet, these conclusions are precisely what the 'watchman' fails to guard himself against, as the

145 Ibid, p.128.
146 See the volume edited by Mary Lynne Broe, Silence and Power: Djuna Barnes a Re-
147 Barnes, 1936, p.132. See also Garber, 1992, pp.40-1.
148 Barnes, 1936, p.135.
crowd overwhelms him. The last descriptions of the Doctor imply that his private
transvestism has filtered through into his public 'act' and that this has destroyed his ability to
maintain a distance from his audience. The curtain has lifted and the man in black has
revealed himself to be a 'tuppenny upright'.

'Go Down, Matthew': The Disintegration of Doctor O'Connor

Walter Benjamin once quoted Saint-Beuve as saying:

In this fine cab, I examine the man who is driving me, no more than a machine,
hideous, with a thick beard and sticky hair. Vice, wine and sleep make his
drunken eyes heavy. How can a man deteriorate that way? So I thought, and I
drew back to the other corner of the seat.150

Barnes's view of disintegration is more compassionate than this. Indeed, it is similar to
Radclyffe Hall's portrayal of the mentally ill waiter, Gian-Luca, in Adam's Breed (1926).151
After his conversations with Nora Flood the Doctor begins to deteriorate, and the text focuses
on Felix's compassion for him. When observed by Felix, the Doctor appears to have aged, his
'dark shaved chin was lowered as if in a melancholy that had no beginning or end'.152 Felix
also notes how the Doctor throws off 'his unobserved self, as one hides, hastily, a secret
life'.153 The reader is made aware that it is the Doctor's obvious poverty and not his stories
which compels Felix to ask him to dinner. The Doctor's speech is abstracted, to match his
economic status, and he refers to his Irishness not as a Celtic storyteller, but as a survivor of
poverty and famine:

All he could think of was coffee and Grande Marnier, the big tumbler warmed
with the hands, like his people warming at the peat fire.154

151 Hall's 1926 novel tells the story of a saintly waiter who develops an eating disorder
because he comes to connect food with cruelty. See Hall, Radclyffe, Adam's Breed
152 Barnes, 1936, p.158.
153 Ibid.
Barnes subtly alters her portrayal of the Doctor, so that he crosses from being a story teller (who as Fullbrook notes, calls himself 'God of Darkness') to a figure representing dispossession:

'Yes', he said, and realized that the Baron had been speaking. The doctor lifted his chin to the night air and listened now with an intensity with which he hoped to reconstruct the sentence.155

The Crowleyesque 'man in black' appears, by this stage in the text, to be prematurely senile. As the text progresses, it becomes clear that Felix and the Doctor reverse their previous roles, with Felix becoming the more confident of the two. For example, Felix carries the conversation throughout the episode quoted above, with the Doctor making short, often pointless, observations. The Doctor speaks of pity in ironic tones and this leads the reader to wonder whether he is aware of Felix's pity for him: The Doctor, as he grew older, in answering a question seemed, as old people do, to be speaking more and more to himself and, when troubled, he seemed to grow smaller.156

This passage operates in direct contrast to descriptions of the Doctor in the novel's first chapters. It is Felix who ends the novel a confident man, whereas the Doctor has become a shambling wreck. Eliot, as has been argued, regarded the 'old' Doctor as a Tiresian figure but this does not account for the Doctor's crumbling mentality at the novel's conclusion. As with Felix, the Doctor increases his alcoholic intake as the novel progresses. During his last meeting with Nora Flood, he drinks a huge quantity of port and then quits her rooms to find a bar. In telling Nora some final truths, the Doctor exhausts himself and removes his last remaining defences. He also speaks as one of the living dead, a man who has outlived his span, in a passage which might also refer to the aftermath of World War One:

My war brought me many things; let yours bring you as much. Life is not to be

155 Ibid.
told, call it as loud as you like, it will not tell itself.\textsuperscript{157} This is ironic, as the Doctor's life appears to 'tell itself'. Barnes slowly divests the figure of all cabalistic imagery, lessening his enigma. Therefore, in this portion of the text, the 'tuppenny upright' forms his final masquerade. As befits his senility, the Doctor's language reverts to that of a child, and Nora rebukes him for 'speaking like a child'.\textsuperscript{158} As with Cassandra, the Doctor's prophecies are not believed. His tragedy is that, as with Jenny Petherbridge's stories, his words cannot prevent either his own descent, or the anguish of Robin Vote: 'Yet we all cry out in tiny voices to the great booming God, the older we get'.\textsuperscript{159}

The text implies that it is self knowledge which he regards as destructive: 'To be utterly innocent', he went on, 'would be to be utterly unknown, particularly to one's self'.\textsuperscript{160} This overdose of self-knowledge leads to his final tirade, which occurs towards the end of his conversation with Nora:

Suddenly, Dr Matthew O'Connor said: 'It's my mother without argument that I want'. And then, in his loudest voice he roared: 'Mother of God! I wanted to be your son - the unknown beloved second would have done'.\textsuperscript{161}

It would be simple to contextualize this within a Freudian framework and state that the Doctor is reverting to the lost mother for comfort. Yet, this might prevent a plural reading, as the Doctor uses a Catholic image in order to name desires which remain obscure. As Fullbrook notes, many key images within the text are pagan, thus this outburst runs counter to the 'God of Darkness' of earlier passages.\textsuperscript{162} Yet, the image of the devil and that of the Madonna appear to be interchangeable. It is the symbolism which is important, as opposed to the religious connotations. The Doctor does not cease to use pagan imagery, but rather mingles images from many religions within his speech. The Mother of God remains an icon, as opposed to

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid, p.164.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, p.171.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, p.184.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, p.189.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, p.193.
\textsuperscript{162} Fullbrook, 1990, pp.125-7.
representing a solution.

The Doctor's final ramble ends in the Café, which he has hitherto described as his home, yet in this section of the text its atmosphere is alien to him. As with Baudelaire's 'hero', he treads 'the way of a man in a fog'. The Doctor's speech pattern is, in this part of the text, incoherent:

In great defaming sentences his betrayals came up; no one ever really knew what was truth and what was not.

The Doctor harangues his audience and his diatribe is vitriolic in the extreme:

'So safe as all that?' he asked, sarcastically; 'So damned safe? Well, wait until you get in gaol and find yourself slapping the bottoms of your feet for misery'.

Resembling the Orphean lyre he is a 'broken instrument ... gone flat'. This image is also similar to the representation of the female body as a 'mug of beer gone flat' in the poem 'Suicide', described in Chapter One. It is interesting that the Doctor's final conversation is with a defrocked priest, as what follows is a quasi-confession, similar to that heard by Father Lucas in Ryder. The priest asks about the Doctor's life and, in the ensuing drunken ramble which is his answer, one realizes that O'Connor, like Wendell Ryder, is no longer able to distinguish fact from fiction. The ramble is that of a man who has confused roles (hag, necromancer, man in black, transvestite, tuppenny upright, golden haired woman, God of Darkness) and who is left cursing like Caliban: 'He caught someone nudging someone. He looked up at the ex-priest and cursed'. The Doctor as 'watchman' has also failed to heed his own prophecy, and has become a part of the inferno. Again, resembling Marlowe's Mephistopheles, he realizes that

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163 See Benjamin, 1973, and also Ibid, p.223.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid, p.224.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
he represents his own hell.  

Once more, one can cite how Barnes describes his theatrical performance, noting how his audience is no longer comfortable observing him:

People had begun to whisper and the waiters moved closer, watching. The ex-priest was smiling to himself, but O'Connor did not seem to see or hear anything but his own heart.

His speech degenerates into a pathetic cry and he describes himself as ‘mauled and weeping’. The Doctor's lack of control leaves him to weep for the remainder of the text, and to mistake past anecdotes for personal history, until the priest says 'remember your century at least'. The Doctor has, at last, forgotten his own origins. He is defined as 'too far gone to care', 'too muddled in his mind to argue' and 'already weeping'. If the remainder of his dialogue is controlled by anything, then it is alcohol. Following an outburst of screaming his words form no more than the echo of an old prophecy:

'Now', he said, 'the end - mark my words - now nothing, but wrath and weeping'.

This confirms the thesis of this chapter, that if O'Connor is the watchman, then the descent which he describes is his own. He begins the novel as a public Celtic storyteller with a private transvestite existence, but he concludes as a lost soul, the victim of his own stories.

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169 Barnes, 1936, p.227.
170 Ibid.
171 Barnes, 1936, p.230.
173 Ibid.
"Love is Death and Death Is Maidenly": The Antiphon and Its Sources

Miranda: Good Wombs have born bad sons.

_The Tempest_ 11, 111.²

_The Antiphon_ is, perhaps, the most complex of all Barnes's works. It was published in 1958 but, as Lynda Curry points out, was begun circa 1937.³ The history of the play is problematic, as it went through many drafts and was considerably cut by T.S. Eliot, Barnes's editor at Faber and Faber, who pressurized her into shortening it. According to Curry, by 1956, Barnes's text had been rewritten four times under Eliot's draconian editorship.⁴ Curry cites a letter from Barnes to Eliot, written on the 21st of February 1956, discussing a fifth major reworking of the play.⁵ She describes how Eliot sliced three-hundred lines from Act Two and thus how the play, with its themes of rape and incest, never recovered from his 'editing'.⁶ The significance of the material cut by Eliot serves to inform Curry's essay, the latest on the play. In this account, Eliot's attitude to the piece remains essentially empirical, and is informed by his prejudice against the subject matter. Curry heightens the reader's awareness that 'in general ... there is more movement, openness, ease and activity in the early drafts'.⁷

If Curry's work concentrates on the publication history of the text, then Louise De Salvo, following similar lines to those which she uses in her discussion of Virginia Woolf and

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¹ All notes to plays preface the page number (marked p. or pp.) with the number of the act; all references to Shakespeare's plays are taken from the 1981 reprinting of the 1623 folio and contain the following references: Act, Scene, Line, Page (p. or pp.). Barnes's play was first published in 1958, for all references here see Barnes, Djuna, 'The Antiphon', in _Selected Works_ (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), 3, p.196.
⁴ Ibid, p.287.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid, p.296.
childhood sexual abuse, regards the play as possessing an inherent code which attempts to break the incest taboo. De Salvo's argument is essentially reliant on Barnes's biography. Therefore, it also asserts that the play charts some basic, if painful, truths about family life. De Salvo perceives the play as articulating a cycle of blame, which is common to child abuse cases. Another recent exploration of *The Antiphon* by Meryl Altman, discusses the problem of performing both Barnes's early plays and her 1958 drama, charting difficulties which affect both performers and director.Whilst all of these readings of the play are valuable to the feminist scholar, what appears remarkable about them is that they do not dwell on the sources for Barnes's verse drama. If the text represents a critique of patriarchal society, then a study of the sources from which its drama is derived would seem to be vital. Louis F. Kannenstine cited both the obscurity of Barnes's vision and the playwright's refusal to make her meaning any more clear to her readers. Yet it is hard to tell whether this obscurity was deliberate or due to Eliot's revisions. To illustrate this he used the (possibly apocryphal) tale of Janet Flanner's complaint to Barnes that she could not follow the play's storyline, only to receive the curt reply: 'I never expected to find that you were as stupid as Tom Eliot'. Kannenstine's own discussion of the play centred on its density, presenting it as a 'reaction against the state of contemporary theatre', which is interesting, as the play could also be regarded as revising some themes and images from Eliot's play *The Family Reunion* (1939). He described the

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9 De Salvo mentions *The Tempest* as a possible source for *The Antiphon* but, as with the analysis of Virginia Woolf listed above, her sources are mainly biographical.
13 Ibid, p.142.
14 Ibid. Eliot's drama of 1939 could be regarded as being similar to Barnes's verse drama of 1958, as both look at family 'skeletons' and the vicious side of family life. However, Eliot's upper class family (the Monchenseys) have little in common with Barnes's dispossessed Hobbe's. See Eliot, T.S. 'The Family Reunion' in *Collected Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp.55-122.
terms of reference used within the text as occasionally specific, suggestive of Jacobean drama and using sources as diverse as Shakespeare and Dante.\(^5\)

This chapter aims to argue that the published text of Barnes's play is not as obscure as it might seem. It deploys specific source references to create a drama on the theme of patriarchy, and sources used are taken from works which also explore patriarchy or were themselves created within a patriarchal framework. Chief among these works is Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, but references to folklore, fairy tales, ballads, film, nursery rhyme, Plato, Dante, Dickens, studies of witchcraft, songs, and plays such as *Twelfth Night* also inform the text. It is worth recalling that the play's chief female protagonists, Augusta and Miranda, a mother and daughter, represent two feared social stereotypes of 'castrating' women, namely the widow and the spinster. The references to witchcraft in the text are therefore not obscure but are linked to deep-rooted fears within patriarchal societies concerning independent women. This chapter, which uses this premise as a base, is divided into several sections: a basic plot synopsis (necessary with such a complex text); a discussion of the gender significance of naming within the play; Barnes's use of *The Tempest* and other sources; music and images of theatre deployed within the text; the rape of Miranda; her socratic role as the one 'just' woman of the text; and a conclusion which deals with the final tragedy which the play seeks to explore. This chapter endeavours to suggest that *The Antiphon* is not an isolated work, but is linked to works such as *Ryder* and *Ladies Almanack* in both style and content. This does not, however, imply that this would be an easy play to stage. The list below provides a brief performance history of the play, revealing how few performances of it have actually taken place:

\(^5\) Ibid, p.149.
The Antiphon in Performance

1958: Reading, Poet's Theatre, (Dir: Edwin Muir), Unstaged.


Lynda Curry's suggestion that Eliot's editorship has made the play's drama unknowable, might be borne out by the above table. Curry has also asked whether or not the play was meant to be performed. Whatever conclusion is reached as to whether the play was meant to be performed or read, a detailed exploration of the existing published text and the complex structure of references which inform it, can only aid the student's understanding of it.

A Brief Critical Plot Synopsis of The Antiphon

The context of the play is Europe during the Second World War. Act One begins with Miranda, a refugee from Paris, coming to Burley Hall, the English home of her childhood. This is located in the old town of Bee-wick from which the family emigrated to New York State, when Miranda was young. Miranda is accompanied by Jack Blow, who (as in many Shakespearian dramas) is actually her lost brother, Jeremy, in disguise. The play is referred to as a piece of theatre throughout, making the reader/audience aware of its construction. During the course of the act the audience discover that the family scattered after the death of Miranda's father, Titus Higby Hobbs, who died before the action of the play begins. Burley, Miranda's uncle lives at Burley, a home for refugees of war which appears only to contain him. Burley, Jack and Miranda are then joined by her unpleasant brothers, Dudley and Elisha. Speeches by

17 Ibid.
18 Barnes, 1969, p.80.
19 Ibid, 1, p.94.
the brothers are used as a device to highlight tensions within the family such as the absence of Jeremy, the implied abuse of Miranda by both themselves and the father, and the collusive role of Augusta, whose arrival at the act's conclusion causes Miranda to cry in Ibsenesque manner: 'No, no, no, no, no!' As Augusta taps her stick against the balcony, Miranda's cries imply that her mother's presence will bring forth past ghosts.

Act Two begins with Augusta in dialogue with her children. She bemoans the loss of Jeremy and blames Miranda for it. Throughout the act, mother and daughter circle each other (both literally and symbolically), creating a pattern of love and blame. Miranda has often been interpreted as being a portrait of Barnes as she is a writer whose mother disparages her lack of fame. Like Sophia Grieve Ryder, Augusta attempts to concoct a glittering family history, whilst Miranda appears determined to tell the truth. At one point, she is seized by her brothers, who enact a mimicry of abuse. Jack (who has been off-stage) brings out a large doll's house and encourages the women to use this to re-enact the part of the story (the abuse) which they cannot articulate (mimicking Hamlet's device of the 'mouse-trap'). The act concludes with Miranda's revelation that her father abused her then let his friend rape her while he listened below. Augusta denies all knowledge of this but, as Miranda suggests, she is directly involved. Despite this, the act ends as Miranda decides that the family should be reconciled.

Act Three represents a prolonged 'duel' between mother and daughter. This is signified by a circling motion, where both women act out the roles of quarry and hunter whilst the men remain off-stage. During this act Augusta reveals a love for her daughter which never quite overcomes her fear of Miranda's celibacy. The mother desperately wishes her daughter to articulate a life-story and family history of fame and triumph, but Miranda refuses to oblige her mother. As tensions mount, the circling motion becomes reminiscent of a pair of fighting

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20 Ibid, I, p.114
cocks. Augusta cries both for her missing son and for her own youth, which is reflected in her
daughter's ageing face. Throughout this scene the reader/audience is made aware of the
apocalyptic nature of the period during which the play is set. Augusta's cry of 'You are to
blame, to blame, you are to blame - Lost-Lost, lost, lost!', echoes her daughter's cry of 'no' at
the end of act one. At the plays' conclusion Augusta brings a large bell down upon her
daughter's head, killing them both. Jack and Burley enter, and Jack then reveals himself as
Jeremy. Rather like Hamlet at the conclusion of 'the Mouse Trap', Jack concludes:

So I, who thought to medicine contumely

With a doll's hutch that catches villains.-

Find I've breathed disaster on myself.®®

Conventional expectations of theatre might lead one to expect a climax to this epilogue but
instead it concludes with Jack/Jeremy leaving 'with what appears to be indifference'. 23

As can be perceived by this synopsis, the plot is complex, and was rendered doubly so by
Eliot's cuts, particularly in his obscuring the father's rape of the daughter.®4 The significance
of names is extremely important to an understanding of the text, and as the section below
demonstrates, adds a unique historical/feminist perspective to a reading of it.

History in a Name: The Cast List of The Antiphon

In her study of Djuna Barnes and history, Julie L. Abraham states that:

For Djuna Barnes history always had at least a double meaning. History was

fixed, exact, monumental, the source of power. It was also chaotic, fragmentary,
constantly under construction.®

21 Ibid, 3, p.223. Likewise, in Eliot's 1939 verse drama, the cousins Amy and Agatha also
circle each other. Eliot, 1962, p.112.


23 Ibid.


25 Abraham, Julie L., 'Woman Remember You: Djuna Barnes and History' in Broe, 1991,
p.253.
History, then, provides Barnes with a method of exploring both patriarchal family networks and perceptions of the past, involving familiar tropes and archetypes which are placed in unfamiliar contexts. When speaking of Nightwood, Abraham positions Barnes's work outside 'the circle of power that official history bestows and legitimates', arguing that it privileges those figures whom history excludes, such as mothers and daughters. What is interesting concerning The Antiphon is precisely the way in which Barnes focuses the reader's/audience's attention on those outside 'official' history. This is achieved, it might be suggested, by deploying moments and characters from 'official' history and using these in an 'unofficial' context. For example, a list of historical and literary figures mentioned in the course of the play might include Socrates, Crito, Plato, Napoleon, Josephine, Mme Recamier, Vesta Victoria, Lily Langtry, Rigaud and Cavaletto from Little Dorrit, the Emperor Augustus, Christ, Prospero, Miranda, Joseph of Aramathea, Dante, Hamlet, Malvolio, Ophelia, Pericles and Titus Oates. If the play contains an oblique collection of references which signify the past, then it also contains an important set of signifiers, names which stand for actual historical figures. Therefore, it uses a border crossing between 'official history' and 'illegitimate' historical figures to indicate the slim divide between the two. Thus Socrates (a 'great' figure, linked to classicism) occurs in the same context as Vesta Victoria (a music hall performer), crossing a divide between the lofty and the popular. Names, as will be discussed below, also fulfil this function.

As has been suggested by critics such as De Salvo, Miranda's name can be perceived as deriving from Prospero's daughter in Shakespeare's The Tempest. As will be discussed later, the play not only provided Barnes with source material for her work, but her text could be read as a deliberate inversion of Shakespeare's text. Descriptions of Miranda, which can be

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27 Most of these characters will be discussed during the chapter. Another reference worthy citing is that made to Archbishop Benson, patriarchal father of E.F. Benson, whose wife, Mary, was a lesbian. Benson's house was run along similar lines to the house of Titus. See Benson, E.F., Mother (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925).
linked to fears concerning her celibacy, can also be connected to descriptions of Elizabeth I, and this aspect of the text, also to be discussed later, could be regarded as a deliberate historical link forged by Barnes. Miranda, who has regal looks, is described as a Queen of no country. Her regal bearing is therefore linked to her sexual isolation. She is also described as 'The Queen of Night', a reference perhaps both to the Goddesses of The Tempest and to Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, where the 'Queen of Night' remains a disruptive and threatening presence.

The Miranda of The Tempest is Prospero's mostly dutiful daughter, whose marriage to the lustful Ferdinand can only take place when sanctioned by her father. She is representative of the motherless female child who, as Stephen Orgel points out, only comes to know her mother through the words of her father. The inversion of this parent/child dyad will be discussed in detail in the following section, but it is worth mentioning here. Just as Miranda in The Tempest knows only of her mother from what her father tells her, Miranda in The Antiphon is only able to explore her childhood through the words of Augusta, her mother. It might be argued that despite her accusations that Augusta's collusion allowed Titus to abuse her, Miranda remains, implicitly, dutiful. As De Salvo has pointed out, the latin derivation of the name means 'to be admired', and thus the reader comes to admire Miranda's 'extraordinary stance' within the play, where, as De Salvo notes: 'Miranda calls incest by its proper name, rape'. Whilst this is true, Miranda cannot bring herself to leave the family which has hidden her father's crimes. Yet, despite this, she remains a threatening presence to patriarchal society: Simply because Miranda exists, simply because she can bear witness to atrocities, she is a threat.

It might be argued that in making Miranda a 'Queen' or 'Duchess', Barnes is able to

31 Ibid, p.308.
32 Ibid, p.304.
articulate precisely how she is conspired against by her brothers, the 'merchants' whom she so fears. Miranda is a woman whose worth is constantly valued or 'priced' by men, and in this respect she resembles Shakespeare's Miranda. Thus the choice, both of name and epithet, for the abused daughter can be regarded as vital to the construction of the play's critique of the patriarchy.

Likewise, Jack, who chooses a pseudonym to replace his actual name, picks a name which signifies a complex selection of meanings. Jack is Miranda's 'good' brother, the only brother who could aid her against Dudley and Elisha. Yet, he elects to remain silent and, by so-doing, precipitates the final tragedy. Jack, traditionally a knave, is also a folk-name for the Will-O'-the-Wisp, an elusive sprite. As Altman indicates, in the text he is described as 'Tom O'Bedlam' a name which refers both to a sixteenth-century pseudonym for a hack-writer and to Gloucester's disguised son, Edgar, in King Lear. This figure is also a well-known archetype of the fool or madman. Thus, like Edgar, Jack disguises himself in order to try and aid his family. Jack is also described as 'the whipper in', a function which can be interpreted as possessing double-meaning. In this context the 'whipper in' might be perceived as the person who fills a theatre or sideshow tent, yet it might just as easily be interpreted as the figure of death. This other analogy is reinforced by a description of Jack as 'the prudent ferryman' surely a reference to Charon, ferryman over the river Styx. Burley acknowledges this facet of Jack's person, observing: 'Courtesy requires that when you speak you make it more than silence'. Jack also hints at his own role as the 'whipper in': 'Welcome, bless you sir, I'm past all welcome'. He is inherently theatrical, a 'juggler' who sports a theatrical

35 King Lear, which was written c.1606, is, likewise, full of references to madness and crises of identity. Shakespeare, William, King Lear, in The Complete Pelican Shakespeare: The Tragedies (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1981), IV, i, 17-79, p.278; also Barnes, 1969, p.102.
36 Ibid, 1, p.103.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid, 1, p.108.
coachman's costume (similar to that worn by Cynic Sal in the Ladies Almanack) and a patch. Yet this costume, which highlights the artifice of the play itself, indicates the sinister figure which Jack cuts. Is Jack, therefore, a fool? Certainly, by not speaking he enables his mother to kill both her daughter and herself. Yet, perhaps Barnes uses Jack as a Charon figure for, as the 'patient ferryman', he awaits the final disaster.

As is discussed in the section of this chapter which deals with Barnes's use of the death of Socrates, Jack, like Socrates' companion, Crito, observes Miranda's execution and cannot act. He cannot act because Miranda's words have made it clear that, like Socrates, she does not require him to prevent her death. Yet if Jack suggests a classical framework of references, he also crosses a border between these references and allusions to the pagan. Perhaps by doing this, Barnes indicates a slim division between paganism and classicism which is easily transgressed.

At one stage in the play, Miranda makes a reference to pagan forces over which society has no control. These forces appear to remain obscure, but one reference to the source of them is provided in a single image, when Miranda describes the 'lichen bridled face of time'. This might be regarded as being a reference to the early European cult of 'Jack-in-the-Green', parts of which were assimilated into European Christian culture, where the Green Man (or Jack) is often represented by a face with lichen and greenery pouring from its open mouth and nostrils. This image represents the eternal and often subversive power of nature, and in the play might also represent a reference to Botticelli's allegorical work 'Primavera' (1478), where flowers and lichen spill from the features of Chloris. If one connects this image to Jack, then Miranda is making a reference to Jack as an ancient and powerful spirit. Textually, he is ultimately as unknowable as Jack-in-the-Green, a presence, as he points out, past all welcome.

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40 Ibid, 1, p.119; see also Barnes, Djuna, Ladies Almanack (Dijon: Darrantiere, 1928), p.36.
42 Barnes, 1969, 1, p.84.
43 Again, this makes a border-crossing between 'high' and 'popular' art forms. A discussion of Botticelli's work can be found in Pescio, Claudio, The Uffizi (Florence: Bonechi, 1988), pp.48-9.
Jack fulfils another function within the text, which ties in both with his connection to Tom O'Bedlam and with the knave. This is his ability to act as both a foil and critic to Miranda. Much as he realizes that Miranda is right to criticize the patriarchy, he mocks her earnestness. As with Feste to Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Jack refers to Miranda as 'lady' and gambols about her. He advises her 'Lady, be not such a party to yourself'. Thus he hints, as does his sixteenth-century counterpart, that in a discordant society, the lady and the fool are interchangeable. By using Jack in this manner, Barnes not only highlights gender difference (male fools are privileged above 'ladies') but reveals how Jack constantly reminds Miranda of her lowly social status. If Jack is also Charon, then Miranda is bantering with the 'patient' servant of death.

If Jack represents the 'whipper in', then Augusta is nemesis, not only causing her daughter's death but also her own destruction. Jack perceives this at the play's opening, and his reaction at the play's close indicates this. In Barnes's text, Augusta, in an almost Freudian scenario, loses her sons (she is not their father) and cannot accept her daughter, who is not a son. She betrays her daughter, and in so doing, destroys herself. Yet individual blaming is not the function of *The Antiphon*, a play which highlights the failings of society as a whole. The circling motion of Mother and Daughter reflects both Augusta's anxiety, and her anger. Her name, as discussed below, contains references to past patriarchal societies, and to historical figures who were themselves patriarchs.

In one dictionary of names, the name Augusta is described thus:

latin feminine form of Augustas, which enjoyed a vogue in Britain towards the end of the nineteenth-century. Augustas; latin name, from the adjective august, great, magnificent, (from augere, to increase). The word was adopted by the Roman emperors, starting with Octavian ... the adopted son of Julius Caesar,
who assumed it in 27 B.C. and is now generally known as the emperor Augustus. This name, together with Augusta, was revived in England in the eighteenth-century. It is interesting to note that although Augusta is a powerful woman, her name is derived from a powerful masculine line. Likewise, she invokes this patriarchal lineage through her usage of historical male names as her speech is peppered with the names of famous men, and she also wishes Miranda to list the male celebrities whom she has known. Augusta's situation is that of a widow fulfilling the role of the head of the family, and remains compromised, as society will not accept a woman who attempts to occupy a 'male role'. Therefore, she will not be accepted as the head of the family either by Dudley or by Elisha who, although they hate the memory of their father, cannot accept their mother as a replacement figure of authority. Thus if the patriarchy has no place for Miranda, it will not accommodate Augusta as a replacement of Titus. Barnes's interweaving of history and modernity at this point is fascinating, as she presents Augusta as a collusive woman who admits to privileging men above women and uses this collusion to suggest a tragedy of classical proportions. In Act Two, Augusta, realizing that her rejection of Miranda has caused her own misery admits: 'I find that I'm a fool'.

Miranda's question:

How is it that women who love children
So often damn the children that they have?

could be regarded as one which punctuates Augusta's life. It might also serve as a coda for the play as a whole. The mother has privileged her boy children, only to return to her daughter with an anguish which comes too late.

If Augusta is defined by a masculine name, and Jack creates his name, then what of the two violent sons, Dudley and Elisha? Both remain afraid of their mother and sister, and a brief

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49 Ibid, 3, p.213.
analysis of the historical reasons for these fears comes at the conclusion of this section. In The Bible, Elisha (ironically meaning God saves) was son to Javan, and his name also represented that of an ancient land and of an unidentified ancient people. In The Antiphon, Elisha feels that he should possess the estate and social position befitting his family's history. Throughout the play the reader/audience is aware that both Elisha and Dudley consider their mother to have dispossessed them, and that, as sons, they have been denied their birthright. During the course of the action we hear much about the supremacy of boy children. Yet the two sons, literally of no lands, feel that their birthright as patriarchs-in-waiting has been usurped by Augusta and Miranda, and also by the absence of Jeremy. Without the father, Titus Higby Hobbs, and without their brother, they feel themselves to be without allies. In the Jacobean sense, the two brothers are 'subtle' schemers, much like the brothers of Webster's Duchess of Malfi. Lisa Jardine states that the question behind plays such as Webster's Duchess of Malfi (1613-4) is 'can this woman be trusted?' This question is repeated by both Elisha and Dudley, as both brothers seem to be desperately afraid of Miranda's autonomy.

As with Elisha, Dudley's name may be representative of several historical figures. Dudley was, firstly, the name of the favourite of Elizabeth I, the Earl of Leicester (1520-98), and Elizabeth I's favouritism also appears as a theme in Eliot's The Wasteland. Guildford Dudley (unknown-1554), was the hapless husband of Lady Jane Grey, a political pawn who was manipulated by his father. The former reference seems to be of most textual relevance as, throughout the play, Dudley and Elisha refer to Miranda as a 'Queen'. She is alternately 'Queen of Night', 'The Ruffian Queen', 'A Stable Queen', 'The Queen of Heaven', or, as

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52 Ibid, p.69.
Dudley names her, the 'new Queen', following her mother's death:\(^54\)

Hoi: The Queen is dead, long live the Queen.\(^55\)

Given Elizabeth I's title of 'the Virgin Queen', and her reputation for taking lovers whilst maintaining a veneer of celibacy, Barnes's seems to have chosen the name of Miranda's brother carefully. As Jardine reminds her readers, an iconography of virginity was constructed around Elizabeth I, a cult in which the monarch's symbols were those linked to the concepts of 'virtue' and newness and included the moon, the phoenix, the pelican, the ermine, pearls, Astrae, Virgo, the ear of corn (representing the fruitful virgin), the turtle dove, a constellation topped by seven stars, and a sieve.\(^56\) The men surrounding Miranda likewise create a series of symbols denoting her celibacy. As with Elizabeth, Miranda's image, dress and presence become heavily symbolic. She is the embodiment of a social fear, that of the strong woman who refuses to marry. This point will be discussed further at the conclusion of this section, but before this can be reached, two further names have to be discussed, those of Jonathon Burley, Miranda's uncle, and Titus Higby Hobbs, her father.

Jonathon Burley's Christian name means 'Jehovah has given'.\(^57\) The most famous biblical Jonathon was the son of Saul, King of Israel. He was the symbol of loyal (some would argue, homo-erotic) male friendship, who risked his life for his friend, David.\(^58\) He is commonly described as symbolizing the 'loyalist love for another'.\(^59\) A direct reference to this occurs in the play, when Augusta echoes David's words 'my brother Jonathon'.\(^60\) Jonathon, it could be argued, finds allegiance to the male characters in the play difficult. He suffers by trying to be loyal to all members of the family. Jonathon's surname, Burley, is a reference both to the family home, Burley Hall, and to the councillor of Elizabeth I, William Cecil, Lord Burghley,
(1520-98) who lived at Burghley House near Stamford, Lincs. Burghley attempted to persuade the Elizabeth to marry, and perhaps this is significant when one recalls how Burley in the play encourages Miranda to quit her celibate state. Burley and Dudley, then, appear to echo machinations at the court of Elizabeth I, where fear of a single Queen was accompanied by a cult which was based upon her unmarried state. Thus, by referring indirectly to history, Barnes extends the play's political dimensions. Both Dudley and Burley fear Miranda's celibacy and try and persuade her to marry, or at least, to link herself to a man. She does not need them, and they both resent and fear this. Miranda is threatening both to her Uncle, who cares for her, and to her brothers, who do not. Like Augusta, they try to invent a past for Miranda because they cannot accept her independence. Resembling Burghley, Burley argues for a more 'acceptable' lifestyle (a married one) for Miranda, the play's 'Queen'. As with Elizabeth I, it is those who fear Miranda's celibacy who construct a cult around her which is based upon it. The text centres on Miranda's past, but it also contains references to history which reveal Miranda's role as having regal precedent. Because she refuses to remain silent, and also resists subscribing to tales of the past which her family invent for her, Miranda is ultimately sacrificed. She cannot debate the past with her dead father, thus her sense that he owes her an explanation of the rape remains. Titus haunts his daughter, and this haunting conditions events which occur within the drama.

So what of this father figure, who forms the absent centre of the text? Titus's Christian name, as Andrew Field has pointed out, refers to Titus Oates, the charlatan and infamous liar who came from Oakham, where Barnes's mother was born and which, Field argues, is the source for the fictional Bee-Wick in The Antiphon. As Field explains:

61 Read, Conyers, Mr Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (London: Cape, 1965), p.361.
62 Ibid.
64 Read, 1965, p.361.
The important Oakham personage for our story is Titus Oates, for it is from him that the name of the father who looms behind all the action in *The Antiphon* is taken. This is one of Miss Barnes's most pointed transference-namings, for Titus Oates is usually, and justly, identified in history books as one of the vilest characters in all English history. He was the seventeenth-century impostor and a fabricator of the story that there was a popish plot to burn London, assassinate the King, and massacre Protestants, and was responsible for many deaths.

Field also comments that Titus was the name of the Parisian bookseller, Edward Titus, whom Barnes disliked after his cursory treatment of the *Ladies Almanack*. Field and others have discussed the meaning of Titus Hobbs' Christian name, but not the significance of his surname. Most obviously, this could be a reference to Sir Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), author of *Leviathan* (English 1651, Latin 1668). As Paul Hammond pointed out in a recent paper, Titus Oates was personified as the devil in a pamphlet (c.1680s) entitled, *A Hue and Cry After Dr T.O.*, where he was described as a homosexual whose key reading matter was Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

Thus, Titus Oates and Thomas Hobbes can be linked historically. Hobbes' belief that man was 'essentially a selfish unit' expounded in the former, seems to be borne out in Barnes's depiction of Titus in *The Antiphon*, whilst his famous contention that the life of man was basically 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short' also appears to be a source for the life of the father in the play. Thus, once more, this reference extends the play's political dimensions. It is also worth recording that Hob is a popular nick-name from British folk-lore for a type of mischievous Brownie, or a mysterious spectre who haunted the lonely

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66 Ibid, pp.187-8. Also see the chapters in this thesis on *Ladies Almanack*.
69 Drabble, 1985, p.463.
road between Hurwoth and Neasham, and that such hob-goblins are also used to represent 'foul fiends' in Bunyan's work. Such allusions might appear spurious, but Barnes's play contains many pointed references to folk-lore and thus Titus is described as alternately mischievous and malevolent.

As with Jacobean drama, names in *The Antiphon* could be interpreted as being emblematic. In her drama of family life, Barnes invoked a complex collection of names, all of which are used to comment upon patriarchal society, and to create a drama which is at once personal and political. Titus lived a life which was 'brutish' and degrading, Dudley is a patriarch without a house to rule, as is Elisha, Burley is the adviser who no longer knows whom to advise, Augusta has attempted to commit an unforgivable sin, in patriarchal terms, by replacing the father, and Miranda is a strong, autonomous woman whose presence is regarded as threatening by all of the above. This, to evoke a seventeenth-century term, is 'the world turned upside down'. It is a patriarchy without a patriarch (as in *Ryder*, where Wendell is dispossessed) and both men and women are enmeshed within a chaos created by the gender stereotypes into which they do not fit: father as ruler; mother as submissive wife; sons as heirs; and daughters as marriageable currency. Augusta cannot be accepted as the head of the family and a substitute for Titus. He was foolish but was accepted as the family's literal 'head'.

Deploying this analogy, it is easy to recognize why both mother and daughter are so feared. The mother represents the socially dangerous role of the widow, whereas the daughter is the doubly threatening 'blue-stocking' spinster. When writing of sixteenth-century representations of women, Lisa Jardine remarks on the female figures most feared by male playwrights:

Lady Macbeth is a nightmare; the Duchess of Malfi is an insidiously subversive force to be reckoned with and that distinction is reflected in the way in which the 'nightmare' figure can be nonchalantly despatched in the dramatic action (she should have died hereafter),

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70 Briggs, 1979, pp.222-3.
whereas the 'strong' woman must be systematically taught the error of her ways.\textsuperscript{71}

Jardine reveals how the 'bad' wife was represented as a scold (using classical allusions such as that of Xantippe, the shrewish wife of Socrates) and remarks that 'the female tongue is coupled with the ever-present threat of female domination in the home.'\textsuperscript{72}

In the sixteenth-century, dress codes, rules of speech, and theatrical presentation were all deployed by the state in an attempt to both ridicule and control 'disorderly women'.\textsuperscript{73} In *The Antiphon*, Miranda's power as a single woman causes fear, whilst Augusta's domination of the family appears threatening to her sons. In short, fears expressed within the play are caused by the concept of a matriarchal line. According to De Salvo, the play presents Barnes's ideas concerning 'the culture's preference for male children'.\textsuperscript{74} In this context, the absent father is responsible for his daughter's abused state as he:

\begin{quote}
tried to make her 'mutton' nothing more than a piece of meat, to be devoured, to be used sexually, by any man that has been allowed to have access to her, including her brothers.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

This cycle of violation, begun by Titus, is also present in fears concerning the widowed mother and of the 'spinster' sister which the brothers reveal. Mary Prior, Elaine Hobby, Antonia Fraser and others have discussed how, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the widow was a figure whose autonomy and landed economic powers were mistrusted, and as Hobby points out, the very sexuality of widows was questioned during the seventeenth-century and their role within the family was, likewise, scrutinized.\textsuperscript{76} She notes that 'widows

\textsuperscript{71} Jardine, 1983, p.98.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, p.104.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} De Salvo, 1991, p.302.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p.301. The absent father is also a theme in Eliot's *The Family Reunion*, but Eliot's play revolves around sons as opposed to a daughter. Eliot, 1962, pp.55-122.
were stereotypically portrayed as sexually predatory.\textsuperscript{77}

Barnes creates a historical frame of reference, thus the reference to Carthage in Act Two of the play could be regarded as a classical reference to male fears.\textsuperscript{78} Dido, the widow of Carthage, as Stephen Orgel has discussed, was deployed in the sixteenth-century as a model:

At once of heroic fidelity to a murdered husband and the destructive potential of erotic passion.\textsuperscript{79}

Like the symbolic Dido, Augusta's sexuality is constantly questioned, even though she protests her fidelity to the memory of her husband. Traditionally, the economic autonomy of widows was feared by patriarchal society and, in occultist texts, such women were represented as witches. As will be discussed later, the symbolism of witchcraft likewise clings to Augusta. Augusta is feared because, as Elisha says, she is a 'grass widow', a sexually and economically threatening woman.\textsuperscript{80} Miranda is also goaded to address her mother as lustful:

\textbf{Miranda:} I thought you said you never liked the man?
\textbf{Augusta:} Except his teeth, his teeth were my delight.
\textbf{Miranda:} Defend a better point; for children hang on it.\textsuperscript{81}

If her mother is feared as a widow, then Miranda's chosen celibacy, and unknown past, are regarded as being doubly threatening. Hobby discusses the fear concerning the sexuality of single women, as do texts dealing with the life of Elizabeth I.\textsuperscript{82} In \textit{The Antiphon}, Miranda's brothers continually question the fact that she has arrived without a partner and, in this context, Jack does not count. Augusta cannot bear to believe that Miranda has indeed lived alone, and attempts to invent a fictional love life for her:

\textbf{Augusta:} No man died for you?

\textbf{No news of famous people?}

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, p.2.
\textsuperscript{78} Barnes, 1969, 2, p.169.
\textsuperscript{79} Orgel, 1988, p.218.
\textsuperscript{80} Barnes, 1969, 2, p.169.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, 2, p.157.
\textsuperscript{82} Hobby, 1988, p.2.
Miranda: No famous people, and no man died.83

Yet Augusta also admits to Miranda that the married state has little to recommend it:

Augusta: Daughter,

There's a battlement in every woman's heart
Whereon she keeps perpetual patrol
To dodge the man she married, for a man
Scratching in the wall.84

Augusta, although she has colluded with the patriarchy in the early silencing of her daughter, realizes that she had helped to make a matriarchy impossible. As she says, regretfully:

'Women, were not saved then, after all'.85

Yet, within the text, it is Miranda who is most mistrusted. As work by Sheila Jeffreys suggests, the spinster who refused to collude with social norms was more socially disturbing than the woman who fulfilled a perceived social role.86 Jeffreys notes that in the nineteenth-century, anti-feminists such as Stella Browne tried to:

get women to participate enthusiastically in sexual intercourse. Those women showing the greatest resistance met with the strongest disapproval.87

As elsewhere in works by Barnes, Miranda's appearance denotes her singularity:

Stage Direction: Miranda, a tall woman in her late forties, enters from the cloister. She has a distinguished but failing air, wearing an elegant but rusty costume, obviously of the theatre, a long cloak, buckled shoes and a dashing tricorn blowing with coq feathers. She favours her left side on a heavy headed cane.88

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83 Barnes, 1969, 1, p.82.
84 Ibid, 3, p.211.
87 Ibid.
88 Barnes, 1969, 1, p.82.
Miranda's clothes, like those worn both by Robin Vote in *Nightwood*, and by Cynic Sal in the *Ladies Almanack*, are an eclectic mixture of historical items and it is also significant that Miranda steps from a cloister (Burley, we are told, was formerly a college of chantry priests), as this is a reminder of her celibate state.\(^9\)

To conclude this section, it is worth recalling that in the play, names are resonant of both the past and the present. Names recall official history (Augusta, Burley, etc.), paganism (Jack), figures regarded as 'outside' official history (Titus) and powerful fictions of family life (Miranda). Also, this is a play which (as with Greek tragedy) deploys the theme of family treachery to explore the contextual dispossession of refugees during the Second World War, a period of political treachery. Thus politics and the personal are revealed as inextricably linked by Barnes's usage of historical reference. Likewise, Miranda escapes a tyrannical political regime, only to fall foul of a family regime which is in itself tyrannical. She is thus betrayed by the place in which she has taken refuge. As Barnes's play uses historical references in order to express this situation, a subtle political dimension is created. In the following section, imagery from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and other works, which, it might be argued are Barnes's chief sources for the play, are linked to the symbolism of *The Antiphon*. These reveal both Barnes's construction of the play and the statements about life within a patriarchal system which are made within it.

**Barnes's Use of Shakespeare: Tales of Power and the Single Daughter**

The absent presence of the wife and mother in the play constitutes a space that is filled by Prospero's creation of surrogates and a ghostly family: the witch Sycorax and her monster child, Caliban (himself, as becomes apparent, a surrogate for that other wicked child, the usurping younger brother), the good child/wife Miranda, the obedient Ariel, the violently libidinized Ferdinand. The space is filled, too, by a whole structure of wifely allusion and reference:

\(^9\) Ibid, 1, p.80; Barnes, 1928, p.36.
Widow Dido ... the witch Medea, murderess and filicide, three exemplary goddesses, the bereft Ceres, nurturing Juno, and licentious Venus; and Alonso's daughter, Claribel, unwillingly married off to the ruler of modern Carthage, and thus lost to her father forever.

Stephen Orgel, *Prospero's Wife*\(^9^0\)

The purpose of this section is not to make a precise comparison between *The Tempest* and *The Antiphon*, but to suggest strategies by which Shakespeare's text can be read as a source for Barnes's play. As Field and Kannenstine both observe, the play deploys 'the language of Shakespeare'.\(^9^1\) Yet, it might be argued, that Barnes builds up her critique of the patriarchy by employing Shakespearian conceits and devices, and by inverting some of the basic plot and images from *The Tempest*. As Orgel points out, the construction of the information that *The Tempest* revolves around derives from the absence of Miranda's mother.\(^9^2\) Indeed, all we know of Miranda's mother comes from Prospero, her father. As Orgel indicates, the mother:

> Is missing as a character, but Prospero, several times explicitly, presents himself as incorporating her, both as father and mother to Miranda.\(^9^3\)

It might be argued that this is precisely what occurs with Titus in *The Antiphon*, as the children fill the blank spaces in their childhood (what is not remembered) through the words of their mother, and they also learn of Titus's death because she tells them of it. Indeed, as with both Prospero and Ariel who fill in textual spaces for the audience, all information on the family given to the reader/audience in *The Antiphon* is provided by Augusta. At several points in the drama, Miranda reveals her mother's use of the truth to be economical thus, as with Prospero, the reader/audience must decide how much they are willing to believe. If *The Tempest* begins with the lack of the mother, then *The Antiphon*, at its opening, is informed by the absence of Titus. Like Prospero, Augusta tries to fill this space with stories and analogies

\(^{90}\) Orgel, 1988, p.218.

\(^{91}\) Kannenstine, 1977; Field, 1985.


\(^{93}\) Ibid, p.220.
which signify the father. Thus could this signify that Augusta, as Orgel suggests with Prospero, attempts to be mother and father both to Miranda?\textsuperscript{94} If this is the case, then what does it mean in terms of the play's presentation of gender?

Like Prospero, Augusta tries to be all to her daughter, but whereas when restored to his rightful place at the play's conclusion, the exiled Duke of Milan can effect a resolution, Augusta cannot. It could be argued that this is due to the fact that her desire to be father/mother/tutor is rejected by her family, as, in such a patriarchal society, fathers are considered able to supplant mothers, but mothers cannot replace fathers. Throughout the play Augusta is constantly defined as a 'bad' mother, because she tries to replace the father. In patriarchal society a father might take on the role of the absent mother, but a mother must remain as she is or face the consequences.

Images and symbols from \textit{The Tempest} surface in \textit{The Antiphon} and are used to highlight Barnes's concept of gender stereotyping. In Act One, Miranda describes her mother as standing aloof, 'a long wind playing out her hair'.\textsuperscript{95} This is extremely reminiscent of Ariel's description of Ferdinand in Act One, Scene Two of Shakespeare's drama.\textsuperscript{96} Miranda thus places the mother as a heroic figure but this placing is also problematic as she uses an image connected to 'masculinity'. Augusta cannot keep this placing, as the patriarchy will constantly displace her. Likewise, when described giving birth to Miranda, Augusta recreates Stephano's vision of Caliban and Trinculo who, under a sheet, form a two-headed monster:\textsuperscript{97}

Yet, in her hour, her either end being terror,

The one head on the other stared and wept.\textsuperscript{98}

Augusta is regarded as a monstrous mother, just as Caliban's mother, Sycorax, and Ovid's Medea, whose speech Prospero borrows, are monstrous.\textsuperscript{99} Interestingly, Miranda's mother

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid, p.220.
  \item \textsuperscript{95} Barnes, 1969, 1, p.87.
  \item \textsuperscript{96} Shakespeare, 1981, I, 11, 213, p.510.
  \item \textsuperscript{97} Ibid, II, 2, 64, p.518.
  \item \textsuperscript{98} Barnes, 1969, 1, p.87.
  \item \textsuperscript{99} Shakespeare, 1981, p.518.
\end{itemize}
likens herself to a witch, begging her daughter:

   When I am gone, Miranda, put me in a tree.\textsuperscript{100}

This seemingly enigmatic statement is repeated by Augusta throughout the text, at one stage she requests 'when I am dead and gone, put me to a tree'.\textsuperscript{101} She lays the responsibility of this upon her daughter, as opposed to her sons, 'Daughter, when I die, I charge you, lay me in a tree/I'll hop to heaven'.\textsuperscript{102} At one point Dudley replies sharply 'back in trees again?'\textsuperscript{103} She continues to plague Miranda with this request, as if placing the responsibility of her spiritual welfare upon her daughter's shoulders. She might also be punning on Miranda's career as a writer, if for 'tree' one substitutes the word 'book'. Augusta herself mentions Miranda's career at one stage, saying, 'When I am gone, Miranda, put me in a tree / remember, you who have the habit of recalling'.\textsuperscript{104} She also begs her daughter 'come flying up with me', and Elisha refers to Miranda as a 'flying sister'.\textsuperscript{105} At one point in Act Two, Augusta says to Burley:

   Words, words! I would that I'd been a shrew,
   I'd have pegged my bosom to the thorn.\textsuperscript{106}

What does this blending of images which are both rural and occult mean? Why should a mother constantly beg her daughter to place her in a tree after death?

Firstly, the image obviously echoes \textit{The Tempest}, where Prospero reminds Ariel how he first found him trapped within a 'cloven pine' where Sycorax had placed him:

   Thou best know'st,
   What torment I did find thee in: thy groans
   Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts

\textsuperscript{100} Barnes, 1969, 2, p.133.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 3, p.215.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 2, p.147.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 2, p.133.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 3, p.193.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 2, p.173.
Augusta inverts Ariel's wish for release by asking to be placed in a tree after death. She also reverses the concept of Prospero's magic by placing herself in the tree. If Prospero's art frees Ariel at the price of his liberty, then Augusta's wishes make the encasement of a body within a tree a source of power, a means of 'hopping' to heaven. Jack's image of Miranda's cane as a 'rod possessed' might also be a reference to Prospero's staff as well as to the staff of Joseph of Arimathea. If so, then the daughter is seen to have inherited the mother's power for subversion. If the tree is Miranda's work then, like Prospero, her mother believes in the power of the written word, yet Miranda's book of her mother's like will remain unwritten. A further layer can be added to the image of the tree, as Augusta's image of the body in a tree is reminiscent of the Alder or Elder witch of British folk-mythology, a spirit who inhabits the Elder or Alder tree. This witch is supposedly a source of both power and of fear in isolated communities. A belief existed that the elder tree had to be asked before being chopped, as it contained the 'old lady of the elder tree' a figure who could be malevolent or benevolent as she chose. The association of the monstrous mother with the occult is an ancient one, and one which Augusta, by bidding her daughter to put her in a tree, manipulates. In both English and Celtic ballads, as Dr Gillian Spraggs notes, lovers who died often had their souls deposited in entwining trees, the two lovers becoming one as they could not in life. Thus Augusta is connecting her physical death with symbols of the life of the spirit after death, and this is particularly ironic, as she kills her daughter, who is meant to be the agent of her spiritual regeneration and renewal.

110 Ibid. This figure also occurs in the Hans Andersen short story 'Mother Elder' in Hans Andersen's Fairy Stories (London: Hamlyn, 1959), pp.131-5.
111 Dr Spraggs (see acknowledgments) was kind enough to discuss her knowledge of sixteenth-century symbolism and folk-lore with me.
112 This might also be regarded as mirroring Greek Tragedy.
The mother in the play is regarded by her sons as monstrous, a type of Sycorax or Medea, yet it is her brothers who Miranda comes to fear. She speaks of them as 'merchants', and informs Jack (who is, unknown to her, a brother also) that she fears them. Later in the play she says to Elisha 'merchant away with you'. Likewise, the heraldic mercantile symbol of the bee (to be discussed later) also occurs throughout the text. The brothers, who resemble Gonzalo's 'greedy Florentines', represent the world of commerce upon which Miranda, with her 'bohemian' affiliations, has turned her back. To her, they represent the violating and ultimately destructive patriarchy. In this they resemble Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Men', whoendeavour to destroy the virginal Lizzie in 'Goblin Market', and whom Rossetti describes in the poem as 'merchant men'. Like Miranda, Lizzie is besieged by patriarchal figures who are 'mad to tug her standard down'. Unlike Lizzie, Miranda, beset by brothers who 'maul and mock her' is eventually destroyed. Unlike Rossetti's heroine, Miranda has no sisterly support and thus is completely at the mercy of the 'merchant men'.

Titus, the dead father, is defined by most of the characters as ludicrous and monstrous, a man who dressed as conspicuously as the yellow gartered Malvolio, and who is also described as malevolent. This manifestation of evil is defined by Jack's image of the father:

Cancelled out with great sanguine sashes,
Crossing up his guts from hip to home,
Like a comfit box, experto credo,
For epaulettes? A swab of furies.

The demonic imagery which describes Titus's clothing is typified by a 'swab of furies', which

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113 Barnes, 1988, 2, p.178.
114 See the following section for a more detailed analysis of this.
115 Shakespeare, 1981, II, 1, 5-6, p.513.
117 Rossetti, 1901, p.28.
118 Ibid, p.29.
119 Ibid, p.34.
120 Barnes, 1969, 2, p.136.
might be regarded as reminiscent of the furies whom Ariel conjures to terrify Prospero’s brother. Not only does the father's deviant dress symbolize a fractured universe, but his image destroys his children's peace. The symbolism used within the text again recalls the seventeenth-century concept of 'the world turned upside down'. It also recalls the turbulent world of The Tempest, where nothing can be relied upon. Or, as Miranda states: 'the world is cracked - and in its breach / my father's mew'.

Within this fractured world, images of water and drowning are frequent, recalling not only The Tempest but also the confused domain of Illyria in Twelfth Night. Augusta refers to herself as a Sycoraxesque figure throughout the text, at one point asking 'or have I been a Tudor crone, sea-hag, for nothing?' As a sea hag, she conjures a storm which will destroy her. Like Prospero (who himself uses words first spoken by Ovid's Medea) she regards herself as the ruler of a warring kingdom, and thus her recognition that she might be destroyed is similar to his recognition that Caliban will war against him. At one point she states: 'My calendar is hulled, my lands in plague'. Also, like Hamlet's mother Gertrude, Augusta is blamed for the ills which have befallen the family. At one point, the family itself is described as mouse-like, and Dudley, perhaps recalling Hamlet's play within a play, states:

I wish I'd built a mousetrap big as God,
And caught myself, master and man.

Likewise, this mouse-trap would also catch Augusta, whom the brothers feel to have denied their masculinity.

In Miranda's description of her infancy, she attempts to recall both her mother and Victoria, her grandmother, and this brings to mind the upbringing of Shakespeare's Miranda.

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122 See Hobby's work for a full analysis of this.
123 Barnes, op.cit, 1969, 1, p.83.
125 Barnes, 1969, 3, p.199.
In using the imagery of a ship-wreck, she literally recalls *The Tempest*:

Her rip-tide bore us up and rocked our cradle,

Ship chandler she, to any wreck off coast.\(^*\)

It is interesting to speculate whether Miranda's use of 'our' and 'us' is a reference to all of Augusta's children, or whether it is a regal self reference. Miranda accuses Augusta of being 'a most abominable cheat', yet she emulates her mother's sense of the self as being regal. De Salvo concludes that Augusta 'sent Miranda into prostitution to support her after Titus has abandoned his family'.\(^*\) Miranda perceives herself as being 'broken', like Lear and Cordelia, 'upon the wheel of bitter vision'.\(^*\) What she does not articulate is her innate identification with her mother, who takes on the role of Prospero, but concludes by being defined by her male offspring as a Sycorax, the unnatural, destructive and unforgiven mother. Under the terms enforced by patriarchal society, the mother who takes on the role of the father must lose, even if she has colluded with that society by selling her daughter, (in these terms, a father such as Prospero who seeks to be both mother and father to his daughter, can effect a resolution at the conclusion of the play, but Augusta cannot do this, as she cannot replace the father).\(^*\) As De Salvo argues:

> Although her behaviour is indefensible, it accords with the behaviour of many mothers who are trapped into complying with their husband's victimization of their children because there is no way for them to support themselves and their children outside the patriarchal household.\(^*\)

Thus, Augusta fails the daughter who so resembles her and, ultimately, fails herself.

**Music and Images of Theatre Within The Play**

If *The Antiphon* mirrors other plays, as both this chapter and work by Meryl Altman
suggests, then both theatrical conventions and theatrical history are also present in its imagery. As Barnes's play is carefully constructed around these images and, as Curry argues, the play draws attention to its own theatricality. As Jane Marcus has discussed with regard to Nightwood, works by Barnes contain characters directly under threat of death from fascism, such as writers and immigrants, those whom war has dispossessed. The list of 'freaks' in Act One accentuates this:

Jack: Hurry! Hurry! This way for the Toymen:
This way, strutters, for the bearded lady;
The human skeleton, the fussy dwarf,
The fat girl with a planet in her lap;
The swallower of swords whose hidden lunge
Has not brought up his adversary yet.

Unlike Nightwood, which is set in the mid 1930s, this play is set during World War Two, when the chaos predicted in the former text has come to pass. Thus the analogy of the 'freak show', with its Tarot pack symbolism, becomes doubly sinister, recalling both Bakhtin's concept of carnival and the graphic results of the holocaust as embodied by 'the human skeleton'. Thus the 'freaks' who represent social fears, act both as border crossing agents and as markers of the period in which they exist.

This chapter links Barnes's play with ideas of gender discussed by critics such as Marjorie Garber. In her study of cross-dressing and cultural anxiety, Garber comments:

Transvestite theatre recognizes that all of the figures onstage are impersonators.
The notion that there has to be a naturalness to the sign is exactly what great

137 See the chapter on Nightwood for a further discussion of this imagery.
This theory, which was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, can be applied to works such as *The Antiphon*, which precisely highlight questions such as Garber raises. Thus the 'freaks' listed by Jack impersonate all aspects of the age in which they exist, rather than merely representing physical 'types'. Barnes's play can thus be regarded as being implicitly political, whilst fulfilling Garber's requirements for 'great theatre'. Likewise, the set draws attention to itself as an artificial construction.

The set includes the paraphernalia of the theatre, flags, gonfalons, bonnets, ribbons, stage costumes, an arched doorway without a door, a gryphon 'once the car in a roundabout', candlesticks, a large bell, a gilt mardi-gras crown, a paneless gothic window, a dress-maker's dummy, music stands, horns, fiddles, bandboxes, masks, toys, broken statues, a ruined colonnade and, most curiously, a 'grey baize donkey, sitting'. The set signifies that this is no more, or less, than a piece of theatre. When Jack says of Miranda in Act One 'she's fond of carnivals and all processions', he highlights the carnival objects which litter the stage. Likewise, the donkey can be also regarded as a symbol of 'licensed misrule' which highlights both cultural and sexual anxieties.

Traditionally the ass was a symbol of cuckoldry and, as Lisa Jardine notes, figures of cuckolded husbands were led backwards astride a donkey at Skimmington rides and charivaris. The charivari or 'carnival of misrule' dominates both the set and the action of Barnes's play where fascist misrule has overturned the world of ideas which Miranda occupies. Mazes, such as that at Hampton Court to which Burley likens the house in Act One, and the labyrinth evoked by Augusta's spool of thread (recalling the legend of Ariadne), complete the illusion of dispossession, as the characters appear to be lost or as Burley puts it

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139 Barnes, 1969, 1, pp.81-2.
140 Ibid, 1, p.95.
'out of keys'. Augusta finds that the house recalls 'all the gaudy that has gone before'. This 'gaudy' is surely a theatrical reference, as well as a reference to the action of the play.

Titus himself is evoked by his wife as maintaining a type of personal religious and political theatre and his mother, Victoria, is described as having been a 'free-soiler, free-thinker, nonconformist, mystic -/Abolitionist, Hyde Park orator'. Titus was also party to a famous spiritualist event, a type of theatrical, at which he, Jack notes, might have been taken-in:

Titus, with broad parochial stare
Of a Sankey and a moody ranter,
Ravished by the knocking sisters Fox,
By prophets, martyrs and by Levitations
Wheeled to the East ...

As Alex Owen has discussed, Katherine and Margaret Fox were two sisters living in rural upstate New York who, in 1814, revealed to the public a series of 'knockings' in their reputedly haunted house. The two young women, aged between twelve and thirteen when these events began, became, within two years, a national sensation whose work heralded an interest in spiritualism which was to continue throughout the nineteenth-century, in both Britain and the U.S. What actually happened in the Fox household is still a matter for speculation, nevertheless, as Owen's fascinating study concludes, spiritualist events (particularly those which used the sensuality of young female mediums) were often regarded by male participants as a form of titillating private theatre. Titus, therefore, chooses both

142 Barnes, 1969, 1, p.95, and also 2, p.126.
143 Ibid, 2, p.149.
144 Ibid, 2.
145 Ibid, 2.
147 Ibid, pp.18-9.
148 Ibid.
political and spiritual beliefs which might be regarded as forms of theatre.

When Augusta disparages her daughter’s life as that of a ‘strolling player’, she is denying the influence of the father upon the daughter.\footnote{Barnes, 1969, 2, p.168.} Yet she herself calls upon theatre in many of its forms, and her speech is punctuated by anecdotes of famous thespians, including Vesta Victoria and Lily Langtry.\footnote{Ibid, 3, p.199, and also 2, p.148.} Not only this, but she draws attention to the fact that she is taking part in a play. She says of the gryphon (the spot on the stage where both she and her dead daughter will fall) that it is ‘a solid beast, an excellent stage, fit for a play’.\footnote{Ibid, 3, p.192.} She also recognizes that these deaths are inevitable when she states that ‘the epilogue is over’.\footnote{Ibid, 3, p.193.} Her plea to Miranda, ‘come, play me daughter’, could be regarded as possessing a double meaning. Firstly, the mother asks her daughter to revert to her childhood role or, secondly, Augusta recognizes that both she and her daughter are ‘players’ and thus interchangeable.

If Augusta’s discourse reflects the legitimate stage it also recalls the carnival stage. At one juncture in the drama she mentions Bartholomew Fair, at once recalling the popular carnival event, and the Ben Jonson play of the same title, itself a tale of cozening and misrule, thus her terms of reference effect a ‘border crossing’, evoking both the legitimate and the illegitimate stage, misrule and order, the actor and the freak.\footnote{See Jonson’s 1631 play; Jonson, Ben, ‘Bartholomew Fair’, in Three Plays (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), pp.321-462. Augusta refers to this in Act Three; Barnes, 1969, 3, p.198.} Miranda responds to this by saying austerely ‘Have you forgotten Calvin?’\footnote{Ibid.} Augusta does not answer because she has become enmeshed within her own performance, using biblical imagery to create a personal theatrical space:

\begin{quote}
Augusta: Was it I, who dipping kerchief at Antoine,

Came up with Augusta on my napkin?
\end{quote}
Oh Miranda staunch me.\textsuperscript{155} The reference to Christ, wherein Augusta becomes both surrogate Christ and Saint Veronica, is yet another reference to the theatricality of orthodox and unorthodox religion. Augusta asks Miranda to enter into her fictional world, to become the 'strolling player' whom she despises but cannot do without. Miranda's recognition that both are about a 'tragic business' might also refer to the 'stage business' which they are about.\textsuperscript{156} Miranda's questions contain a recognition that she is 'one of a company of players ... wardrobe mistress, living many parts'.\textsuperscript{157} Therefore, her life becomes paralysed by its fictions and Miranda is 'grappled in the mortice of the ritual ... and turning in the spirit of the play'.\textsuperscript{158}

Likewise, her description of death is ultimately theatrical:

\begin{quote}
The frantic sloth of grieving, the hidden head,  
By its waters eaten. The high crossed sleeves  
The muffled drum, the creeping catafalque  
Toiling backward to the cot; the great stone fly  
Sarcophagus, at Flemish in the ways.\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}

This pseudo-mass, occurring at the play's conclusion, is reflected in the 'missae pro defunctis' in Act One.\textsuperscript{160} Jack also cries of 'mass, mass', as does Augusta at both the opening and at the conclusion of the play.\textsuperscript{161} It might be argued that the play is a type of 'mass' for the concept of family life, which the drama renders effectively dead.

As in \textit{The Tempest}, music occurs throughout the play which contains reference to musicians including Thomas Tallis, Henry Purcell, Vesta Victoria, and the fictional women

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 3, p.200.  
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 3, p.205.  
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, 3, p.213.  
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid, 3, p.219.  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, 1, p.82.  
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, 1, p.112.
\end{footnotes}
singers Lotta Crabtree and Kitty Partingale, Titus's mistress.\textsuperscript{162} It is worth noting that Purcell wrote a new song for the 1690 revival of \textit{The Tempest}.\textsuperscript{163} However, the most significant musical image which occurs in the play is a snatch of song, repeated throughout, 'who passes by the road this late?\textsuperscript{164} This song is first mentioned when Miranda fears 'merchants', or as she later identifies them 'brothers'. Originally, as Kannenstine notes, the song was that of the \textit{Chevalier du Guet Royal}, an eighteenth-century Parisian night patrol.\textsuperscript{165} Its full title is \textit{Compagnons de la Majolaine} and it runs thus:

\begin{verbatim}
Who Passes by this road so late?
\textbf{Compagnons de la Majolaine}
Who Passes by this road so late?
Always gay.
Of all the king's knights tis the flower,
\textbf{Compagnons de la Majolaine}
Of all the king's knights tis the flower,
Always gay.\textsuperscript{166}
\end{verbatim}

The song also occurs early in Dickens's \textit{Little Dorrit} and this adds to its significance within Barnes's play.\textsuperscript{167} This song was originally intended to function as both a warning to criminals, and to impart a sense of security to the Parisian merchant class. Ironically, it is Paris that Miranda and Jack have fled, as it is now 'patrolled' by an invading army. As Jack states, 'we are the waifs of Paris/Orphans of the war'.\textsuperscript{168} The song of patrol is feared by Miranda, who feels imprisoned by it. The song occurs in the opening chapters of \textit{Little Dorrit}, where Signor

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, 2, p.137.
\item\textsuperscript{163} Orgel, Stephen, 'Introduction' \textit{The Tempest} (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p.66.
\item\textsuperscript{164} Barnes, 1969, 1, p.89, p.93.
\item\textsuperscript{165} Kannenstine, 1977, pp.147-8.
\item\textsuperscript{166} Barnes, 1969, 1, p.89.
\item\textsuperscript{168} Barnes, 1969, 1, p.102.
\end{itemize}
John Baptiste Cavaletto and Monsieur Rigaud (Blandois) are in prison in Marseilles. In the novel, Blandois is a corrupting force who works against the concept of family life, as do the brothers in The Antiphon. Thus it might be maintained that by employing the song sung by Blandois in Little Dorrit (the song appears in exactly the same form in both works), Barnes is signifying the concept of entrapment which permeates both her drama and Dickens's novel. Barnes's play, which has often been discussed as if it is apolitical, might therefore be regarded as deeply political. Miranda and Jack, on the run from fascism, are trapped by the totalitarian politics of family life. As with The Tempest, both the music and theatricals employed here are redolent of discord and the strivings of internal politics.

Barnes's Parable of the One Just Woman

At the climax of Act One, Jack indicates why he has remained with Miranda:

'Someone owes a cock to Aesculapius', she said.

That moment I became her man.170

These are the last words of Socrates, spoken as he was poisoned by hemlock for 'corrupting youth'. In Plato's account Socrates dies thus:

The coldness was spreading about as far as his waist when Socrates uncovered
his face - for he had covered it up - and said (they were his last words): 'Crito,
we ought to offer up a cock to Aesculapius. See to it and don't forget'.171

Socrates, the one just man, punished because he refused to break his principles, died by hemlock poisoning. Miranda could be interpreted as a Socratic heroine, the 'one just woman' who (like Socrates) refuses to break her ideals. As has been formerly acknowledged, Dudley and Elisha work towards destroying their sister's composure by both using violent tactics and by recalling the past. Jack 'her man' from the moment she utters the last words of the philosopher, might be regarded as the textual equivalent of Socrates' servant, Crito, and like

169 Dickens, 1985, p.45.
170 Barnes, 1969, i, p.113.
Crito, does not save his employer from death. The plot against Miranda is ingrained within the family history: Augusta says 'your grandfather smelled like Hemlock', recalling Socrates's poisoner. Elisha cites Miranda's 'awful virtue', and he and Dudley conspire against her from the first. As Augusta notes of Miranda:

I've observed the more my daughter lives up to the general principle of her scruples, the more she is abandoned.

The brothers fear her precisely for the reasons that Socrates was feared, namely, they mistrust her rectitude and refusal to abide by prescribed social codes. Elisha describes her as a 'damned and dedicated victim' and protests 'I never knew such an earnest stinker'. This rectitude could be linked to her sexual abstinence and also to her continuing refusal to marry. Miranda's speech to her mother is similar to Socrates' speech to Crito:

Would you that I leap into myself
There dismiss me of my occupation,
To set me in the slum of their regard?
Would have me clapped between the palms of their approval?
Get me rated
In the general horror of the common mouth;
And to the verdict of the vulgar, stand me down
Crying 'I'm a fool!' To ease a fool.

Elisha perceives Miranda's allies as being intellectuals, whom he mistrusts almost as much as he mistrusts women. Burley, who sympathizes with intellectuals as 'winged things and holy', attempts to argue against this but, as with Socrates' allies, is silenced both by the brothers' boorishness and by Miranda herself. If Socrates (who is often likened to Jesus Christ) is the

172 Barnes, 1969, 2, p.132.
175 Ibid, 2, p.177.
176 Ibid, 2, p.189.
just man, then what does it mean for Barnes to have inverted this and thus present her reader/audience with a parable of one just woman?

As Marjorie Garber maintains, to change the gender of a major historical figure does more than merely disquiet the audience, it actually changes meaning, thus if Miranda represents the feminization of the Socratic ideal, she also displaces that ideal.  As was outlined in the introduction to this thesis, in discussing transvestism, Garber maintains that:

*Transvestism is a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture:* the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself. (My italics)

This does not mean to imply that Miranda is a transvestite in the literal sense of adopting male dress, but that by taking a Socratic role, she effects a border crossing within the patriarchal system. In Barnes's text, 'the crisis of category' is repeatedly highlighted, thus she constantly destabilizes social and cultural meanings. When Miranda produces a crisis of category (by taking a Socratic role), she is destroyed because society has no space for such a role.

The rape of Miranda, which lies at the heart of Barnes's play despite Eliot's revisions, unfolds within a series of complex images. The 'house' of Burley has been constructed to silence her, and the doll's house which Jack carries onstage at the climax of Act Two signifies a process by which she might subvert silence. Jack names this house 'a beast box, a doll's house and an arc'. Miranda loathes the house because she was 'sold' there by her father, and Augusta hates it because it represents her domestic servitude, Jack recalling that she 'hated the house, and all the housework in it'.

Titus is here depicted as a disruptive figure, who courted his wife through the agency of Victoria, his mother, and then, it is implied, treated her brutally. Titus at this juncture is named 'Bull' Titus, recalling the legend of Europa and the Bull. In this myth, Zeus, disguised

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177 Garber, 1992, p.29.
178 Ibid, p.17.
179 Barnes, 1969, 1, p.97.
180 Ibid, 2, p.142.
as a bull, rapes Europa who then bears a son, Minos. Minos grows up to rape Pasiphaë who gives birth to two children, Ariadne, a beautiful girl, and the minotaur, a monstrous boy with the head and lower portions of a bull.\(^{181}\) This mythological cycle of rape and violation is reflected in *The Antiphon*, for just as Minos fathers the Minotaur then Jeremy, son to 'bull Titus', is named a 'bull baby'.\(^{182}\) Titus's violence even ruins the life of Dudley, whom he beats. Augusta remarks, 'Don't come at me too. I was a victim'.\(^{183}\) The doll's house which Jack means to use to exorcise the past, acts as a catalyst and demolishes the 'house' constructed by Titus. However, it also destroys both mother and daughter, as what it reveals violates both of them. In terms of the play, disclosure and discourse end in death.

Also, this house (as the characters acknowledge) has been constructed to embody a work ethic from the nineteenth-century. Thus, the 'house work' hated by Augusta manifests itself in the iconography of industry and the symbol of the bee. In both Hebrew and European symbolism, bees represent industry, chastity and the life of the soul. Heraldically, it was both the symbol of merchants and of the kings of France, from whom it was later taken by Napoleon Bonaparte. In the context of the play, the bee is a symbol of a household industry which is a façade. The town of 'Bee-wick' is, as Burley says of the family, 'compounded in motion, like a slow-strutted honey'.\(^{184}\) Titus, a petty Napoleon, is described by Dudley as being both 'egoist and emperor'.\(^{185}\) Miranda is likened to a bee by Dudley, a bee which, supposedly, dies when it stings:

It's true Miranda gave the world away
And no one seems to pay the least attention
Her acts will themselves, as does the sting the bee.\(^{186}\)

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182 Barnes, 1969, 2, p.159.
185 Ibid, 2, p.144.
186 Ibid, 2, p.142.
Bees surrealistcally haunt the features of the dead Titus where 'bees buzzed and hung'.

If Titus the petty tyrant becomes a scaled down Napoleon, then Augusta becomes a parodic Empress: 'then have I am Empress Josephine, with a hat full of Napoleon's bees'.

Titus's regime over his family is linked to the political tyranny of Napoleon, thus once more personal tyranny is linked to a public political regime. It is significant that it is a French emperor to whom Titus is linked, when one recalls that both Miranda and Jack have fled France.

Titus listened while his friend raped his daughter and, it is implied, violated her herself. The scene where he does so, Curry maintains, was cut from the final edition of the play but it its hinted at even in the published version:

Augusta: As in a profound monstrance see conspire,  
the fighting shadow of the devil and the daughter.  
Miranda: Miranda damned, with in-step upside-down,  
Dragging rape blood behind her - like a snail -  
Jack: Beneath her, in a lower room, her father  
rubbed his hands.

Jack takes the rape to be that of Miranda by the father's friend, but Augusta's words seem to also point to Titus, the 'devil' of the drama. Elsewhere, Titus carries a 'raping-hook' with which to catch his daughter. Thus Miranda is abused by all of the patriarchal figures in the play, her father, his sons and his friends. Augusta knows of this but has kept silent. When the mother and daughter finally speak, the result is apocalyptic.

Conclusion: Time Runs Out

Augusta: I trust men till they whisper.

Within the confines of the play, a journey into the 'self' represents a voyage into the

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188 Ibid, 3, p.199.  
189 Ibid, 2, p.185.  
190 Ibid, 3, p.194.  
unknown. All of the characters, at some point within the drama, question the nature of identity. For example, Jack recognizes that he is only pretending to be a stranger, and that he cannot objectively consider the family's position. Dudley acknowledges his violence only in terms of the occult, 'If they saw me backward in a mirror/I'm not sure what type of beast they'd see'. Jack remains afraid of 'meeting' himself, of losing his disguise and of others recognizing his 'true' self. In these terms, recognition by others results in self-recognition of the type which leads to the deaths of Augusta and Miranda. Miranda meets herself in the form of her mother, and is thus destroyed.

At times, both mother and daughter perceive themselves as interchangeable. Augusta defines Miranda as 'that part of me I can't afford'. Miranda cries 'What else, if I am she, and she Miranda?' Augusta likewise asks:

Magpie!

In what pocket have you my identity?

I so disoccur in every quarter of myself

I cannot find me.

Miranda comes to cry 'where is Miranda?' These questions lead to a recognition that mother and daughter reflect each other, and it is Augusta who recognizes (as both women circle like fighting cocks) that the resolution of this identity crisis will be death:

You who've always been fond of death,

Will soon be as nothing as your mother.

Towards the climax of the drama, both mother and daughter perceive themselves as alternating between hunter and quarry. They conclude by ascending and descending a flight of

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192 Ibid, 1, p.99.
193 Ibid, 1, p.112.
194 Ibid, 2, p.131.
195 Ibid, 2, p.185.
196 Ibid, 3, p.213.
stairs as their hostility mounts. The duel will end with Augusta hitting Miranda with a bell, the strength of which kills both of them. Earlier, Augusta claims to have 'heard the hunter crying “Gone Away”', and ironically the hunter can be perceived in this context as herself. Miranda acknowledges early in the play that this meeting is a 'clocked encounter'. The cars of the roundabout might, in this context, signify the Shakespearian concept of the 'whirligig of time' which Miranda perceives as having come full circle. Like Poe's murderer in 'The Tell Tale Heart', Elisha remains afraid of the tick of 'the tell-tale watch'. Whilst, in the final act Miranda states wearily, 'Mother, there's no more time, all's done!' In the final analysis, the mother who has favoured her sons, cannot transfer the primacy of her affections to her daughter. She blames her daughter (and, implicitly, her reflected self) for the loss of Jeremy and it is this process of blaming which destroys both the mother and the self which she sees reflected in her daughter.

This reading of the play is determined by the set of historical and mythological images and sources which I have chosen to isolate. It is, I believe, the first study to do so in such detail. Of course, other readings linked to further sets of complex images are possible when discussing a work of such a complex and critically rewarding nature. This reading acknowledges Barnes's continued use of those sixteenth and seventeenth-century sources which fascinated her throughout her career, and suggests a continuity of aesthetic. As De Salvo has maintained, The Antiphon is Barnes's harshest critique of patriarchal society. It is a critique which Eliot, for one, was not prepared to fully accept. In this 'world turned upside down' Augusta and Miranda are destroyed, not merely because of who they are, but because

203 Barnes, 1969, 3, p.239.  
of what they represent. Barnes reminds her reader/audience that the spinster and the widow were not merely threatening archetypes in the past but have remained so. Thus, Augusta's diminished sense of her own reality, ultimately questions the role of women in society:

Was I ever princess in legend?

(Whispers)

Did I sleep a hundred years?²⁰⁵

Like Robin Vote, in recalling the tale of the 'Sleeping Beauty', Augusta acknowledges an archetype, creating a border crossing between folk-lore and theatre. In Barnes's verse drama, women are destroyed by such fictions of 'femininity', as they do not control their lives precisely because they are trying to squeeze their personalities into stereotypes which they do not fit. Miranda and Augusta do not survive, but are themselves powerful archetypes (the spinster and the widow) and as such their images continue to threaten fragile concepts of life within the patriarchal family.

²⁰⁵ Barnes, 1969, 3, p.199.
Conclusion: Towards A Reading of the Problematic Text

In a letter to Peter Hoare written on the 5th of January 1974, Barnes said:

the time of the 'twenties and 'thirties seems the property of someone else, to be observed, in the mind, with Greta Garbo's murmur, when sitting through Cammille, or Anna etc. 'Watch her now, she is going to' - When you look up you are sitting in your particular house number - No one can stand it, that's certain ... but one can parry, parry, or try to foil ... or draw a measure -

This sense of combat, which suggests that writing enables a type of duel with the past to take place, appears to underlie much of Barnes's aesthetic, both in youth and in old age. It remains significant that even when she was finding it difficult to work she did not stop. Her analysis remained penetrating and acute until the end of her life.

I hope that this thesis re-evaluates texts of Barnes's which have been hitherto regarded as biographical in nature, and that it sheds some light on the sources which the author used in creating her pastiche. Marianne Moore's previously quoted note which stated that 'reading Djuna Barnes is like reading a foreign language which you understand', has been borne out by my research. It is the sheer diversity of Barnes's texts which represents the challenge to the critic, from the pithy journalistic articles to the poetic candour of the elegies, or from the bawdy critique of the patriarchy in Ryder to the allusive tragedy of The Antiphon. Moore's words it appears to me, encapsulate both the difficulty and the pleasure of reading Barnes's texts. These are texts which repay the critic, as they possess the ability to surprise, displace and question the position of the reader. In her own terms, Barnes was an original, one whose 'genius' presents the critic with the difficulties which Mary Anne Caws identifies in her study on the women of Bloomsbury.

2 Ibid, p.155.
'I am afraid it's a very difficult play', Barnes conceded in writing of *The Antiphon* yet, when Janet Flanner complained that she did not understand it, Barnes snapped, 'I never expected that you were as stupid as Tom Eliot'. Flanner recalled 'I thanked her for the only compliment she had ever given me'. This paradox, of admitting that the text was difficult while expecting the reader to interpret it, is typical of Barnes. Indeed, it embodies the displacement which her texts undoubtedly create. If, in concluding this thesis, I have come to recognize the difficulty of interpreting Barnes's work, I have also come to acknowledge the tremendous pleasure which such an endeavour represents.

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5 Ibid, p.155.
Appendix A

Plural Readings: The Lives of Djuna Barnes

Thus far, one biography of Barnes has been written, and one is in the making.¹ Andrew Field’s 1983 biography, *Djuna: The Life and Times of Djuna Barnes*, which was reprinted in 1985 as *Djuna: The Formidable Miss Barnes*, is an anecdotal volume which relies on a series of assumptions concerning Barnes’s sexuality and the choices which she made in old age.² For example, the description on the book jacket (1985) appears to highlight Field’s view of Barnes and her work, as the cover reads ‘writer, artist, lesbian, lady ... (Barnes) mixed with other brilliantly original literate, eccentrics and bohemians’.³ Barnes is here typified by glamour and lesbianism, (which Field appears to regard as exotic) by eccentricity and by bohemianism. At one point in his text, Field states that Barnes’s life exceeded fiction: ‘such a life. Dostoevsky and Faulkner, even working together, probably couldn’t have invented it’.⁴

Barnes was born in the artists’colony of Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York State, in 1892, and she died in Greenwich Village, New York City, in 1982. Due to the length of her life and the fact that she lived through several ‘infamous’ decades in the history of American letters (such as Greenwich Village c.1913-21 and Paris c.1922-9) Barnes’s life story has entered into the realms of myth.⁵ Many of the terms which have been attached to her, both as a writer and as a woman, are inherently problematic. Barnes has been termed a ‘modernist’ by many, yet, as Bonnie Kime Scott has pointed out, the very term is problematic as it covers such a diverse

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¹ See Field, Andrew, *Djuna: The Life and Times of Djuna Barnes* (New York: Putnam, 1983); This was reprinted as *Djuna: The Formidable Miss Barnes* (Texas: Texas University Press, 1985); An autobiography *Cold Comfort: The Life of Djuna Barnes Told Through Her Letters*, is being compiled by Broe and McCulloch as this thesis is being completed.

² Field (1985) argues that Barnes was essentially a lonely recluse and that this increasing isolation made her bitter.

³ Field, 1985, dust-jacket.

⁴ Ibid, p.194.

⁵ This myth, has recently been developed in film representations of the expatriates such as *The Moderns* (1985) and *Henry and June* (1991).
range of writers (from D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot to Sylvia Townsend-Warner) and does not take into account concepts of gender, class and race. Yet, as Scott argues, these concepts are crucial to an understanding of early twentieth-century writing. In the introduction to this thesis I analyse the meaning of such a term when applied to work by Barnes.

Barnes’s life and works are distorted by a series of complex biographical fictions and by a nostalgia for the periods through which she lived. These fictions are partly conditioned by tales spread by the consummate liars with whom she was associated: among these one might include Wald Barnes, her father; Frank Harris; the publisher Guido Bruno; Dan Mahoney, whom some regard as the model for Dr Matthew O’Connor in the novel *Nightwood* (1936); and the dadaist poet, Elsa Baroness Von Freytag Loringhoven. Barnes’s silence concerning her history, however correct a personal decision, means that no record exists of her own opinions on her years in Paris. Critics such as Field interpret these using the plethora of memoirs published about the lives of ‘the crowd’ between 1930 and 1992.

1892–1912: Childhood and Adolescence

As was formerly stated, Barnes was born into an artists’ colony. Her father, Wald Barnes, had changed his name from Budington and was, in many senses, a self-creator. His mother, Zadel Barnes, was an eclectically creative woman who composed spiritualist tracts, feminist polemics and gaudy romances such as *Can the Old Love?* (1871). From 1857-77 she was married to Henry Aaron Budington, a spiritualist and the father of Wald Barnes. In 1878 she married Axel Gustafson, a Swedish spiritualist who was seven years her junior. According to Field, Zadel was probably in London during the 1880s, meeting Oscar Wilde in 1882.

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7 Ibid, pp.1-18.
8 Again, this refers to her old-age as well as her youth.
10 Field, 1985, p.170.
11 Ibid, pp.170-5.
12 Ibid.
Barnes's mother, Elizabeth Chappel, was born in Oakham, Rutland, in November 1862. She is listed in the Rutland census of 1881 as the daughter of Anne Chappel, widow of Henry Chappel, a plasterer. On Henry's death, his plastering business was passed to Anne. In the 1881 census, Elizabeth is listed as being a 'scholar'. What this alludes to is unrecorded, so we do not know where Elizabeth was studying, or at what level. Field maintains that the family lived in Flore's House, Oakham's oldest dwelling. On looking at Oakham's census records for the periods when the family lived there, visiting the resource centre at Oakham Museum and visiting Flore's House, I could find no concrete evidence for this, other than the fact that the family lived on the High Street, where Flore's House is situated. Facts concerning Elizabeth's early life are few, thus speculation punctuates her history. When exactly did she leave Oakham for London? Where did she study music, and how was this funded? At what period did she meet Wald Barnes? When did they marry?

What is known about Elizabeth is that she must have been a tolerant and passive wife to countenance Wald's sexual promiscuity. Altogether Elizabeth and Wald Barnes had four children: Thum, Djuna, Saxon and Shangar. Wald Barnes also fathered many illegitimate children. He had many mistresses including Fanny Faulkner (who was to become his second wife and who lived, with her children, in the same house as Wald and Elizabeth), and Marguerite D'Alvarez, opera singer and one probable source for Kate Careless in Ryder. As she grew up, Djuna Barnes was expected to look after both Fanny and Elizabeth's younger children. Throughout Barnes's childhood, which did not involve any kind of formal education, both her father and his mother invented and re-invented the tale of the family's history. Barnes's father paraded his sexual conquests before his wife and daughter and may have abused Barnes. Mary Lynne Broe maintains that Zadel Barnes protected her granddaughter

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15 This census is at the Leicester Record Office. Microfilm No: R611/3187.
16 Ibid.
17 Field, 1985, pp.170-5.
18 Ibid; Also see Bros, 1991, pp.3-4.
19 See Broe, Mary Lynne, 'My Art Belongs to Daddy: The Textual Economics of Hayford
from Wald's patriarchal domain by creating a 'nanocracy' of stories, with its own private code of linguistic references. Yet this protection, as Broe and Louise De Salvo both point out, had its limits. Circa 1909 Barnes was 'engaged' to her father's friend, fifty-six year old Percy Faulkner. In her guise of protector, Zadel claimed to speak for her grand-daughter, writing letters which encouraged the match. Broe explores Zadel's role, asking if Zadel hoped to release Barnes from her father's power by getting her to marry Faulkner. Broe describes how Barnes was silenced within the family home. According to Silence and Power (1991), Broe's latest volume, Barnes married Faulkner at her home, leaving immediately for Bridgeport, Connecticut, and appearing, with her mother, in Queens, in 1912, enrolled as an Art Student at New York City's Pratt Institute. What is certain is that no birth or marriage certificates have been found among Barnes's papers and that, as Broe points out, the years 1910-2 are curiously blank spaces in Barnes's chronology.

C.1912-22: Greenwich Village, Journalism and Early Poetry

Barnes's brief period of study under Elizabeth Ely Lord at the Pratt Institute and a brief sojourn at the Art Students League during the fall and winter of 1915 were her only periods of formal education. By 1913 she had begun work as a freelance columnist for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. A good analysis of this has been provided by Nancy J. Levine. Between 1913 and 1920, Barnes was to write over eighty-three illustrated articles, most of which have been re-published. Many pieces, especially a famous article from 1914 on forcible feeding, were...
deeply influenced by contemporary feminism. Likewise, paintings created during the First
World War reveal a keenly developed sense of political satire and a commitment to pacifist
ideology. These pieces of verbal and visual art negate assertions such as Field’s which
promote the concept that Barnes was apolitical and no feminist. To articulate this notion,
Field deploys a statement which Barnes made in 1977 (‘those women, why don’t they do
something? Or knit socks for their husbands?’) to suggest that Barnes cannot be seen as the
early twentieth-century equivalent of a contemporary feminist. His view is also shared by
Hank O’Neil, whose memoir of Barnes in the last years of her life depicts her as a woman-
hating homophobe. Yet, as Susan Snaider Lanser’s work has highlighted, what Barnes
believed as a young woman and what she came to believe very late in life are quite separate.
The young Barnes penned many articles in support of women’s suffrage and shared many
ideas with feminists such as Susan Glaspell, Charlotte Perkins Gillman and Susan B.
Anthony. In the 1914 article on forcible feeding, she shared the experience of many British
suffragettes:

I shall be strictly professional, I assured myself. If it be an ordeal, it is as
familiar to my sex at this time; other women have suffered it in acute reality.

Surely I have as much nerve as my English sisters?

This is not the attitude, or the language of one disdainful of the women’s cause, and many of
Barnes’s writings remain woman-centred. Throughout her early journalism there runs an
awareness of the existing bond between herself and her ‘sisters’ both in America and abroad.

Between c.1914-5, Barnes was in love with Mary Pyne, writer and mistress of the notorious

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30 See O’Neil, Hank, Life is Painful, Nasty, and Short... In My Case It Has Only Been
Painful and Nasty: Djuna Barnes, An Informal Memoir (New York: Paragon House,
1990).
32 It is perhaps, then, no surprise that she wrote plays for Glaspell’s politically motivated
Provincetown Players, for which she also sold programmes and acted.
33 Barnes, Djuna, ‘How It Feels to Be Forcibly Fed’, in New York World Magazine (Aug 23,
'village' artist, Harry Kemp. Pyne's tragic death from tuberculosis in 1915 left Barnes devastated. Pyne had fuelled Barnes's creativity and her death influenced 'Six Songs of Khalidine', one of her most memorable poems. 1915 might be regarded as a watershed in Barnes's career, as it was in this year that she published her first full volume of poetry, *The Book of Repulsive Women*, which was printed at the attic press of Guido Bruno.

Between 1918 and 1919, Barnes may have been married to the editor Courtney Lemon, who himself appears to have been bisexual: again no certificate exists to authenticate this. She wrote three plays between 1919-20 for Susan Glaspell's Provincetown Players. Inevitably, the overview of Barnes's life as a cub reporter and a young poet in Greenwich Village, is as incomplete as views of her childhood. In New York she met Mina Loy, Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson, the lesbian couple who edited *The Little Review*, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Robert McAlmon. In Paris, many of these relationships were to be renewed. When Barnes left Greenwich Village for Paris in the early 1920s, she was aware that the 'village' had become full of tourists and regretted this change. Ironically, this pattern would later be repeated in Paris.

*Paris c.1923-9: Women, Writing and the Myths of 'Modernism'*

The introduction to this thesis outlined the problematic nature of the term 'modernism'. Barnes's period in Paris represents the part of her career most often termed 'modernist'.

In Paris, apart from short-fictions and journalism, Barnes was to write several major works: *A Book* (1923), *Ryder* (1928), *Ladies Almanack* (1928), and *A Night Among the Horses* (1929). She was to contribute to *transition*, *The Little Review* (an association begun in the U.S.A.), *The Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers*, *Vanity Fair* (another American

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36 See the *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers* (Paris: Contact, 1924).
association) and gained the experiences which were to fill her 1936 novel Nightwood. She was to develop her illustrative style while in Paris and attend the predominantly lesbian salon of Natalie Clifford Barney. She also began an affair with Thelma Wood, which lasted from the early 1920s until about 1930, roughly a ten-year period. As Shari Benstock, Gillian Hanscombe, Virginia L. Smyers and Karla Jay point out, this period is problematic as far as the representation of women artist is concerned. First of all, the women who lived in Paris are often represented as a network, influencing each other and acting as a cohesive group. As Benstock pointed out in a recent article on Barney, the women's relationships were tempered by conflicts of class, economic status, race, sexuality and background, thus to regard them as close-knit is problematic. In memoirs of Paris, Barnes emerges as either an exotic, alcoholic lesbian, or as a detached object of desire; what she rarely emerges as is a consummate and committed artist. By the time she left Paris c.1929, Barnes had become tired of the tourists who filled the city, just as she had been bored with those who had flocked to Greenwich Village c.1920.

1929-31: The Theatre Guild

Between these dates, according to Cheryl J. Plumb, Barnes was briefly back in America writing for the Theatre Guild. During this period she created a monthly article series entitled The Playgoers Almanack and a 1931 series of articles entitled The Wanton Playgoer.

1932-41: Djuna's Travels

When Barnes decided not to return to Thelma Wood, she appears to have taken a role that

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38 See the chapters on short fictions, poetry and illustrations.
42 Ibid, pp.34-5.
was increasingly celibate. In 1931 she returned to Paris from New York, where she had begun a brief relationship with the bisexual writer Charles Henry Ford.\textsuperscript{43} Ford, who was predominantly gay, was to co-write a novel with Parker Tyler, entitled *The Young and Evil* (1933), about a group of bohemians, for which Barnes wrote an introduction.\textsuperscript{44} In 1931 Ford was to travel briefly with Barnes to Vienna, Budapest and Munich, where they met up with Putzi Hanfstangl, an old friend of Barnes's.\textsuperscript{45} In 1933, Ford (influenced by Paul Bowles) went to Tangiers and Barnes stayed with him there. She probably became pregnant c.1933, not by Ford, but by the painter Jean Oberele.\textsuperscript{46} Whoever the father was, Barnes returned to the continent for an abortion, which may have been performed by Dan Mahoney.\textsuperscript{47} Circa 1932 Barnes had visited Hayford Hall, the Devonshire home of Peggy Guggenheim. She returned there c.1934 and was to return there throughout the 1930s. As Broe has stated, many of the women at the Hall, including Barnes, Emily Holmes-Coleman and Antonia White, were survivors of childhood abuse.\textsuperscript{48} Thus the period spent at Hayford Hall might be interpreted as being both therapeutic and liberating. In 1936 Barnes travelled to Oakham, the place of her mother's birth, with her friend Peter Hoare.\textsuperscript{49} Thus by the time that *Nightwood* was published (1936) Barnes had already gathered the ideas for her last play *The Antiphon* (1958).

It is worth recalling at this point that although T.S. Eliot is often regarded as Barnes's patron during this period, it was Emily Holmes-Coleman who persuaded Faber to publish Barnes. In 1939, Barnes was to leave for London, returning to America in the early 1940s where she visited Emily Holmes-Coleman at her new home in Arizona.\textsuperscript{50} By 1940, according to Field, Barnes was suffering from severe alcoholism and had been hospitalized several

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Field, 1985, p.163.}
\footnote{Field, 1985, pp.17-8, pp.165-6.}
\footnote{Ibid, p.167.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Broe, 1989, pp.41-86.}
\footnote{Field, 1985, p.192.}
\footnote{Ibid, p.217.}
\end{footnotes}

times. By 1941 she was back in Greenwich Village, at first living with her mother and then alone, inhabiting the Patchin Place apartment which she was to live in until her death in 1982.

1942-82: ‘The Most Famous Unknown in the World’

Barnes’s old age has often been referred to in negative terms. Despite the creation of a major play, *The Antiphon*, Barnes’s later years have been presented by critics such as Valerie Eliot, John Strand and Shari Benstock in negative terms. These years were often beset by poverty, ill-health and alcoholism. Yet they do not represent the decline of Barnes’s creativity. As Mary Lynne Broe has revealed, during this time, she continually revised her works and produced up-dated collections of previous stories, such as *Spillway* (1962) and *Vagaries Malicieux* (1974). Despite assertions that she was almost a recluse, Barnes kept in touch with most of the women she had known in Paris, particularly Natalie Clifford Barney, Margaret Anderson and Emily Holmes-Coleman. Her final book *Creatures in an Alphabet*, a bestiary, was published after her death. She died on Friday, June 18, 1982.

* This brief biography omits details which appear in the thesis as a whole.

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Appendix B.

A Note on the Text

References to The Little Review are problematic, as the volume numbers are not sequential. References to Vanity Fair reflect the changes in format which occur at the magazine: for example, some magazines are un-numbered and are listed under the date only. The word 'modernist' most often appears in the text in inverted commas, (as the introduction discusses) this can be considered a problematic term, as it seeks to cover such a diverse range of writing and makes no distinction between gender, race, etc. I have used the common spelling of almanac, except where mentioning Ladies Almanack.
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