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MIXED COMPANY: GENRE CROSSINGS IN ROSSETTI, ELIOT, SCHREINER, AND WOOLF

by

Lynne S. Nugent

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Florence Boos

ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes interruptions of realist narrative in the work of four women writers from the mid-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries: Christina Rossetti, George Eliot, Olive Schreiner, and Virginia Woolf. I argue that these writers use such interruptions—which take the form of alternate genres such as lyric poetry and the expository essay—to subvert the authority of the third-person novelistic narrator and thus question the dominant structure of the realist novel. By employing these asides, they provide opportunities for first-person and present-tense discourse within a third-person, past-tense narrative, which in turn leads to productive contrasts between subjectivity and objectivity, emotion and thought, public and private spheres, inner and outer lives of characters, and the novel and other genres. These cross-genre interruptions destabilize the overall works in ways that reveal both the contradictions in female characters' lives and the anxieties surrounding being a female author. The practice also exposes limitations of the novel as a form by raising in the reader an awareness of genre conventions. The result is an anti-realist tendency, inspired and fueled by gender concerns, in the midst of the age of greatest dominance of the realist novel.

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Thesis Supervisor

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Title and Department

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Date

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph. D. thesis of

Lynne S. Nugent

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in English at the December 2010 graduation.

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David Hamilton

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Garrett Stewart

To my family

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes interruptions of realist narrative in the work of four women writers from the mid-nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries: Christina Rossetti, George Eliot, Olive Schreiner, and Virginia Woolf. I argue that these writers use such interruptions—which take the form of alternate genres such as lyric poetry and the expository essay—to subvert the authority of the third-person novelistic narrator and thus question the dominant structure of the realist novel. By employing these asides, they provide opportunities for first-person and present-tense discourse within a third-person, past-tense narrative, which in turn leads to productive contrasts between subjectivity and objectivity, emotion and thought, public and private spheres, inner and outer lives of characters, and the novel and other genres. These cross-genre interruptions destabilize the overall works in ways that reveal both the contradictions in female characters' lives and the anxieties surrounding being a female author. The practice also exposes limitations of the novel as a form by raising in the reader an awareness of genre conventions. The result is an anti-realist tendency, inspired and fueled by gender concerns, in the midst of the age of greatest dominance of the realist novel.

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INTRODUCTION

> The traditional scholar bypasses the basic distinctive feature of the novel as a genre; he substitutes for it another object of study, and instead of novelistic style he actually analyzes something completely different. He transposes a symphonic (orchestrated) theme onto the piano keyboard.
>
> M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*

> …I have to some extent forced myself to break every mould and find a fresh form of being, that is of expression, for everything I feel or think.
>
> Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*

This dissertation analyzes the work of four female authors from the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who experimented with incorporating alternative, often non-narrative, genres into the realist novel. Within the structure of the prose-fiction female bildungsroman, the writers I discuss each interpolate other kinds of writing—variously poetry, epigraph, allegory, and/or essay—to disrupt the linear narrative and third-person distance of the larger work. I argue that these other genres open a space for a more personal voice amid that of the authorial narrator that structures the overall work, and they delay the limited range of outcomes for the female characters provided by the structure of the novel of development. I seek to fill a gap in criticism of these works that often does not take into account the other genres that punctuate these works. As my dissertation will show, paying close attention to these interruptions can lead to alternative readings to those that have traditionally been offered.

The four authors I discuss have four distinctly different ways of interrupting narrative time and the unfolding female lives they focus on in their novels. In Christina Rossetti's novella *Maude*, a narrative of banal bourgeois social rituals is halted as the eponymous poet picks up her pen to create lyrical expressions of religious malaise. In George Eliot's final three novels, interchapter epigraphs suspend narrative time and compel the reader to consume each chapter not just for its events but for its distilled

philosophical or emotional essence. In Olive Schreiner's allegories and lyrical interludes, novelistic time is replaced by an ahistorical, antirealist, and often utopian timescape. In Virginia Woolf's *The Pargiters*, each novelistic chapter is followed by an essay pulling the novel's events from its narrative timeline to isolate historical facts that create a connection between the imaginary world she creates and the historical one her readers inhabit.

Despite the very different ways these authors chose to include other genres in their novels, focusing on these strategies reveals a striking continuity of certain priorities and preoccupations for these women writers. Centrally, the inclusion of other genres helped them to address perceived limitations of the novel as a form, and instead argue with, supplement, and subvert the novelistic narrator that had become so popular by the mid–nineteenth century: that is, the third-person, disembodied, omniscient narrator, speaking in prose, and sticking closely to the story. Unlike the distanced absorption encouraged by this type of narration, their use of the "I," "you," and "we" pronouns of direct address in the interpolated sections engages the reader in a sense of immediate interaction with a personified author. Cross-genre interpolation has the additional benefit of providing new hybrid ways of portraying the contradictions of women's lives in a way the traditional novel could not. The use of contrasting genres shows how wildly divergent characters' inner lives and outer appearances are, with the lyric and expository fragments often providing the forum in which female characters' perspectives are most intimately presented.

But this drive to create a more personal voice was balanced by anxieties inherent in being a female writer. On one hand, genre mixing alleviated some of these anxieties. It allowed these authors to multiply their authority by speaking in more than one genre at a time: to find a way to escape the stereotype of the "lady novelist" absorbed in the superficial details of individual everyday life and instead ascend to a level of abstraction and universality afforded by discourses such as poetry, prophecy, and history. The

different genres allowed them to create a balance between feeling (considered women's strength) and a more abstract knowledge. On the other hand, the personal types of writing introduced by the interpolated genres came close to the autobiographical writing for which women were often faulted. As a result, themes of privacy, publicity, and the shifting boundary between private and public featured largely in all of their works.

Thus, my study of these narrative interruptions shows that, far from being the marginal ornamentation or unnecessary exposition they are sometimes assumed to be, they are central to understanding these works. Moreover, their study has implications for the study of narrative and characterization, especially as narrative interruption has certain similarities to other fictional and poetic devices, such as free indirect discourse and the dramatic monologue.

It also has implications for the history of the novel. Between the prose text and the interpolated genre text in the works I discuss exists a fault line that illuminates many contradictions the novel as a genre had otherwise tried to smooth out by the time these novels were written: between multiple voices and unity of voice; first-person and third-person points of view; verse and prose; and lyric (or expository) time and narrative time. The genre interpolations represent a return of the repressed, of sorts—a re-emergence of elements of literature over which the novel otherwise had gained hegemony by the mid-nineteenth century.[1]

Although my thesis is in part that discontinuities of form in certain novels by women reflect discontinuities within Victorian female experience, that is not to say that only women writers have ever mixed genres, or that the only possible reason to interrupt novelistic narrative is to make a point about female experience. However, I do argue that

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[1] Susan Stewart draws a similar conclusion in her article "The Ballad in *Wuthering Heights*." She calls the use of balladic themes in *Wuthering Heights* an example of "archaism…a sense of return to something older" (175). In her argument, however, the modern novel brings forward older forms in order to tame them. In my examples, the older forms highlight needs that are not met by the novel.

the similar strategies of these four writers are something more than individual artistic choices; rather, they reflect anxieties surrounding the gendered power dynamics of the novel as a form.

Gender essentialism was a favorite tactic among critics in the era I study and one that highly disturbed the writers I discuss. To avoid falling into the traps of gender essentialism, I will argue that the pattern of literary techniques I trace is not due to essential differences between male and female writers, but rather has to do with how certain women writers have found themselves reacting to similar situations due to a history of patriarchal culture. Elaine Showalter writes that it is for these cultural reasons that "when we look at women writers collectively we can see an imaginative continuum, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems, and images from generation to generation" (11). I realize that no conclusions can be drawn about "women writers collectively" from my four examples, since the sample size is so small, and all of them are of a particular group, a group Virginia Woolf called "the daughters of educated men" (*Three Guineas* 14): relatively privileged, white, and at the center of empire (except for Olive Schreiner, who was born in South Africa). My purpose is not to attribute everything about these writers and their techniques to gender, nor to draw conclusions about women writers as a whole, but rather to closely analyze each text for the differences between the individual writers as well as the common issues and anxieties they faced.

Genres, Genre Mixing, and the Novel

Defining Genre

Before presenting my arguments in greater detail, I will try to define what kind of genre mixing I am focusing on in this dissertation. Some narrowing is necessary because the classification of genres and subgenres can proliferate to the point where almost any literary text could be cited as an example of genre crossing. In the examples I have

chosen, the mixing is at a very fundamental level.[2] Different scholars have described the distinction between these fundamental genres using varying terminology.[3] The terms that I will, for convenience, depend on most to label this distinction, keeping in mind that others have given the same divide widely different names—can be found in Gérard Genette's terms "narrative" and "discourse" in his essay "Frontiers of Narrative" from *Figures of Literary Discourse*. On the sentence level, Genette explains, discourse regularly features "certain grammatical forms, like the pronoun 'I' (and its implicit reference 'you'), the pronomial (certain demonstratives), or adverbial indicators (like 'here,' 'now,' 'yesterday,' 'tomorrow,' etc.) and…certain tenses of the verb, like the present." (Genette describes the narrative/discourse distinction as akin to Emile Benveniste's distinction between story and discourse.) Narrative, on the other hand, "in its strict form is marked by the exclusive use of the third person and such forms as the aorist (past definite) and the pluperfect" (138). "I," "you," adverbial indicators, and the present tense are overrepresented in the narrative interruptions of all four authors in this dissertation.

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[2] In *The Architext*, Gérard Genette calls this level of (pre-)genre the level of "modes." He describes how Plato, Aristotle, and their followers arrived at three basic modes that precede genre: narrative, dramatic, and lyric. Modes are "situations of enunciating," Genette explains, and a genre is based on the mode and other factors (e.g., dramatic mode plus characters of superior rank results in the genre of tragedy; narrative mode plus characters of superior rank results in the genre of epic) (12). Alastair Fowler provides another term to describe the "situation of enunciating": "representational aspect." In his work, the notion of genre includes "historical kinds" (e.g., the epigram or the epic) and "modes" (e.g., comic or pastoral), as well as countless subgenres (e.g., "the poem about a work of art") (106–115). "Representational aspect" has to do more with the one or multiple forms in which a historical kind is expressed, such as lyric, narrative, or dramatic (60).

[3] Käte Hamburger claims there are two fundamental genres at this level: lyric and fiction. The lyrical genre is subjective, and it may exist in prose as well as poetry that features an "Ich-Origo of its enunciation," whereas the fictional genre is objective in that it is "defined by an enunciation that reveals no trace of its source" (Genette, *Architext* 58). In each work I discuss, what Hamburger calls the lyrical genre intrudes into what is otherwise more or less uniformly in the fictional genre. In contrast to Hamburger's terms "lyrical" and "fictional," Susan Lanser draws a distinction between authorial (usually known as third person) and personal (or first person) modes of narration (21). Using Lanser's terms, the authors I discuss embed the personal mode within the authorial mode through interpolated poetry, epigraphs, and essays.

Rossetti, Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf all employ interruptions that, whether primarily poetic or essayistic, resemble the "discourse" that Genette describes as fundamentally different from narrative. In the poems with which Rossetti interrupts her narrative in *Maude*, the speaker uses first person and the present tense, in contrast to the narrator of the larger work, who uses third person and past tense. Among the epigraphs in Eliot's last three novels, there are similar reprieves from the overall third-person, past-tense narration of the books. Schreiner's lyrical "I" in the poetic asides in *Story of an African Farm* is actually a lyrical "we," making the subjectivity a collective one, but there is still the same sense of immediacy that discourse provides through first person (even though it is first-person plural) and use of the present tense. The essayistic portions of Woolf's *The Pargiters* are in first person and present tense, with the "I" persona a writer lecturing to an audience about the work of fiction she is writing.

Genette adds that narrative and discourse rarely exist in their pure states: "there is almost always a certain proportion of narrative in discourse, a certain amount of discourse in narrative" (*Figures* 140). A discursive text may include narrative elements; a narrative text may include discursive asides. On the most basic level, critics have long noticed that novels are not composed entirely of narrative events. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan describes how the "succession of events" that dominates narrative fiction may be interspersed with "descriptive or expository propositions": a description of a landscape may smoothly transition into the events that take place within it, for example, or a narrator may suspend the action in favor of an expository aside (2, 15). Dorrit Cohn also points out that novels contain much more than is strictly "narrative" in the sense of a sequence of events: there are plenty of instances of "theoretical, philosophical, explanatory, speculative, or critical discourse" in any given novel, as well as "purely descriptive statements and expressions of emotion" (*Distinction* 12). While conceding that narrative and discourse rarely exist apart from each other, Genette still insists on the fundamental difference between the two forms of enunciation.

Every time a narrator deviates from the strict recounting of events into a description of landscape or a philosophical tangent, one might say that the boundary between narrative and discourse has been breached. However, this mixing of narrative and discourse can be quite seamless. In the texts I examine, the authors try to make this distinction as clear as possible. They emphasize the contrast by casting sections of discourse into non-fictional genres—poetry, epigraph, allegory—and setting them off from the main text of the narrative.

Cohn argues that in novels, "expository or descriptive language is *subordinated* to narrative language" (*Distinction* 12). The texts I look at, however, are those in which it is not always clear which is subordinated to which. In Rossetti's *Maude*, the poems start to dominate the prose; in Eliot's last three novels, the sheer number of epigraphs disrupts the flow of narrative; in Schreiner's *African Farm*, the allegory and lyric sections become the centerpiece of the book; and in Woolf's *The Pargiters*, the narrative is enclosed in a frame that resembles an essay or lecture in form. In that sense they bear more resemblance to a text like Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu,* of which, as Cohn describes, some critics argue that "its narrative is merely an illustration of ideas Proust developed in the essayistic passages of his work" (13). Although it may be easier to argue that *The Pargiters* is more of an illustration of its essayistic interchapters than that *Middlemarch* is an illustration of its (much shorter) epigraphs, I am interested in the destabilizing qualities of these interpolated texts.

The Novel as Inherently Mixed

According to Georg Lukács in *The Theory of the Novel,* novels reveal the split between the individual and the outside world in modernity. With a project of, following Hegel, "the historicization of aesthetic categories," Lukács describes how changes in the world led to changes in literary expression (15). Distinct from the civilization of the epic in which the individual feels at home, modernity has led to a "world of events" to which

"the soul is a stranger" (36). At odds with the larger community, the individual develops his own interiority in opposition to the world outside the self. The novel form expresses this "transcendental homelessness" of the soul (41). Thus, to aestheticize the split between subjectivity and objectivity, or inner and outer life, is part of the novel's reason for being.

Writing that "[i]n the novel, meaning is separated from life, and hence the essential from the temporal; we might almost say that the entire inner action of the novel is nothing but a struggle against the power of time," Lukács is not speaking of narrative interruptions per se, but of internal conflicts within the novel and its character agents more generally (122). To say that the novels I discuss have narrative interruptions is thus simply to say that they are novels: they fit the pattern of the ur-novel, *Don Quixote*, which Lukács describes as "the first great battle of interiority against the prosaic vulgarity of outward life" (104). The "struggle against the power of time" could easily form a partial explanation for the interpolated poetry in Rossetti's *Maude* or the epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda*. The interiority of Maude the poet battles against the prosaic third-person narration of *Maude*'s narrator. It makes sense that if the "experiencing subject," as Lukács says, is "a lyrical one" (128), then Maude's experiences would be expressed in lyric verse. Therefore, my arguments surrounding the four authors I discuss build upon Lukács's description of the novel's—and modernity's—inherent conflicts between interior and exterior. For Lukács, both of these parts are expressive of normative novelistic form, but the authors I discuss exaggerate and emphasize this tension.

Other Genres in the Novel

Another theorist who writes about the novel as an inherently mixed form is M. M. Bakhtin. In "Discourse in the Novel," an essay in *The Dialogic Imagination*, he writes that the key element of the stylistics of the novel is heteroglossia, the "social diversity of

speech types" featured in the novel. This diversity is introduced through differences in authorial speech, narratorial speech, and characters' speech, but most interestingly to this dissertation, he claims it can also be introduced through "inserted genres" (263).

Later in the same essay, he describes the role of these genres in more detail: "The novel permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others)" (320). Bakhtin describes how these incorporated genres usually "refract…authorial intentions" but in some cases are deprived of such intentions and are objectified or "displayed, like a thing" (321). The poems in Rossetti, the epigraphs in Eliot, the allegories in Schreiner, and the essays in Woolf all fall at some undeterminable point along this continuum between authorial intention and ironic objectification. Essentially, they all fulfill the purpose of heteroglossia as Bakhtin describes it: "to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (324). Like character speech that includes two voices, the character's directly and the author's indirectly, the heteroglossia introduced by interpolated genres contains this "double-voiced discourse": the language of the poetry (or the epigraph, or what have you) and the use the author is making of it in the larger work.

Incorporated genres allow for what Bakhtin calls a "relativized consciousness" by raising the "perception of language borders" (323–324). This relativized consciousness is what I will discuss when I describe how the authors in this dissertation use sections of other genres to point out the fact of genre itself, and to delineate what the novel is and is not capable of. The authors break the spell of fiction to make the reader aware of its limitations.

While incorporated genres are essential to the novel as Bakhtin understands it, they are clearly subordinated within it, as he reveals in his essay "Epic and Novel" from the same volume. In the essay he argues that genres exist in a state of "struggle," and that the novel, especially, "gets on poorly with other genres." He writes that "when the novel

reigns supreme, almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent 'novelized'" (5). But I would argue that the influence between novels and other genres works the other way too. These four authors' inclusion of other genres does more than just subsume the other genres into the novel. Rather, the interruptions explore the nature of the novel and interrogate its limitations.

The Novel and Poetry

In the work of three of the four authors I discuss—Rossetti, Eliot (in the case of her verse epigraphs), and Schreiner—narrative interruptions take the form of poetry. Thus it is important to discuss both the relationship between the novel and poetry and examples of hybridity between the two. When describing why poetry so often enters into novels, it is important to note that poetry tended to be accorded a higher value than novelistic prose in the nineteenth century. A contemporary reviewer approvingly called Olive Schreiner's allegories "poems in prose" (Murphy 210). Eliot's anthologizer, Alexander Main, praised *Middlemarch* as a "prose poem" (Price 107). There is an implicit claim in these statements that the category of poetry is on a higher plane than fiction. Dino Felluga describes how, in the nineteenth century, the category of "pure poetry" came to represent aesthetics disconnected from the market and commodification (143). Using poetry or poetry-like devices may have been a way to avoid the still-somewhat-remaining stigma of the novel as not quite "literary" enough.

Mixing narrative and poetry has a long history. Peter Dronke describes classical and medieval examples of *prosimetra*, the mixed form of verse with prose, in *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of a Mixed Form*. In *The Lyrical Novel,* Ralph Freedman cites Dante's *La Vita Nuova* as an early example of "lyrical narrative" (vii). Monique Morgan's "Lyric Narrative Hybrids in Victorian Poetry," though focusing mostly on long narrative poems, provides reasons why mixing lyric and narrative forms appealed to Victorian writers, which is applicable to why they might also

want to mix prose narrative and lyric discourse. She cites "the increasing prestige of lyric poetry, and the increasing popularity of the novel" as a reason why mixing lyric and novel was such an appealing option. While valuing the "emotional intensity" of poetry as the Romantics did, they were also affected by the fact that "novel sales had exploded" by the mid-nineteenth century (918). The result is new forms, such as the dramatic monologue, that have hybrid features, such as the audience being cued "both to adopt the speaker's perspective"—as in lyric—"and to judge him"—as in a novel (920). These poems have the inwardness and subjectivity of Romantic lyric verse as well as, Melissa Gregory writes, "speakers who firmly locate themselves historically and rhetorically" (Morgan 922).

Drawing from the work of Susan Stanford Friedman, Morgan warns that it is not necessary to create a binary opposition between lyric and narrative, with lyric being privileged as the repressed feminine and narrative the repressive masculine: "Subversive force does not belong exclusively to lyric discourse." Moreover, there is no inherent competition between lyric and narrative forms: rather, they can "cooperate, collaborate, or compete with each other" (924). I agree that this can very well be the case, but in the writings that I focus on, there is more of a Bakhtinin sense that the forms are in competition.

The poetic interpolations in the work by Rossetti, Eliot, and Schreiner are often the repository for the first-person voice within what is mostly a third-person narrative. Lyric poetry seems to provide an acceptable mode for the presentation of female emotion; speaking aloud in everyday prose is more difficult for these characters. This may be because poetry was a sanctioned outlet for emotions: Wordsworth called poetry a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (661), and John Stuart Mill described the interest felt in a story as deriving from "incident" and that excited by poetry as deriving from "the representation of feeling" (344). Perhaps one reason poetry was more

acceptable for both male and female characters' more intimate thoughts was that the formality of the language can mitigate its personal tone.

The Novel and First-Person Prose: Essay, Letter, Memoir

Rossetti, Eliot, and Schreiner use discourse in the form of *poetry* to critique the third-person novelistic narrator's limited ability to represent the subjective states that they find to be an important part of female experience. Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf use discourse in the form of the *essay* to critique the novelistic narrator's limited ability to connect the imaginative world inside the novel to either the larger world of thought (in the form of the literary tradition or abstract ideas) or the real, historical world in which the writer and reader are living. With both poetic and essayistic interpolations, the novelistic narrator is shown to be just one option among many other forms of representing experience, and the reader is directly solicited as a participant in creating meaning from the text.

Like poetry, the essay was also held up as being distinctive from the novel in ways that were value-laden. In "The Hero as Man of Letters," Carol T. Christ writes about how men dominated the role of the "sage," the nonfiction writer of essays and criticism whose work was privileged over the feminized novel (26). I argue that Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf wanted to claim that "sage" role, and combine it with the role of the novelist, by interpolating essayistic genres into their narratives. This is not to say that they were the only novelists to do so: essayistic statements in the form of exposition, description, and narrative intrusion were common in the novel from the beginning. But Eliot and Woolf remove these nonfictional statements from the text of the novel and set them apart in the form of epigraphs or essays inserted between novelistic chapters, while Schreiner allows her epistolary and essayistic interruptions in *From Man to Man* to become so long as to disrupt the third-person narration of the overall work.

In contrast to the interpolation of poetry, it is easier to include essayistic segments in a novel without creating a visual break on the page, since both essays and the main text of novels are in prose. Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf choose to emphasize the oppositional character of their essayistic sections by not smoothly integrating them into the narrative but by treating them as narrative interruptions.

The Commonplace Book

In discussing the mixing of genres on the page, I want to bring up another genre with a long history: the commonplace book. Each of the works I will discuss resembles a commonplace book in its purposefully unfinished, fragmented aesthetic sensibility. We learn in *Maude* that the eponymous heroine's writing-book is "neither Common-Place Book, Album, Scrap-Book nor Diary; it was a compound of all these" (Rossetti 30). This writing book is a mise-en-abyme of *Maude* itself, which is rather like a commonplace book in its mixing of poetry and prose. Eliot's epigraphs, too, harken back to the concept of the commonplace book as defined by Ann Moss: from the medieval practice of assembling notable quotations into *florilegia* (flower-collections), the form at its height in the Renaissance became "a collection of quotations (usually Latin quotations) culled from authors held to be authoritative, or, at any rate, commendable in their opinions, and regarded as exemplary in terms of linguistic usage and stylistic niceties" (24, v). After its decline as an academic tool, the form devolved into "an album of favorite lines of poetry put together haphazardly for purely private perusal and meditation" (1). The four authors I discuss variously use their collages in the earlier sense of the commonplace book (Eliot's literary quotations and Woolf's historical facts are used as sources of accumulated evidence) and in the later sense (Rossetti's and Schreiner's inclusion of poetry, letters, and/or diaries show the private preoccupations of their female characters). Either way, they adhere to a commonplace-book logic that is essentially non-narrative, while also containing novelistic narrative.

Gendered Genre Mixing from Rossetti to Woolf

To trace a submerged tendency in a small group of otherwise narrative novels to order knowledge in non-narrative ways is not to argue that this kind of interruptive genre mixing in the novel was a technique only used by these four writers, or only used by women writers, or only used for the specific purposes I describe. As we have seen, writers have mixed genres throughout literary history, and the novel, in particular, is a famously hybrid form to begin with. Pointing out the shared preoccupations of these four authors—personalized narrators, public and private spheres, female subjectivity, and critique of the realist novel and the bildungsroman—however, may provide a point of entry into further exploration of genre, genre mixing, and female authorship in the heyday of the novel.

Embodied and Disembodied Narrators

As Genette explains in his article on narrative and discourse: "In discourse, someone speaks, and his situation in the very act of speaking is the focus of the most important significations; in narrative, as Benveniste forcefully puts it, *no one speaks*…" (*Figures* 140, italics in original). The "someone" of Maude's poet, Eliot's "epigraphist" (who speaks in a multiplicity of voices but who often pointedly chooses those with a point of view in opposition to the narrator's), Schreiner's lyrical collective consciousness, and Woolf's lecturer creates a tension between the "no one" speaking in the third-person fictional sections that describe characters and scenes from a relatively more disembodied and omniscient perspective. I argue that the use of this "someone" is an attempt to directly engage the reader by positing the existence of a specific, embodied writer with whom the reader can have a relationship.

To see how this might be, it may help to look at another breach of the narrative-discourse divide that has been given much attention: the narratorial intrusion. Within a framework of feminist narratology, Robyn Warhol describes narrators' intrusions when

made by women writers. She focuses on "those moments in realist novels where (as [George] Eliot put it in *Adam Bede*) 'the Story Pauses a Little' while the narrator explicates, evaluates, or comments upon the materials of the text" (20). For example, she writes that when Elizabeth Gaskell speaks as "I" and speaks to "you," making statements such as "I must tell you," a reader who takes these pronouns seriously "would experience an intensified sense that the novel is a personal act of communication between Elizabeth Gaskell and 'you'" (65). Warhol calls this type of narrative intrusion—when meant to impress upon the reader the emotional truth of the story rather than point out its artifice—"engaging narration," and she links it especially to women writers. She writes that the engaging mode "strives to close the gaps between the narratee, the addressee, and the receiver" (29).

I focus on "the story pauses a little" moments as well, except these moments are not moments in which the narrator speaks to the reader, but rather moments in which the writer substitutes writing in another genre than realist fiction for the edification or enlightenment of the reader. Like the use of direct address that Warhol describes, the use of cross-genre interpolations posits a direct relationship between reader and writer, with the reader being invited to participate in the text's creation of meaning. Similarly to the women writers Warhol describes, who were looking for ways to influence the reader and hence the world, the writers I discuss used genre interruptions to make an impression beyond what they could make through presentation of a self-enclosed fictional world.[4]

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[4] To discuss the "real reader" and the "real writer" and their having a relationship is not to be unaware of the question of, as Warhol puts it, whether "anything in a literary text [can] transcend its textuality." Warhol admits that we "cannot refute the philosophical arguments that motivate such questions," but that deconstruction could "paralyze any narratologist who was to take [its questions] as central to all studies of literature" (20). I believe that it is possible to discuss the reader and the writer, and their relationship, while keeping in mind that what are really being discussed are textual effects. To discuss an authorial persona created in a text and its reaching out toward a reader are not to make claims about what are unknowable matters: the actual author and his or her intentions or the actual reader and how he or she was affected by the text.

Genette sums up the narrative/discourse distinction as “an opposition between the objectivity of narrative and the subjectivity of discourse” (*Figures* 138–140). This claim provides insights into what all the authors I discuss have in common, since all four of them exploit the tension between the seeming objectivity of their third-person narrators and the subjectivity of the often first-person voices in their interpolated narrative interruptions.

Creating a balance between objectivity and subjectivity has been an ongoing concern of poets, Carol T. Christ claims in her book *Victorian and Modern Poetics*. In it, she argues that post-Romantic poets found many aspects of Romantic subjectivity troubling, including “arbitrary and personal meanings,” “alienation from tradition,” and “the identification of the speaking voice of the poem with that of the poet” (11–12). To avoid espousing such a world-denying radical subjectivity, these poets devised means of “attempting to objectify the materials of poetry,” from Browning’s use of dramatic monologue to T. S. Eliot’s theory of the objective correlative (3). To take the example of Browning, Christ argues that he is able to express “two conflicting attitudes” in the dramatic monologue: the belief that a poem is “a personal utterance” involving a “subjective sense of truth” and the belief that a poem has “the status of an object” and can be separated from the writer’s own subjectivity. He achieves this balance through presenting extremely personal voices that yet are highly distinguishable from the writer’s own perspective. By attributing highly subjective language to a character distinct from the writer, the dramatic monologue “emphasizes the subjective, historical, and relative nature of truth while it strives to escape that relativity and historicity by separating the poem from the experience of the poet” (17). My examination of Rossetti’s, Eliot’s, Schreiner’s, and Woolf’s use of narrative interruptions leads me to claim that prose writers, too, were interested in maintaining this balance between objective and subjective. On one hand, the subjectivity of the discourse sections balances the objectivity of the third-person narration. On the other hand, the discourse sections have their own kind of

objectivity, too. Though often quite personal, we will see how they can also bring a level of abstraction and universalization to the narrative. It is the combination of genres that creates the objectivity/subjectivity balance, not that any one genre has a monopoly on objectivity or subjectivity.

To a surprising degree, the authors I discuss align objectivity with thought and subjectivity with feeling, leading their balancing of objectivity and subjectivity to be explicitly described as a balancing between thought and feeling. For example, I will discuss George Eliot's use of epigraphs to integrate knowledge with feeling in order to achieve the state in which, as a character in *Middlemarch* puts it, "knowledge passes instantly into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge" (223). Similarly, Schreiner describes allegory as "the passion of abstract ideas" (First and Scott 182), and Rossetti's main character in *Maude* insists that feelings can be best expressed in technically skilled verse (36). Woolf extols "disinterested passion" as a new kind of pedagogy (*Pargiters* 112). All four authors use formal variations on the novel to integrate the supposedly female strength in matters of emotion into a kind of knowledge that they would claim is enhanced, rather than being impaired, by feeling.

Private and Public Authors

Attempting to create an embodied writerly persona that engages the reader was an especially fraught activity for women writers, who struggled with how much a "private" woman should make herself into a "public" author. To see how too much of an embodied writerly persona might backfire, it helps to look at "Modern English Poetesses," a review essay published in *Quarterly Review* in 1840. The writer, Henry N. Coleridge, had this to say of the futility of reviewing poetry by women: "It is easy to be critical of men, but when we venture to lift a pen against women, straightaway *apparent facies*; the weapon drops pointless on the marked passage; and whilst the mind is bent on praise or censure of the poem, the eye swims too deep in tears and mist over the poetess herself in the

frontispiece, to let it see its way to either" (375). With his assertion that the "faces appear" (*apparent facies*), the critic is speaking literally of the poetess's portrait in the frontispiece of her book; yet, on a more metaphorical level, he implies that he can perceive the poetess herself—her physical being as well as her individual personality—through the words on the page.

Rather than a compliment to these poetesses who make him weep, the reviewer's professed inability to criticize them is a way to relegate them to a separate and more limited range of achievement. Accordingly, Coleridge praises poet Caroline Norton for her "intense personal passion" but then advises that she "break through the narrow circle of personal and domestic feelings, and adventure herself upon a theme of greater variety and less morbid interest" (376, 382). In doing so, he holds two interrelated elements at arm's length: femininity and emotion. Emotions are what draw him in to poetry by women, but emotions are also what render him unable to be analytical about this poetry. The face that appears is the author's, but it is also the face of the critic himself, swimming in tears. The faces and their associated bodies interrupt a reading process that he assumes would otherwise be unsullied by such extraneous factors.

The notion that the "face appears" in writing recalls the way Paul de Man, in an influential essay, examines the rhetorical move "prosopopeia," or the giving of a face to an absence; de Man calls this face-giving a trope present in all texts "with a readable title page." Not just the poet's portrait, but the name itself on the title page, conjure an inevitable "autobiographical moment," as de Man terms it (70). Although de Man does not mention gender, the 1840 review shows how this moment can become especially uncomfortable when the poet is female. We will see how female writers used, for example, lyric poetry of "intense personal passion" in their third-person novelistic narratives, thus invoking a face and conjuring an autobiographical moment, but surrounding it with more distancing rhetorical techniques in a way that would perchance confound readers like the *Quarterly Review* critic. In their multi-genre works, the writers

in this dissertation create a complex portrait of the female author, one that moves at will between the affective power of poetry and the action- and time-based power of fiction, and one that varies between the notion of an embodied and a disembodied narrator.

Using multiple genres destabilized the notion of "the" female author. Multiplying their voice through different genres confused the tendency for readers to read their work autobiographically, as the mixing of genres brought to the reader's attention the fact of genre itself, allowing for the "relativized consciousness" that Bakhtin encouraged with regard to "perception of language borders": the awareness that every type of writing is a construction that adheres to certain conventions, rather than being an autobiographically-motivated, spontaneous overflow of emotions (323–324).

As we will see, the authors all redefine the boundaries between public and private in other ways besides their own use of autobiographical or seemingly autobiographical voices. Rossetti's Maude, more than her creator a private writer (the heroine never publishes), still struggles with how public to make her art, with her coffin designated the place of utmost privacy. In *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot moves Gwendolyn increasingly toward the private sphere as Daniel advances towards the public sphere, and the chapter epigraphs reflect this shift. Olive Schreiner creates a shared (and hence somewhat public) privacy in her use of the collective first person. Finally, Woolf struggles with what should be considered "public" history and argues in *The Pargiters* that the domestic lives of women should be part of this story.

Inner and Outer Lives of Characters

All four authors write of women's lives in ways that resemble the female bildungsroman, but I argue that they find mixing genres a more appropriate way of portraying fractured female identities. The inner lives of the female characters are so distinct from their outer appearances in the social world of the novel that a different genre is sometimes needed to contain them. Therefore the narrative interruptions split some of

the female characters into, to use Rossetti as an example, the "self" described by the poems and the "self" described by the prose fiction, allowing this inner-self/outer-world inconsistency to become apparent.

Of course, there are other mechanisms for this kind of contrast within the main narration of the novel. Characters' spoken words or thoughts can be enclosed in quotation marks, or remain unenclosed as free indirect discourse. Many examinations of free indirect discourse—which is third person and carries the narrator's tense but the character's thoughts—have described how the technique facilitates a merging or overlap of interior self and exterior world, since it blurs the boundaries between the narrator's and the character's thoughts. According to Cohn, what makes fiction distinctive is the ability of the narrator to see within a character's mind, often expressed in the technique of free indirect discourse (*Distinction* 16). In *Transparent Minds*, she describes how Jane Austen was a pioneer in using free indirect discourse to combine third-person narration with first person epistolary or confessional narration. She quotes Ian Watt as describing the technique as harmonizing the portrayal of the inner landscape pioneered by early novelist Samuel Richardson with the greater focus on outer actions and social satire of Richardson's rival Henry Fielding (113).

Narrative interruptions like the ones I will discuss are another way of combining these two worlds: the social world of the third-person narration with the interior world of, say, the first-person lyric poems in Christina Rossetti's *Maude*. But rather than combining them seamlessly, the way Jane Austen does using free indirect discourse, the layering of genres shows their incompatibility. In the case of *Maude*, the poems are "all inside," the narration is "all outside"—not even dipping into the omniscience of a psycho-narrating narrator. And the resulting heroine does not emerge clearly but is split between the outer person she seems in society, and the inner, unknowable person of the poems. Rossetti and the other authors I describe emphasize how difficult it is to overlap the inner and outer worlds and how radically different they are, especially for women.

Rossetti's angst, Eliot's soliloquies, Schreiner's lyric essays, and Woolf's historian all take on a shape that becomes formally different from the novel, showing that certain expressions of female experience would not fit comfortably into the novel as it then existed.

In free indirect discourse, the third-person narrator still remains firmly in control, framing the voices of the characters within a larger omniscient consciousness. However, in the case of Eliot's epigraphs, for example, the epigraphs stand outside of this contextualizing frame and help assure that no one voice can completely dominate, not even the narrator's. In a sense, the texts I will discuss fight against the notion of free indirect discourse and the omniscient narrator that peers into characters' minds at will. In formulating this idea of resisting the narrator, I draw on D. A. Miller, who has written on the panoptical way the narrator has access to the innermost thoughts of the characters (23). The authors I discuss find ways to circumvent the narrator and yet reveal that category of thoughts. Somewhat like free indirect discourse, but ultimately not under the control of a third-person narrator, many of these interruptions are ultimately indeterminate in origin: it is not clear who is speaking. Not limited by actual or implied quotation marks to being the thoughts of one character, they are text on their own, unattributed, seemingly pure language.

Beyond the Novel and the "Lady Novelist"

In addition to this splitting of female characters across different genres, there is also a multiplying of the authority of the female author through showing mastery of the different genres. They did not want to be "just" novelists. All four of the writers I discuss describe elsewhere in their work their objections to then-prevalent stereotypes of women, the woman writer, and the woman novelist. Showalter writes that once it became clear, in the mid-nineteenth-century, that women were writing novels successfully and could not be discouraged from it, critics wanted to ghettoize novel writing as being *especially*

suited to women: “Women were obsessed by sentiment and romance; well, these were the staples of fiction. Women had a natural taste for the trivial; they were sharp-eyed observers of the social scene; they enjoyed getting involved in other people’s affairs. All these alleged female traits, it was supposed, would find a happy outlet in the novel” (74–82). If women were good at writing novels, the argument went, then there must be something limited about novels as a form.

Showalter also quotes an 1853 reviewer who wrote: “We know, all of us, that if man is the head of humanity, woman is its heart; and as soon as education has rendered her ordinarily capable of expressing feeling in written words, why should we be surprised to find that her words come home to us more than those of men, where feeling is chiefly concerned?” (83). Thus not only were the capacities of women novelists devalued, but novels, too, became devalued once women moved into the field. Rossetti, Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf struggled with the double-bind that all women writers faced: their strengths were assumed to be in the private, personal sphere, but when they wrote this way they were criticized for being too personal, not universal enough. The notion that women artists and writers could not achieve the desired state of abstraction to create art—with novels considered a kind of crude mimesis of reality, and thus not counting as “art”—led them to blend the novel with these other more abstract forms.

While critics thought women well-suited to the novel because of its personal, intimate tone, these writers’ changes in generic register opened a space in which the writer could speak with an authority transcending the novel, whether religious authority (Christina Rossetti), aesthetic (George Eliot), mythical (Olive Schreiner), or scholarly (Virginia Woolf). Narrative interruption allowed these four writers to show to advantage the domestic, everyday, and emotional knowledge that the novel is so well suited to display while demonstrating that this kind of knowledge is not mutually exclusive with other kinds of cultural authority.

Their genre-mixing also implies a critique of the specific form of the novel of female development. All of the novels I discuss could be called variants of the female bildungsroman in the sense that they trace the development of women through life starting at a young age. Rossetti tells the story of Maude's (truncated) adolescence, Eliot's novels are centered around characters moving through adolescence and young adulthood leading up to marriage; Schreiner's novels describe childhood and young adulthood through motherhood; and Woolf in *The Pargiters/The Years* project follows Eleanor from young adulthood through middle age.

Critics have often focused on how the female bildungsroman offers its protagonists limited options compared to the male bildungsroman. Susan Fraiman argues that the specific meaning of the male bildungsroman in the sense of "progress towards masterful selfhood" is not available to female characters because, for women of the time, notions of mastery, choice, apprenticeship, and vocation that make up the bildungsroman did not apply (x, 4–5). Therefore, she argues, the dominant narrative of maturity achieved is balanced by Gothic "counternarratives" that reveal the underlying truth that "the heroine's rise to happy maturity" is also "a history of obstruction, imposition, and loss" (10). Fraiman provides the example of *Pride and Prejudice:* the happy marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy is the dominant narrative, and Elizabeth's series of humiliations along the way is the counternarrative revealing the losses to self suffered as the price of female maturity.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis also discusses the limitations of the female bildungsroman in *Writing Beyond the Ending*. To her, any Bildung aspect of the plot—a woman's development of vocation or ambition—is ultimately pushed to the side as the narrative progresses: "Th[e] contradiction between love and quest in plots dealing with women as a narrated group, acutely visible in nineteenth-century fiction, has, in my view, one main mode of resolution: an ending in which one part of that contradiction, usually quest or *Bildung*, is set aside or repressed, whether by marriage or by death" (3–4). Both Fraiman

and DuPlessis find female development in these novels less than fully realized—reflecting the limitations on female development in the society that produced these novels. Like Fraiman looking for counternarratives, DuPlessis looks for examples of "writing beyond the ending"—"strategies that express critical dissent from dominant narrative"—that redeem the novel from its tendency towards marriage-or-death resolutions (5). She tends to find "writing beyond the ending" possible mainly starting in the twentieth century (21).

By punctuating the traditional novelistic narrative, Rossetti, Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf do violence to both the space and time of the realist novel. They suspend the realism of the fictional world in which the characters live and events play out. They halt the forward movement of time in the novel's plot, whether for just a few lines or for many pages. By carrying out this violence on the plot, the writers critique the genre of the female bildungsroman and its limited number of possibilities for women. Their interruptions stop, at least momentarily, the trajectory of the female protagonists who are otherwise hurtling toward happy marriage or tragic death. These characters may be trapped in time's current, the works seem to say, but we aren't; we have a vantage point safely outside of time from which to observe and evaluate.

I look upon these interruptions in the female bildungsroman as phenomena similar to Fraiman's "counternarratives": "those dissenting stories that cut across and break up the seemingly smooth course of female development and developmental fiction" (xi)—although, in the case of the interpolated fragments I examine, what are offered are not just other narratives, but often are alternatives to narrative itself. In other words, competing genres embedded within the novel can complicate stories in which female quests are apparently set aside. These moments are somewhat like the counternarratives Fraiman discusses, although, rather than revealing the dark side of female maturation beneath the surface of the happy ending, they reveal the possibilities for female mastery outside the limitations of the novel and its plot. It is true, for example, that Maude's quest

to become a poet is cut short by death, and Dorothea's quest to be a modern St. Theresa is absorbed into marriage, but the countercurrents of genre in each of these stories reveal a quest of their own: that of the female author. *Maude*'s poems and *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs reveal the artistic and scholarly aspirations of Rossetti and Eliot. The later books I discuss, by Schreiner and Woolf, have heroines of a more modernist flavor, with less clearly defined quests, but the ambitious voices of the lyrical or essayistic interludes are clear: respectively, to achieve transformation of the world of the realist novel through poetic language, and to persuade audiences of feminist arguments by incorporating the tools of fiction and other genres. All these strategies "write beyond the ending," to use DuPlessis's expression, in that they destabilize the marriage-or-death resolution of the female bildungsroman, but unlike the strategies DuPlessis focuses on, these genre interruptions are not confined to modernist works but are used by the Victorian authors in this dissertation as well.

One major feature of the novel that these authors are trying to circumvent is time. In describing alternatives to narrative, Rimmon-Kenan mentions "lyrical poetry" and "expository prose," which both adhere to a "spatial or logical principle" rather than a temporal one (2, 15). Lyrical poetry and expository prose are the two main categories of the narrative interruptions I describe in this dissertation. Whether lyrical or expository—or both, in the case of George Eliot, who uses both poetic and essayistic epigraphs—the interruptions I discuss oppose themselves to the linear storytelling of the typical popular novel of the time and follow a spatial principle rather than the temporal principle of narrative. The reflection, meditation, and evaluation they encourage allow for a break from the relentless press of time in the story. The digressions from narrative can be read as especially visible instances of the "struggle against the power of time" that Lukács describes as existing in all novels (122).

In "Spatial Form in the Novel," Joseph Frank writes of moments in which "the time-flow of the narrative is halted: attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships

within the limited time-area" (231). These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative. He gives examples from modernist literature, but I find that this type of spatial form occurs with Eliot's epigraphs and Schreiner's lyric passages as well. Frank describes the reader in Proust "confronted with various snapshots of the characters 'motionless in a moment of vision'" (239). This kind of laying out of spatial relationships happens, for example, in Eliot's epigraphs capturing a character or a relationship in a similar kind of "snapshot."

We can see the drive for spatial form in the following passage from Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*: "Sir Joshua would have been glad to take her portrait; and he would have had an easier task than the historian at least in this, that he would not have had to represent the truth in change—only to give stability to one beautiful moment" (101). In this self-reflexive aside, Eliot's narrator wistfully compares her task as a novelist with the task of a painter, whom she portrays as having the relatively easier job of presenting "one beautiful moment" rather than "truth in change." Each of the works discussed in this dissertation balances the historical and novelistic drive to represent the "truth in change" with the need to give stability to a moment—whether a "beautiful moment" as Eliot writes above, or a spiritual moment in the case of Christina Rossetti, or a feminist utopian moment for Olive Schreiner, or a critical and analytical moment for Virginia Woolf.

When it comes to characterization, the distinction between spatial and temporal form provides two distinct ways of describing and assessing a character. Rather than narrating their actions, the interruptions isolate certain essences of the character outside of changing circumstances. Drawing on the tension McKeon sees between ontology and epistemology in the novel, Garrett Stewart elaborates on this tension as "'she is' versus 'she does,' the inbred against the discoverable, the axiomatic against the circumstantial" (139). Narrative interruptions are one way of expressing these differing ways of showing character in the novel, and indeed, differing ways of understanding human nature in

general: viewing a person as defined by an unchanging, atemporal essence rather than his or her behavior through time.

The tension between ontology ("she is") and epistemology ("she does") is reflected in the contrast between non-narrative interruptions and the main narrative. In *Maude*, a stable essence of character is reflected in the poems, whereas the character in the prose narrative is changeable. Eliot's epigraphs contain essences of the female characters, while the narrative shows how they change. Schreiner's lyrical interludes posit stability in a collective identity, while the individual lives described in the fiction are more changeable. Woolf's essay chapters describe how lives are often determined from birth by larger social forces, rather than the individual choices characters make in the novel chapters.

But it is not only the cross-genre interruptions of fictional narrative that figure this contrast between the stable essence of character and its changeability. There are also other symbols of this contrast. Each of the texts discussed includes at least one example of a non-narrative aesthetic object that mirrors the atemporality of the alternate genre. In *Maude*, it is an embroidery project; in Eliot's and Woolf's texts, it is real or hypothetical paintings; and in Schreiner's *African Farm,* it is a wooden carving. Visual art is thus a way of representing the capturing of time in an essence, though I will argue that the writers show that it is not as effective as the verbal tableaux that the authors create through their use of cross-genre interruptions.

Overview of Chapters

Even with these commonalities, each chapter pursues an argument closely tied to the text itself. My first chapter describes a work of juvenilia, unpublished in Rossetti's lifetime, in which she creates a narrative frame around a series of poems ostensibly written by her fictional heroine. In *Maude* (written 1850; published 1897), the interpolated lyric poems take on the burden of the "I" persona and the present tense

banished from the rest of the narrative. Rossetti's layering of prose and poetry allows her both the intimacy of first-person lyric poetry and the distanced irony of a third-person novelistic narrator. By balancing the two opposed forms, she could avoid both the stereotypes of the self-involved female poet and the romance-driven female novelist. She thus reveals the contradictions involved in simplistic conceptions of "the" author.

In addition to the purposes for interruption shared by all four of the writers I discuss—creating a space for the intimacy of direct address, negotiating the boundary between public and private, showing the discrepancies of inner and outer female lives, and expanding the writer's authority beyond the confines of the novel—Rossetti's concerns are different from the others in that her notions of atemporality and the essential self have a strongly religious dimension.

I argue that, like the other poets Carol Christ discusses, Rossetti was disturbed by the legacy of Romantic poetry that overly identified the writer with the poems. The problem of her work being interpreted autobiographically was only compounded by her gender. Therefore, in *Maude* she couches her poetry in a fictional narrative to avoid being seen as putting her poetry on display—to create one more remove between herself and the "I" of the poems. She also shows, through the lack of continuity between the Maude described in the poems and the Maude described in the prose, that there is no direct autobiographical link that can necessarily be drawn between a poet and her work. Finally, I argue that although the poems in *Maude* are diegetic—in that they are supposedly the writings of a character internal to the plot—they challenge and contradict the authority of the third-person narrator who oversees this plot, and thus exceed their place "within" the narrative.

Like Rossetti, who did not want to be considered a "wounded spirit" just because she was a female poet, George Eliot did not want to be put into the category of the "lady novelist" of the kind she disparages in her 1857 essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists." One of her solutions to this dilemma is her extensive use of epigraphs. Eliot included

chapter epigraphs in her three last novels—*Felix Holt* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871–72), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876)—where they are a constant presence since the chapters are so short.

In these epigraph-laden novels, many of the verse fragments circumvent the third-person narrator and create first-person statements that are not limited by actual or implied quotation marks to being the thoughts of one character (or the narrator, or the author). They thus attempt a kind of universality and abstraction, yet paradoxically seem especially grounded and embodied through their emotional content and their use of first- and second-person pronouns to engage the reader. Especially striking are those that allow for the speaking of unspeakable female experience—in the margins of the text, as it were. These epigraphs that are repositories for female subjectivity are often in stark contrast, in both form and content, to the social selves of the female characters that are unfolded in the chapter text.

Because the epigraphs may be variously attributed to characters, the narrator, and other authorities, their ambiguity allows them to seemingly escape the control of the third-person narrator who otherwise keeps everything neatly under a central gaze. In fact, from some of them, a voice of the epigraphist emerges that provides a distinctly different perspective from that of the narrator.

The epigraphs allow for a break from the narrative time that keeps the story moving forward, and their presence forces the reader to step back from the plot and contemplate larger, more abstract issues. Eliot also uses these breaks from narrative time to reveal the process of composition, normally effaced by the smoothness of fictional narrative. She is especially concerned with the interaction between her work and those of other authors, and frequently uses epigraphs to place her work within the literary tradition.

Next, I examine the ways that Olive Schreiner uses framing and framed narratives in *Story of an African Farm* (1883), some of her short stories, and the posthumously

published *From Man to Man* (1927). In *Story of an African Farm,* I look at the narrative/discourse distinction created in the way realist fiction that frames an extended lyrical interlude and an allegory. Such interruptions destabilize the overarching linear narrative and question to what extent realist fiction can "contain" female experience. In her short stories and allegories, she also frequently uses framing devices, such as the first-person recollection of a dreamer who recounts an allegory. In *From Man to Man,* the third-person narrative frames two long sections in other genres: an essayistic section that is meant to represent a diary entry, and an extremely long letter written by a character.

I argue that Olive Schreiner uses these balanced framing and framed sections—especially allegory—to address the question of subjective emotion versus objective reason. She wrote that she favored allegories because they combine emotion and abstraction: "While it is easy…to express abstract thoughts in argumentative prose, whatever emotions those thoughts awaken I have not felt myself able adequately to express except in…[allegory]" (Heilmann 120). For Schreiner, then, allegory combined personal immediacy with abstract ideas, thus becoming a technique that stood somewhere between argumentation and self-expression. I will argue that Schreiner's adoption of allegory as a feminist technique is complex because it was neither positivistic and identified with the "male" genres nor, in her mind, does it reject abstract argumentation. Allegory allows for what she called the "uncloth[ing] of the human soul"—a way to escape the outward forms of individual life and speak in universally applicable truths (*Dreams* 108–109).

Schreiner was interested in collective identity, which is reflected, for example, in her use of the first-person plural in the "Times and Seasons" section of *Story of an African Farm*. A "lyric we" has different implications from the lyric I of, for instance, Rossetti's interpolated sonnets. But even when she does not explicitly use the first-person plural, Schreiner takes advantage of the indeterminacy of her interpolated voices to postulate a collective consciousness for marginalized groups.

If George Eliot had greatly expanded her epigraphs, her books might have taken on a shape something like *The Pargiters* (1932–33), Virginia Woolf's attempt at a "novel-essay," which she never completed, and parts of which eventually were folded into the novel *The Years*. In *The Pargiters*, she alternates chapters from a novel with essays explaining and commenting on the novel. In her essayistic voice, Woolf talks about what the novelistic voice leaves unspoken and argues that the way to interpret either fiction or real life is not to passively allow the details to wash over one, but to actively forge an interpretation based on abstract concepts.

Woolf seeks to engage the reader's feelings with the story—and with the plight of the female author, whose quandaries are presented in first-person essays—and then channel them away from attachment to one character or another and towards attachment to the larger historical narrative that underlies the characters' individual lives. This larger narrative would not then be seen as dry, disconnected facts, but as intimately connected to everyday life.

Like her predecessors in this dissertation, Woolf uses genre experimentation to overturn stereotypes of the woman writer as overly emotional and unable to generalize. She attempts to speak in the voice of a novelist and an essayist alternately, doubling her authority by increasing the types of analysis she brings to bear on the same topic. Woolf uses the essay portions of the book to assert that the private history of the Pargiter family is relevant to public matters such as the struggle for women's rights. She trains her readers to be alert to the relationships between private and public life by analyzing the fictional events for their more general relevance, and thus—like Rossetti, Eliot, and Schreiner—she claims a space for a kind of novel that will give rise to a new kind of subjectivity and create a new link between feeling and thought as well as private and public.

***

Each of the female authors in this dissertation finds innovative ways of avoiding being considered merely a “lady novelist” while simultaneously using the great power of the novel to draw readers in. The answer, for them, was not exclusively first-person discourse that eschews narrative fiction, nor was it third-person narrative that maintains an ideal of transparency to avoid disrupting the reader’s enthrallment with the story, but a combination of approaches within the same work. Alison Case describes “feminine narration” in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels as “characterized by the restriction of the female narrator to the role of narrative *witness*; that is, by her exclusion from the active shaping of narrative form and meaning” (4). In contrast to this tendency towards feminine narration, Case finds female autodiegetic narrators who are involved in the activities of “plotting” and “preaching” to be less passive than those who merely witness (11). As I will show, another way for authors to retain an active role in the shaping of meaning of their novels is to interrupt their own narrators with poetry, epigraphs, essays, and other fragments.

CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S *MAUDE*: FEMININITY IN PROSE AND VERSE

> They shut me up in Prose–
> As when a little Girl
> They put me in the Closet–
> Because they liked me "still"–
>
> Emily Dickinson, Poem 613

When Christina Rossetti's first book of poems was privately printed by her grandfather in 1847 and sent to relatives, including a cousin in Devon, it prompted a response in verse from the cousin's elderly husband that began, "What! can a maid so young / Feel the fond force of love?" The admirer, a Rev. Mr. Bray, then confesses his own "heart, so old / If passion prompt its will / Has never yet been cold" (Marsh 75). The whole Rossetti clan was disgusted by this tribute, Christina reporting her "illimitable" contempt, her sister Maria declaring the poem "below the dignity of a man and a clergyman," and her brother William recalling that the lines were in a "philandering semi-amatory vein" (Harrison 8, 9n). Less than two years later, Christina may have been thinking of this episode when she wrote to her brother giving him permission to copy out some of her poems to give a friend:

> To please you, Mamma not objecting, Mr Woolner is welcome to any of my things which you may have energy to copy. Only <I must beg that you will not fix upon any which the most imaginative person could construe into love personals> you will feel how <more than ever> intolerable it would <now> be to have my verses regarded as outpourings of a wounded spirit; and that something like this has been the case I have too good reason to know. (Harrison 16; angle brackets indicate strikethroughs by Christina Rossetti or later by William Rossetti)

The sin of Mr. Bray had indeed been to regard her verses as "outpourings of a wounded spirit," to assume they afforded him knowledge of her private self, and to respond with revelations of his own. Christina Rossetti was not the only Victorian woman writer to

worry about seeming to allow her private life to reach the public gaze. Violating the line between private and public has a "visceral force" even now, according to Michael Warner, but in the nineteenth century restrictions on women were especially severe: he reports the "disgust and abhorrence" of nineteenth-century observers of a woman having the audacity to speak in public (22–23). Robyn Warhol reports how a female writer had been "alarmed" to see her work in print: it was "as if I had been detected in man's apparel" (164). To court public attention and fame was, for a Victorian woman, to have the unseemly fault of display. Often women wrote of their ambivalence toward gaining public attention. Felicia Hemans, one of Rossetti's poetic influences, wrote of rejecting the "laurel leaves" of fame in favor of a more feminine reward: "AWAY! to me—a woman—bring / Sweet waters from affection's spring" (Marsh 71). Writing about (and thus bringing into the public realm) a desire *not* to be in the public gaze, Hemans, like other women writers, negotiated a difficult line between pursuing her calling and seeming to engage in display.

At a time when women were so identified with the private sphere, even the private printing and distribution of a woman's writing could cause misunderstanding and anxiety, as it did for Christina Rossetti's first attempt at a relatively wider readership than manuscript-copying allowed her. There are ways to mitigate the sense of transgression of appearing in public, however: Warner notes that "being in public is a privilege that requires filtering or repressing something that is seen as private" (23). The actual circumstances of one's life could be filtered or repressed by the poet speaking as someone else, and indeed, Isobel Armstrong writes that "it was the women poets who 'invented' the dramatic monologue" (326). A role different from that of the writer could allow her to express herself without seeming to expose her private life. Rossetti may have thought that the poems in her book provided filtering enough, as they were often dramatic monologues in the voice of a traveler, mermaid, star in the night sky, or character from literature. But in the contretemps with her cousin's husband, Rossetti

found, to her dismay, her poems' filtering devices, their formal qualities, and their quality as literature were unnoticed, and the "I" of the poems identified squarely with herself.

Given this incident, it is interesting that the next major project Christina Rossetti embarked on was the novella *Maude: Prose and Verse* (written 1850; published 1897). *Maude* is the story of a young poet who gains local fame for her verses but struggles with what she sees as an un-Christian tendency toward display. The heroine never has to make a final choice between her religious scruples and her drive for poetic expression, however, as she is mortally wounded in a freak carriage accident. While *Maude* is often described as a straightforwardly autobiographical work, I argue that instead it reveals her highly conflicted feelings toward being perceived as an autobiographical writer. I also argue that it is centrally concerned with the negotiation of the boundary between private and public for the female writer. The key to this reading is the fact that the prose of the novella is presented in contrast to a number of interpolated poems.

Critical Reaction to *Maude*

It is typical for critics to see the parallels between Maude and Christina and call the book "one of her most autobiographical compositions," as does the editor of the 1976 edition, R.W. Crump (7). Undoubtedly, there are parallels between Rossetti and her character Maude, and critics rarely fail to point this out. The critical reception of *Maude* began with Christina Rossetti's brother William, who found and published the volume after his sister's death. In his Prefatory Note (included in the Crump edition), he presents the story as a thinly veiled autobiography: "It appears to me that my sister's main object in delineating Maude was to exhibit what she regarded as defects in her own character" (79). This kind of autobiographical criticism was standard for the time; women writers, especially, were thought to write from "the heart," from their own experience and emotions, rather than from "the head," from reason or imagination (Reynolds xxix). This notion went hand in hand with the Romantic expressive theory of poetry: that its main

purpose is to transcribe the feelings of the writer, feelings that pre-exist language (Armstrong 339).

Christina Rossetti's first biographer, Mackenzie Bell, also claimed she was an artist by nature, not by effort: "Her impulse to write was spontaneous, it came from the deeps of her own soul" (160). Bell sees her art as chiefly a transcription of her selfhood onto the page rather than the result of imaginative labor: "Much of her finest work both in verse and prose is a veiled expression of her own individuality" (4). As evidence, Bell quotes William's report that his sister's "hand obeyed the dictation" of her feelings (161). Along with many of their contemporaries, Bell and William Rossetti would subscribe to the "outpourings of a wounded spirit" view of Rossetti's poetry, even though William Rossetti knew she had explicitly objected to such an interpretation.

This kind of reading of Rossetti's work persisted in later criticism. In the 1976 edition, Crump takes as autobiographical a view of the text as did William Rossetti. She calls the novella worthy of study because "it sheds considerable light on the inner suffering and intensity of her outwardly uneventful life" (7). Crump sees in *Maude* "not only Christina Rossetti's religious devotion, but also her appearance, manner, psychological outlook, and social and literary concerns" (9). This adherence to the same general approach to the book that it received in 1897 is not surprising when we realize that, as Joy Fehr writes, "there is a persistent tendency to read Rossetti autobiographically and symptomatically no matter what theoretical approach may be favored at the time." Indeed, Fehr shows how again and again, scholars assume that "the speaking voice of the poetry and Rossetti are one and the same" (25). Scholars never tire of probing Rossetti's work for the "secret" of her inner life.

When critics have focused on thematic and plot elements of *Maude*, the ending is often discussed. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the ending is a "moral": "that the Maude in Christina Rossetti—the ambitious, competitive, self-absorbed, and self-assertive poet…must die" (Smulders 31). The book might be seen, then, as a self-corrective, a way

for Rossetti to exorcise her poetic ambition in her quest to become a proper Victorian lady. Leighton summarizes the thrust of this type of argument: “Death here seems to offer a moral solution to the temptations of vanity to which Maude has fallen prey. To be saved from her own ambition, the girl must die.” (“When I Am Dead” 375). Unlike Gilbert and Gubar, Leighton finds some redemption in this bleak ending by claiming that the trope of the grave in Rossetti’s work gives the poet “a place from which to speak” that has authority over the reader, “an eerie afterlife of the imagination, untroubled by weeping or remembering” (*Victorian Women Poets* 143). The ending thus makes Maude into one of the capricious, taunting posthumous women who inhabit many of Rossetti’s poems.

Several more recent critics have looked at the historical context of *Maude*. Mary Arseneau describes the influence on Rossetti of Tractarianism, a religious movement that recommended “a reserved and religiously dedicated art” (68). Rather than seeing Maude’s fate as the death of the female poet’s (i.e., Rossetti’s) artistic ambitions, Arseneau reads her death as the excision of the inauthentically sentimental aspect of poetry, leaving viable a poetry of “restraint and even indirection” (69). Diane D’Amico also examines the religious context of *Maude*, especially Rossetti’s eschatological beliefs. In D’Amico’s view, a central metaphor of *Maude* is the “Spring” of resurrection, and Rossetti speaks “as preacher and prophet of the vanity of this world and the need to prepare for the next by waiting and watching for the Second Coming” (39–41). Her religious themes give Rossetti the authority to speak, even though she is a woman, and advise the reader on Christian behavior.

“Prose and Verse”

As useful as all these approaches are, however, all of these analyses would be equally valid if *Maude* contained no poetry and was simply a prose narrative about a girl who wanted to be a poet. While the content of *Maude*’s story (the character’s struggles and her early death) has been interpreted by critics as commenting on religion, ambition,

female experience, and the Victorian era, its formal structure—a prose narrative including throughout its length fourteen complete poems—is barely mentioned.

This chapter will explore the implications of the prose/verse mixture in *Maude*—which, after all, Rossetti herself emphasizes with the subtitle *Prose and Verse*. Rossetti's genre mixing in *Maude* shares many qualities with the works by Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf discussed in subsequent chapters. As in these other works, the interpolated genre in *Maude* presents an alternative to the novelistic narrative in terms of person (first-person rather than third) and tense (present rather than past), which would place it in the category of Genette's category of "discourse" (which he contrasts with "narrative"). Following Genette, such a discourse versus narrative split would reflect a split between subjectivity and objectivity (*Figures* 138–40). *Maude* shares with the works by Eliot, Schreiner, and Woolf a use of discourse to delve into an interior world of subjective feelings and perceptions, a world that Lukács would say is in battle "against the prosaic vulgarity of outward life" (104). Like the works discussed in my other chapters, the interpolated genre in *Maude* represents a switch into spatial form. In the case of Rossetti, her favored alternative to novelistic time is a postapocalyptic atemporality based on her religious beliefs.

In Maude, the use of the lyric "I" in the poems creates a sense of intimacy and confession absent from the prose sections narrated by a third-person ironic narrator. The collision of poetry and prose in *Maude* reflects a discrepancy between the female protagonist's inner life and her outer appearance to the world. Thus the form of *Maude* reflects the apparent incompatibility of subjective emotion and objective narration, highlighting the inadequacy of third-person prose narration and fictional realism to tell Maude's full story. The use of prose and verse in *Maude* splits the character of Maude between prose and verse, destabilizing the reader's understanding of the "female character," and multiplies the writer's authority, expanding stereotyped notions of the "female author."

The contrast between prose and verse reflects a number of other contrasts that are specific to Rossetti and specific to this work. An analysis of her use of genre hybridity provides insights into the notion of "display" with which Rossetti and other Victorian women writers struggled; the related problem of autobiographical criticism, according to which critics both contemporary and future would judge Rossetti; and the reading that interprets *Maude* as a work in which Rossetti attempts to kill off the poet in herself.

I will compare Rossetti's use of narrative interruption with a technique popular in fiction at the time and with a similarly popular type of poetry: free indirect discourse and the dramatic monologue. Rossetti's inclusion of both prose and verse is one way of trying to solve the problem of presenting both the inner life and the social person in literature. Free indirect discourse, with its dipping into the consciousness of a character while maintaining the third person voice, may be seen as attempting to solve the same problem; however, the implications of Rossetti's method are far different from those of users of free indirect discourse: namely, her conclusion in both the form and content of *Maude* is that the inner life and the social person cannot be easily reconciled. The other technique that I will compare to Rossetti's interpolated prose and verse is the dramatic monologue. Dramatic monologue, too, tries to balance identification with a character's subjective experience with the more distanced judgment associated with taking an outside perspective on a character (Morgan 919).

Not all genre mixing necessarily involves the same conclusions that Rossetti comes to, however; to show this, I will end by comparing *Maude* to three other similar experiments in genre hybridity: Dante's *La Vita Nuova* (1293–94), William Morris's *The House of the Wolfings* (1889), and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856). Most similar to *Maude* is Dante's work in its structure of prose introducing poems, although *Maude* is more extreme in its separation of the poet and the narrator. *The House of the Wolfings* has a structure involving pockets of verse appearing amidst a prose narrative, but rather than revealing the alienation of the individual, Morris's interpolated

poems highlight communal values. *Aurora Leigh*, like *Maude*, attempts to combine the form of a novel with poetic expression, but while Rossetti separates novel and verse, Barrett Browning merges them to create a novel *in* verse—one whose more fully hybrid nature argues that female life, too, can become fully integrated.

In *Maude,* the story of a teenage would-be poet, Rossetti includes full transcriptions of Maude's poems between fictional scenes depicting her life. The practice of including poetry in novels is not Rossetti's invention; among other antecedents, it harkens back to Gothic novelists such as Ann Radcliffe, who included poems written by characters to show the depth of their Romantic yearnings or their poetic sensibility.[1] What makes *Maude* unusual is just how much space is given, proportionally, to the poems in the text: about one-fourth of the novella consists of Maude's verse.

Writing on classical and medieval *prosimetra*, the mixed form of verse with prose, Peter Dronke describes the form as one in which "verse is more than quotation or parody, incidental adornment or allusion…verse and prose have become consubstantial" (2). This is certainly the case in *Maude*, in which the verse is far more than ornamental or incidental. Instead of simply writing a novella, Rossetti chose to create something that could just as easily be called an annotated book of poems. By subtitling her manuscript *Prose and Verse*, she draws attention to how important the two genres are to her conception of the work.[2]

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[1] For example, in the first ten chapters of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the main character, Emily, composes or recites three poems on the beauties of nature, in addition to discovering a love sonnet penciled on the wainscoting of a fishing-house (Radcliffe 8, 12, 39, 49). All the poems are reproduced in their entirety.

[2] The subtitle also recalls other works that announce that they contain "prose and verse": works such as Thomas Hood's *Whims and Oddities, in Prose and Verse* (1854), Leigh Hunt's *A Book for a Corner, or, Selections in Prose and Verse from Authors the Best Suited to That Mode of Enjoyment* (1851), and Elizabeth Smith's *Fragments, in Prose and Verse* (1811). Titles like these advertise the fragmentary, whimsical, or miscellaneous aspect of their contents. While more coherent than these works, which contain separate pieces not unified under a single plotline, *Maude*, with its subtitle, hints that it potentially could be read in a similar non-linear fashion to these other books.

The fact that the book is one-quarter poetry creates a dual way of looking at the character of Maude. The poetry has certain qualities that are brought into contrast with the narrative frame of *Maude*. Warner describes how lyric poetry is a special kind of address to the public in that it pretends there is no address, no public: “lyric poems are in fact produced by particular persons and addressed to others, and they circulate in public media (even if only in manuscript). But to read them as lyric, we ignore those facts” (80). This misrecognition gives rise to lyric’s “deep subjectivity” and its sense of “absolute privacy” (80–81). T. J. Clark describes this internal focus by describing lyric as “the illusion in an artwork of a singular voice or viewpoint, uninterrupted, absolute, laying claim to a world of its own” (Jackson 236). Morgan describes lyric poetry in terms of its seeming directness as opposed to the more mediated form of narrative: “In lyric, the focus is entirely on the poet, who speaks in his or her own voice. Narrative occupies an intermediate position, because the characters speak, but only through the poet who temporarily adopts their voices” (917). We will see how Rossetti disrupts the reader’s attempt to achieve intersubjectivity with a lyric “I” by setting the poetry into a narrative that provides specific details concerning how the poems are created and to whom they are addressed—and that makes pointed judgments of the pretentions of the lyric “I.”

Lyric poetry has another striking quality in addition to its privacy, singularity, and subjectivity, one having to do with its relationship to time. In a study of Emily Dickinson’s poetry, Sharon Cameron draws some inductive conclusions about lyric poetry as a genre. While narrative is diachronic, lyric poetry is synchronic: its voice rises “momentarily from the enthusiasms of temporal advance” (23). Narrative is carried forward by the momentum of time, but the lyric poem is static: “what does happen is arrested, framed, and taken out of the flux of history” (71). Cameron argues that Dickinson confronts the transience of life through her poems, whose “occasions of presence gain the self the only immortality it will ever know, for in a very real sense they lie outside of time and do not ‘count’ in (are not counted by) it” (89). Dickinson sought in

her poetry "that temporal completion which will fuse all separations into the healing of a unified whole" (1). With their invocations of death and the afterlife, Rossetti's poems may also be seen as attempting to escape the vicissitudes of time and occupy a space of "temporal completion," in direct competition with the secular world of the prose. Other writers on lyric poetry have also commented on how its temporality is at odds with that of narrative. For example, Jonathan Culler writes: "If narrative is about what happens next, lyric is about what happens now—in the reader's engagement with each line" (202). Rossetti brings together the time-bound lives of her fictional characters with the hoped-for "temporal completion" that her poems represent.

Maude's Journey: The Transfiguration of the Poet

The opening sentence of *Maude* establishes both the book's setting and one of its central problems, withheld communication:

> "A penny for your thoughts," said Mrs Foster one bright July morning as she entered the sitting room with a bunch of roses in her hand, and an open letter: "A penny for your thoughts," said she addressing her daughter, who, surrounded by a chaos of stationery, was slipping out of sight some scrawled paper. (29)

By choosing the cliché of a penny for one's thoughts, Mrs. Foster makes herself akin to the reader/consumer who demands the "product" of the author's interior self in exchange for money. She holds an "open letter" as if to model the behavior she desires on the part of Maude: full self-disclosure. As she will do throughout the book, however, fifteen-year-old Maude resists this demand. Her own stationery is in "chaos" (rather than serving its communicative function), she hides what she is writing, and she doesn't speak, forcing her mother to repeat herself. She only converses with Mrs. Foster once she has "locked her writing-book" (29). Maude's interiority is opaque to her mother, both because she hides whatever thoughts she has written down and because she is verbally evasive. When asked if she feels well, Maude answers, contradicting herself several times, "Oh yes; there is not much the matter, only I am tired and have a headache. Indeed

there is nothing at all the matter; besides, [a visit to] the country may work wonders" (29). Mrs. Foster gives up, realizing her queries are "vain questions, put to one who without telling lies was determined not to tell the truth" (29). After her mother leaves the room, Maude returns to her writing-book:

> This choice collection she now proceeded to enrich with the following sonnet:—
>
> Yes, I too could face death and never shrink:
> But it is harder to bear hated life;
> To strive with hands and knees weary of strife;
> To drag the heavy chain whose every link
> Galls to the bone; to stand upon the brink
> Of the deep grave, nor drowse, though it be rife
> With sleep; to hold with heavy hand the knife
> Nor strike home: this is courage as I think.
> Surely to suffer is more than to do:
> To do is quickly done; to suffer is
> Longer and fuller of heart-sicknesses:
> Each day's experience testifies of this:
> Good deeds are many, but good lives are few;
> Thousands taste the full cup; who drains the lees?—
>
> having done which she yawned, leaned back in her chair, and wondered how she should fill up the time till dinner. (30)

In this first instance of verse interrupting prose in *Maude*, we see the qualities of lyric described by Warner and Cameron brought into tension with the prose narrative. From the prose with its free-form letters and conversations and "chaos of stationery" comes the rigid structure of a sonnet. The sonnet presents the point of view of an "I" to whose private thoughts it appears to allow full and immediate access. An ironic third-person narrator gives way to an intense, sincere first-person voice that reveals a state of mind that had previously been inaccessible to both Maude's mother and, seemingly, the narrator (and thus the reader). It is as if verse is the magic key to unlock Maude's secret thoughts, a key lacking in her conversation with her mother. The sonnet describes a state of mind presented as without beginning or end: the speaker's world-weariness is the central topic, rather than any motivation or result. There are no specifics other than metaphors: the "knife," the "cup," and the "chain" are meant to evoke a set of emotions

rather than a particular person, place, or activity. No action is proposed other than to continue living in a hell-like state of existence.

Taken in the context of the prose, however, the verse loses some of its intensity. From the world of bright July mornings, roses, and solicitous mothers emerges—rather implausibly—a world of knives, chains, graves, and nameless thousands. The irony that introduces the poem (describing the "choice collection" Maude "proceeded to enrich") and the humor following it—yawning and waiting for dinner, Maude hardly seems to be dragging the heavy chain!—distances the reader from a feeling of identification with the lyric voice.

When the writer is suddenly revealed as an embodied figure, and one who is quite different from the speaker implied by the poem, not only is a sense of intersubjective intimacy with the poem's speaker disrupted, but attempts to read the poem autobiographically are frustrated. If a poem full of almost parodically masculine images like "to hold with steady hand the knife" has such feminine and domestic origins, then how far can a poem ever be trusted to be autobiographically accurate? Rossetti shows that the poet even inhabits a different temporal order than her poems. She is an embodied person who does not live in the eternal present of her poems; therefore, even if she was feeling tortured a moment ago, she can easily move to feeling merely hungry.

Despite the distance we are made to feel from the lyric speaker, whom the narrator clearly finds somewhat melodramatic at this point in the story, the poem sets up an alternate reality that has its own validity: it hints at the unruly emotions that can underlie a calm bourgeois exterior. The self may be a bored teenager or an anguished poet, or it may be both at once; it is layered and fluctuating (like Maude's writing book that is "neither Common-Place Book, Album, Scrap-Book nor Diary; it was a compound of all these" (30)). One thing is clear, however: the poetic creation is not a simple or easy transcription of the poet's feelings or her life.

Whether we are to understand Maude as being truly distressed under a veneer of social superficiality, or whether we are to understand her as being a playful poet who is merely writing about ennui as an exercise, there is a disconnect between her interior, imaginative life and the appearance she presents to the world. Far from being "outpourings of a wounded spirit," Rossetti seems to argue, the poem is a tightly crafted text. Poetry requires imaginative labor: Maude is not drawing imagery of chains and knives from her limited, drawing-room-heavy life experiences. Thus Rossetti uses contextual narrative to emphasize that the poetry is a consciously created artifact. In addition to the differences in imagery and theme, the sonnet form stands out against the surrounding prose, emphasizing how crafted the language of the poem is in terms of metrics and rhyme.

After setting up the reader to feel privileged information is about to be revealed in this sonnet (the locked writing book is for the moment open to *us*), the book fails to definitively say who Maude is: a person suffering from suicidal torments, or merely from boredom? We are left with a radical uncertainty as to which act, the writing of the sonnet or the thinking about dinner, reflects the "real" person. Our narrator soon comments on this disconnect:

> Touching these same verses, it was the amazement of every one what could made her poetry so broken-hearted, as was mostly the case. Some pronounced that she wrote very foolishly about things she could not possibly understand; some wondered if she really had any secret source of uneasiness; while some simply set her down as affected. Perhaps there was a degree of truth in all these opinions. (31)

The narrator adds, "But I have said enough: the following pages will enable my readers to form their own estimate of Maude's character" (31). And yet, such an estimate never fully coheres from the information provided. As Leighton observes, *Maude* is in its own way as "emotionally secretive as any of the poet's best verse" ("When I Am Dead" 374). The narrator of *Maude* would be classified in Dorrit Cohn's taxonomy of narrative styles as avoiding psycho-narration: in books of this sort, "characters' inner selves [are]

revealed only indirectly through spoken language and telling gesture." Cohn finds this style typical of writers like Dickens and Thackeray and other practitioners of the "novel of manners" from roughly the same time period in which *Maude* was written (*Transparent Minds* 21). It would have been a common, but not the only, choice for a narrator: Rossetti could have chosen to emulate someone like Jane Austen, who, Cohn argues, more frequently entered into the minds of her characters (113). It is not only Maude who is evasive with her mother: the narrator of *Maude* displays similar evasive strategies with the reader. A narrator that avoids psycho-narration does not enter much into the thoughts and feelings of the characters, and the focus is more on the characters' interactions with others to reveal character (20). Yet, Maude's interactions with others are often of a very conventional sort, and thus her character is not fully readable from these, either. Hence Rossetti allows Maude to remain somewhat out of focus from beginning to end.

In the book's next scene, Maude travels from her home in London to the country to visit her cousins Mary and Agnes. As they are preparing for Mary's birthday party, Agnes puts on Maude's head a wreath that includes a sprig of bay (33). Maude responds that she has not earned the bay laurel, but "still she did not remove it," which is far from Hemans's rejection of the laurel in favor of "sweet water from affection's spring" (33). The guests arrive, including Magdalen Ellis, who, in a verb that foreshadows her future career as a nun, is "habited as usual in quiet colours" (34).

If wearing the bay wreath were not enough evidence of her poetic pride, Maude steers the party guests into a rhyming game that she knows she will win. The scene of the party game again makes the point that poetry does not necessarily capture an essential self. Poetry in this game is a performance. Like the previous poem, after which Maude thinks of dinner, the poem she creates for the *bouts-rimés* game is not a direct outpouring of the soul. The end rhymes the players must use (white, black, hack, right, etc.) are given

by the game's judge, Mary, in advance. Far from being an artless eruption, poetry is a craft; therefore, what can seem like confession may actually be a kind of game.

The three players—Agnes, Maude, and Magdalen—write their sonnets and then share them. Agnes's sonnet declares she would do almost anything "rather than writing":

> Would that I were a turnip white,
> Or raven black,
> Or miserable hack
> Dragging a cab from left to right... (36)

Upon hearing the sonnet, Maude comments to Agnes, "Might I venture to hint that my sympathy with your sorrows would have been greater, had they been expressed in metre?" (36) Her comment emphasizes that feeling is a result of poetic expression; it does not precede it, a view that turns upside-down the expressive theory of poetry. In her poem, Magdalen writes about "good fairies dressed in white / Glancing like moon-beams through the shadows black" and performing altruistic deeds (36). Maude's sonnet is less tranquil, facetiously advocating murder of the inappropriately dressed:

> ...If all the world were water fit to drown
> There are some whom you would not teach to swim,
> Rather enjoying if you saw them sink;
> Certain old ladies dressed in girlish pink,
> With roses and geraniums on their gown:—
> Go to the Bason, poke them o'er the rim. (37)

This sonnet imagines the writer as a female flâneur—with the Bason "the one in St. James Park," Maude explains (37)—examining her fellow Londoners in the park and passing judgment on their sartorial choices. But even in Maude's most outwardly-focused, lightest poem, she cannot avoid the theme of death.

After the party, the cousins discuss their guests. Mary faults one for a "disagreeable expression," but Agnes reproves her, citing the girl's good deeds toward the poor (39). The theme of appearance versus reality seems to stay with Maude, who later says to her cousins:

> "How I envy you;" she continued in a low voice as if speaking rather to herself than to her hearers: "you who live in the country, and are exactly what you appear, and never wish for what

> you do not possess. I am sick of display and poetry and acting." (41)

By equating poetry with display and acting, Maude implies that poetry is not sincere, which reinforces the idea that it is a game or a performance. The narrator indicates that these are Maude's real feelings by describing her as speaking "as if…to herself"; this is as close as the narrator will come to providing us with knowledge of Maude's internal thoughts.

When Agnes tells Maude that a party guest, Miss Savage, has asked for one of Maude's poems for her album, we learn again that poetry is shaped by its readership and its situation of creation, not just by its creator. Maude wants to offer the "Lynch-law" poem she wrote for the *bouts-rimés*, but because it might offend Miss Savage, she comes up with a poem that is sweetly melancholy: "She sat and sang alway" (41). This scene reveals the external forces that can determine what kind of poetry a poet offers to the public. If melancholy is in demand, that is what the poet will supply. Miss Savage is not the public, paying for the poem in published form, but instead an individual receiving a handwritten copy as a gift, but the interaction is a microcosm of the market for poetic work that may influence a writer. The facts that Warner claims we must ignore when reading lyric poetry—that they are "produced by particular persons and addressed to others" (80)—Rossetti brings to the fore in this scene.

Part Two of *Maude* begins more than a year later, when Agnes and Mary visit Maude in London. Over tea, they discuss their friend Magdalen's recent decision to join a Sisterhood of Mercy, an Anglican religious community. Agnes conveys Magdalen's desire for an autograph copy of one of Maude's poems, and Maude searches for something appropriate. The four-stanza poem, "Sweet sweet sound," that she sends Magdalen is a love letter to death, claiming "Death is better far than birth" and urging "Let us wait the end in peace" (45). Its final stanza concludes:

> ...Let us pray while yet the Lord will hear us,
> For the time is almost o'er;
> Yea, the end of all is very near us;

> Yea, the Judge is at the door.
> Let us pray now while we may;
> It will be too late to pray
> When the quick and dead shall all
> Rise at the last trumpet call. (46)

Like "Yes, I too," this poem finds the speaker anticipating death. Cameron argues that Dickinson sought the eternal by writing poems. Rossetti also figures the eternal in the non-time of lyric poetry. Life is presented as a struggle for all living creatures, and by the end of this poem, the speaker imagines a world after history. "Yes, I too," though more secular, likewise betrays a preference for that which is eternal. "Hated life" in part seems hated because of all the verbs—"to strive," "to drag"—that convey ongoing processes that the speaker wishes would come to an end.

The themes of the two poems may be similar, but the treatment of them by the narrator has undergone a change. The second, more religious poem is treated without irony and without the effort to distance the reader from the lyric speaker. It is only introduced with "They [the verses] were as follows" (44). After the poem there is a section break, and the narrative resumes the following Thursday. Thus the poem is allowed to stand on its own and speak with more authority than "Yes, I too." This is the beginning of a trend that will last until the end of the book. By Part Three, the poems will take up more space than the prose.

This does not mean the critique of the expressive theory has been dropped. In the next scene, Maude must pay a call to some dreary family friends. They praise her poetic efforts and imagine the circumstances of their creation:

> In the first place, did she continue to write? Yes. A flood of exstatic compliments followed this admission: she was so young, so much admired, and, poor thing, looked so delicate. It was quite affecting to think of her lying awake at night meditating those sweet verses—("I sleep like a top," Maude put in drily,)—which so delighted her friends, and would so charm the public, if only Miss Foster could be induced to publish. (48–49)

Though apparently ignored, Maude's interjection "I sleep like a top" is an attempt to deflate the romantic image of the poet that her friends have in mind.

Unlike the earlier scene in which she suggested the party game, at this reunion she does not want to put her poetry on display and will not recite for the party. Later, her cousin Agnes finds her in a spiritual crisis as she sits at her writing desk. Over her shoulder, Agnes reads two sonnets on the theme of Vanity. The first concerns "vanity" in the sense of futility: "Until the ancient race of time be run / The old thorns shall grow out of the old stem, / And morning shall be cold and twilight grey." (51). The second sonnet addresses "vanity" in the sense of pride. The writer accuses herself: "thy love / Soars not to heaven, but grovelleth below" (51). With these sonnets, Maude connects her usual laments about life and time to a harsh self-criticism. Maude tells Agnes that she feels like a "hypocrite," and Agnes argues, "don't you see that every line of these sonnets attests to your sincerity?" (69). Maude does not respond, for good reason. Agnes is yet another member of a poet's readership who takes the poems as an accurate map to the poet's soul, an idea that the book up till now has been questioning in a variety of ways.

Maude shocks Agnes by announcing that she will not take communion at church the next day, which is an even more serious gesture because the next day happens to be Christmas. She argues that her vanity makes her unworthy of communion: "No one will say that I cannot avoid putting myself forward and displaying my verses" (53). Here the narrator steps back from the character of Maude and comments: "Deep-rooted indeed was that vanity which made Maude take pleasure, on such an occasion, in proving the force of arguments against herself" (53). In other words, Maude *is* vain, but not in the way that she thinks. This narrative interjection shows that not only is the poet not necessarily sharing the truth of the self in her poems, but she may not even be *aware* of the truth—another problem that hinders the reading of poems as transparent statements of the author's life.

Maude assures her cousin, "I do not mean never to Communicate again" (53). Maude's tendency to withhold communication has now extended to religious "Communication." In deferring communion, Maude is trying to take advantage of one

aspect of life (and narrative) that is a benefit of its residence in time: the opportunity to be one thing at one moment, and another at another. Contrasting narrative to lyric poetry, Cameron writes: "Stories both enact chronology and insist that it is chronology that has the power to save us. Time will sanction reversals, permit insights, provide space for action, or so we are assured" (57). Maude wants to be a sinner first, and then repentant. But the freedom that Cameron argues can be found in narrative is of limited value in a book so obsessed with death and final judgments. Agnes impresses upon Maude the way that death ends opportunities for deferral: "You cannot mean that for the present you will indulge vanity and display; that you will court admiration and applause; that you will take your fill of pleasure until sickness, or it may be death, strips you of temptation and sin together" (53). It is not just Maude's poems that dwell in an eternal state out of time; the characters are starting to place eternal matters above temporal ones. This is yet another sign of the shift in *Maude* toward the poems' authority over the prose.

Maude goes to bed, but through habit cannot sleep before praying. The narrator speculates, "Strange prayers they *must have been*, offered with a divided heart and a reproachful conscience" (54, italics mine). Here the narrator again protects Maude's privacy by not delving too far into her thoughts. The narrator's ethical stance seems to be that privacy must be preserved, whether the private matters are written in a locked writing book or whispered to God.

Part Three begins, not with the resolution of the crisis, but with a letter from the country six months later: Agnes asks Maude to come visit for Mary's wedding. She tells her not only of Mary's preparation to be a bride but of their friend Magdalen's taking of final vows at the Sisterhood. Agnes relates that Magdalen told her that Maude's name "will be known at some future period," but that she "could fancy you very different as pale Sister Maude" (58). Maude considers this, then sets off on the visit but is returned home unconscious after her carriage is overturned. Dying, her poetic output becomes

prodigious, and she sends Agnes a long poem, "Three Nuns," a set of three dramatic monologues by women who have entered a convent.

She writes to Agnes, "The first Nun no one can suspect of being myself, partly because my hair is far from yellow and I do not wear curls, partly because I never did anything half so good as profess" (60). By hinting the first nun has other similarities to herself, Maude is implying that there is some autobiographical content in the poem. But this connection is limited: Agnes is to understand that the "I" voice cannot be identical to Maude's because of differences in their appearances and characters. The poem presents an image of an ideal self rather than an introspective look at one's own consciousness. This is yet another indication to the reader of lyric poetry not to read the narrator as a simple stand-in for the poet.

For each of the nuns in the poem, the convent is a temporary substitute for the peace that death brings. They reject the world in favor of eternity:

> ...I will not look upon a rose
> Though it is fair to see:
> The flowers planted in Paradise
> Are budding now for me..... (67)

Agnes comes and visits her ailing cousin, and Maude tells her she has taken Communion again after running into her pastor in the street:

> "He enquired immediately whether I had been staying in the country? Of course I answered, No….Then gradually the whole story came out. I shall never forget the shame of my admissions; each word seemed forced from me, yet at last all was told. I will not repeat all we said then, and on a subsequent occasion when he saw me at Church: the end was that I partook of Holy Communion on Easter Sunday." (70)

By having Maude recount this scene (with her usual strong sense of privacy) rather than narrating it as it happens, Rossetti avoids having to "repeat all we said then," allowing Maude to keep her secrets. The question of her "secret source of uneasiness" can thus remain unanswered.

Maude tells Agnes her return to church did not have lasting effects: “I felt as if I never could do wrong again, and yet—”, and she presents Agnes with a new poem demonstrating her impatience with life’s temporality and the impossibility of making perfection last, using the rose metaphor again.

> I watched a rosebud very long
> Brought on by dew and sun and shower,
> Waiting to see the perfect flower:
> Then, when I thought it should be strong,
> It opened at the matin hour
> And fell at evensong.... (70)

Like the nun who “will not look upon a rose,” the speaker of this poem is impatient with the imperfection that living in time entails. Whether she watches the rosebud “very long” or the rosebud takes “very long” to bloom, both possible interpretations of the poem’s syntax, the waiting disappoints. With this kind of slippage, the speaker becomes identified with the rose’s life cycle (also, she may have been “brought on” to view the rose, or the rose’s existence itself may be “brought on,” by the elements), and the dying of the rose represents the shortness of human life as well.

Maude asks Agnes to “destroy what I evidently never intended to be seen” after her death, they plan to take communion together in the morning, and they say their goodbyes until tomorrow, but, as Agnes once warned her, death prevents her from her planned reconciliation with God through communion: “that morrow never dawned for Maude Foster” (71). Agnes carries out her promise: “The locked book she never opened, but had it placed on Maude’s coffin,” perhaps hoping that the “true penitence” confessed in the notebook will constitute a communion of sorts with God. She reads and then burns the “mere fragments, many half-effaced pencil scrawls” on Maude’s desk (72). Lastly, there are the finished poems Agnes leaves for Mrs. Foster and copies out for herself, which are reproduced in the book. These are hopeful poems of rebirth and resurrection, with strong Christian overtones, exemplified by these lines celebrating spring:

> ...Birth follows hard on death,
> Life on withering.

> Hasten, we shall come the sooner
> Back to pleasant Spring. (73)

The Second Coming and resurrection are clearly invoked here, as D'Amico argues. But one of the poems that expresses a wish that death will be a more productive time than life can be seen as having a secular as well as religious meaning:

> …Sweet thought that I may yet live and grow green,
> That leaves may yet spring from the withered root,
> And buds and flowers and berries half unseen;
> Then if you haply muse upon the past,
> Say this: Poor child, she hath her wish at last;
> Barren through life, but in death bearing fruit. (73)

The poem's speaker may be thinking not just of the resurrection in which she believed, but also of the life her poems would have after her death (with a pun on leaves of a tree and leaves of a book). The separation between private and public materials that Agnes carries out allows the poems alone to enter into public circulation. The poems with their timeless quality both figure immortality and are allowed to become immortal; the "fragments" of the composition process that show a life over time, and that are more private than universal, are placed in Maude's coffin or consigned to the fire. The poems are what matter, not the biography, and the happy ending of *Maude* is the hope of their "bearing fruit" after her death.

Written after Christina Rossetti's first ambivalent encounter with her public, *Maude* uses prose fiction to mediate the supposed "outpourings" of her poetry. Thus, though considered highly autobiographical, *Maude* presents an extended critique of autobiographical reading practices. Rossetti frames the lyric "I" of her poetry within the more impersonal voice of a third-person prose narrator. Using this structure for *Maude*, Rossetti undercuts the expressive theory of poetry, which assumed that poetry—especially by women—was an expression of the poet's innermost feelings. The intense, subjective feelings of the poetry are balanced by the objective, distanced view of the third-person narrator. Instead of the expected unitary subject, the suffering artist, Rossetti creates a multiple subject: one belonging to the poems and the other belonging to the

prose. If that were not enough to deflect autobiographical readings, Rossetti puts Maude in situation after situation that shows that her writing is not necessarily a transcription of her interior life: the poetry game, the shaping of poetry by its intended audience, and the contextualization of poems in domestic situations far different from what their content implies.

By choosing the recognizable fictional structure of the third-person omniscient narrator, Rossetti lodges the emotionality of her poems in the realm of "fiction" and implicitly directs us to read them as such, deflecting possible identification of the poems with her private life. That the narrator uses only very limited psycho-narration, preferring to focus on external events, gives Maude even more privacy. It is as if Rossetti is the resistant teenage poet and the reader her prying mother: attempts to reach the "secret"— of Maude's melancholy, of Rossetti's own—will be met with "one who without telling lies was determined not to tell the truth" (29). This is a good definition of fiction: not exactly lies, because not attempting to deceive, and yet not referential truth either.

Maude shows that Rossetti was questioning from an early age the extent to which lyric poetry should be considered autobiographical. The world she created in the novella framing her poetry does not uphold statements made about the sincere, spontaneous poetic process by critics like Mackenzie Bell and William Rossetti. (For one thing, the notion that the female writer's "hand obeyed the dictation" of her feelings, and produced spontaneously perfect representations of them, is refuted by the sheer mass of revisions and fragments and exercises that cover Maude's writing desk.) Rossetti uses the prose sections of *Maude* to address the tension between a woman poet's putting her poetry forward in "display" and conforming to the more retiring behavioral norms expected of a Victorian woman. To diffuse this tension between respectability and artistic creation, Rossetti brings prose and verse into sharp contrast with each other to demonstrate that poetry is an art form, full of conventions and artifice, and not necessarily a display of one's innermost soul. The person writing is layered, self-contradictory, and always

changing; the poetry is written under different situations and for different readerships. At every turn, the prose narrative counteracts the poems' tone of private confidence with distance and irony, their timelessness with temporality, and their spatial indefiniteness with a concrete spatial location.

Despite the way prose frames the poetry and attempts to lay an interpretation over it, however, the poetry provides a quiet voice of inner emotion that subverts the ideology that novelistic realism provides the fullest understanding of character. Although a reader attempting to read *Maude* as a novel may be frustrated by the long sections of verse that delay the narrative, to skip the verse would be equally frustrating, as the verse contains most of the emotion and drama to be found in the book. While the novelistic scenes and interactions in *Maude* are often unsuccessful in presenting character and leave many questions as to actual feelings and motivations, the poems cut through the social masks and reveal the type of full communication that would happen in Maude's ideal world—which for her is the spiritual world. Addressed to an ideal audience outside her usual social circle, Maude's poems are the next best thing she has to the private communication she has with God or her pastor.

With two equally powerful "selves" of Maude, the version presented through the prose and the one in the verse, Rossetti presents no stable "self" that we can "know" through reading, since the very genre conventions themselves lead to different understandings of the self in question. The verse and the prose are two fragments that do not add up to a whole, part of the overall problem the book presents of communication that is not achieved.

Cohn describes free indirect discourse as a defining feature of the novel in its ability to combine inner psychological landscapes with outer social ones using a third-person narrator who dips into the consciousness of a character (*Transparent Minds* 113). *Maude* constitutes a partial refusal of free indirect discourse. Instead, interpolating poems is Rossetti's way of combining these outer and inner worlds: the social world of the third-

person narration with the interior world of the first-person lyric poems. But rather than combining them seamlessly, the way someone like Jane Austen does using free indirect discourse, the layering of these genres shows their incompatibility. The poems are "all inside," the narration is "all outside"—infrequently dipping into the omniscience of the psycho-narrating narrator. And the resulting heroine does not emerge clearly but is split between the outer person she seems in society, and the inner, unknowable person of the poems.

Dramatic monologues also attempt to balance depictions of the self shown from inside and outside. The character in a dramatic monologue is given the opportunity to speak in first person, which encourages sympathy from the reader, but the fact that the speaker is so obviously a character encourages the reader to join with the poet in judging him or her. In *Maude*, a similar balance is attempted: the lyrical outbursts encourage identification, whereas the third-person narration encourages judgment. In fact, in *Maude*, Rossetti argues that we must read even lyric poems that don't appear at first to be dramatic monologues as if they were. For example, as we have seen, according to Rossetti the sonnet "Yes, I too could face death and never shrink" should not be read as a direct expression of Maude's innermost soul, much less Rossetti's innermost soul. Rather, the reader is to understand that "Yes, I too" was written not by Rossetti, but by the fictional persona Maude, and not only that this layer of distance should be taken into account, but also that Maude may have been insincere in her claims of torment and despair, and thus the situation is that the author (Rossetti) is wearing a mask (Maude) who in turn is wearing another mask. Carol T. Christ describes how Robert Browning and other poets use dramatic monologue to avoid the perception that the "I" of the poems is the "I" of the poet (*Poetics* 11–12). With her use of a fictional narrative framing her own poetry, Rossetti attempts the same kind of distancing in *Maude*.

According to this argument, the prose and verse in *Maude* are equal counterweights; each serves to destabilize reading of the other. And yet, although this

may not have been Rossetti's intention when she started writing the manuscript, *Maude* makes a final gesture slightly favoring the verse. By the end, the verse takes up more space; the narrative distances us from it less. The lyric voice is given more authority to make its statements about the superiority of eternal timelessness to temporal narrative. This preference is reflected in both the death of Maude the character and in the fate of *Maude* the manuscript. Within the story, both Maude's body and her locked book are buried in the coffin; only the completed, polished poems are appropriate for the public gaze.

This reading reverses the argument that Rossetti was attempting, by writing *Maude*, to kill off the poet in herself. Instead, this reading notes how Rossetti killed off a *person*—a person with a history, a body, and a specific character—but left the *poet* intact through the poems that remain. In this way, Rossetti complicates what may appear at first to be an all-too-typical female bildungsroman, the kind in which, as Rachel Blau DuPlessis describes, "quest…is set aside or repressed, whether by marriage or by death" (1, 3–4). DuPlessis describes many nineteenth-century narratives in which marriage and death are the only possible outcomes for female characters, including George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. Like Maude, Eliot's heroine Maggie dies tragically at a young age after not fitting into her society: "when the character, for sometimes the most subtle reasons, has been marginalized or herself chooses experimentally to step aside from her roles, death enforces the restrictions on female behavior" (DuPlessis 16). Maggie is marginalized by her desire to learn and her entanglement in a romantic scandal; Maude refuses to choose any of the options represented by the women around her (marriage, motherhood, religious sisterhood).

If only the narrative of the novella is taken into account, *Maude* appears to fit this pattern completely. But the poems delay the narrative inevitabilities and introduce a non-narrative alternative by which Maude can be judged, rather than being judged simply by the outcome of her story. This atemporal sphere of lyric poetry, an example of spatial

form "out of the flux of history" according to Cameron, allows for Maude to inhabit a world in which character is not defined by circumstances and events—a world more like that of the religious eternity that Rossetti idealized (71). The poems show a Maude who, to use Frank's words from his description of spatial form, is frozen in time, "motionless in a moment of vision" (239). In Lukács's words, the Maude of the poems is the "soul" that remains a "stranger" to the narrative's "world of events" (36).[3]

The layers of concealment—locked book, buried coffin—only continue in the fate of *Maude* the manuscript. Christina Rossetti went on to publish most of the poems in *Maude*, but she did not publish *Maude* itself. She wrote to William: "She [*Maude*] is lying perdu in a drawer, several removes from undergoing a revise. Perhaps I shall some day produce something better in the first instance" (Harrison 49). Her personification of her manuscript—"she" instead of "it"—connects the manuscript lying in a drawer to the image of Maude and her writing book in a coffin. With a locked book inside buried coffin inside closed drawer, communication is completely blocked. In the end, the prose/verse experiment of *Maude* is consigned to obscurity, and only the verse is deemed worthy of public exposure. That the locked book and the hidden manuscript continue to exist and thus to be available for possible review (perhaps by God in the case of the coffin; by posthumous readers in the case of the drawer) is a sole, slight promise of the accessibility of the private self.

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[3]Another example of spatial form besides the poems appears when *Maude* isolates a different kind of aesthetic object: a lectern cover Maude's cousins are sewing for their church. "Let me see if I understand the devices," Maude says. "There is the Cross and the Crown of Thorns; and those must be the keys of S. Peter, with, of course, the sword of S. Paul. Do the flowers mean anything?" The sisters explain that the flowers reference the biblical line "I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys" (40). The lectern cover is a non-narrative aesthetic object that must be read for its symbolism, much like Maude's sonnets. The scene provides a lesson in reading a non-narrative text that a reader could carry over to the poems.

Maude and Other Genre Hybrids

Maude is not the only text that embeds a synchronic lyric voice in a diachronic narrative, or that creates a lyric-narrative hybrid, so looking at other examples of both types of works may help define influences on *Maude* as well as what makes it unique. In Dronke's book on *prosimetra*, he discusses one short narrative interpolated with poetry that is especially pertinent here because it may have been used as a model for *Maude:* Dante's *Vita Nuova* (1293–4).[4] Like *Maude*, the *Vita Nuova* presents poems in the course of a narrative about the development of a young poet. The prose narrative of Dante's work includes not just context for the poems but also analyses of each poem's structure and meaning. According to Dronke, *prosimetra* juxtapose the "poetic 'I'" of the verse, which speaks "on behalf of humanity," with the "empirical 'I'" of the prose, which is the "specific personality revealed in the writing" (83–84). Dronke compares the "anguished and exalted moments" in the *Vita Nuova'*s poetry with the "cool reflection and distancing" of its prose: "Dante is in fact saying: These poems are *not* my inner life, they are consciously crafted artifacts….Dante wanted to be remembered not as an infatuated dreamer but as a poet." Dronke connects Dante's double self in the *Vita Nuova* to T.S. Eliot's assertion, much later, that the "man who suffers" should be separate from the "mind which creates" (111). We glimpse the man who suffers in Dante's poems about his encounters with Beatrice, and realize the mind which creates through the prose that breaks down and analyzes each poem.

Rossetti's work has many of the same implications. Like Dante, she contrasts the "anguished and exalted moments" of her poetry with the "cool reflection and distancing" of her prose, a contrast that shows that the poetry is not simply the poet's inner life transcribed onto the page. But there are differences as well. If the splitting of the subject

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[4] Christina Rossetti's letters show that she had been aware of Dante from a young age: several letters she wrote in her teens mention the Divine Comedy and the poems of the *Vita Nuova* (Harrison 7, 8, 45).

between the "man who suffers" and the "mind which creates" is the case in the *Vita Nuova*, it is much more the case in *Maude*. Dante writes his prose narrative in the first person, explaining the life circumstances that surround the writing of each poem, but Christina Rossetti chooses the fictional persona of Maude as the poems' author and writes the framing prose narrative in third person. In a sense, Rossetti disavows authorship of the poems, since they are presented as the work of "Maude." Dante's poetic self and his narrating self are both "I"; Rossetti's suffering poet speaks as "I"; but the narrator calls her "she." Nor does the narrator take apart Maude's poems the way Dante does his own, providing glosses on their content. Instead of being smoothly integrated into the narrative, many of Maude's poems are presented with minimal transition or commentary, and in all of them, their depths of feeling and darkness of tone are incongruous with the stilted conversations and cozy domestic settings of the narrative.

A much later example of prose-verse experimentation is William Morris's 1889 book *The House of the Wolfings,* a romance of Germanic tribes containing both historical and mythical elements. Florence Boos calls *Wolfings* a "highly selective and idiosyncratic interpretation of medieval society, an interpretation which elaborates those aspects of idealized tribal life which Morris hoped would be realized in a future socialist society" (340). This ideal world included a strong element of "popular art," befitting Morris's own proclivities: besides crafting beautiful objects, the characters "express emotion in extemporaneous songs" (337–338). This is where the poetry comes in: most of the dialogue is in verse. The first time the hero of *House of the Wolfings*, Thiodolf, speaks, the narrator notes that he "spake, but in rhyme and measure" (23). It is not just Thiodolf's high status that makes him speak this way: the messenger he greets likewise responds in verse. Later, Thiodolf visits the goddess Wood-Sun, and a long section of verse dialogue is introduced with: "Therewith he laughed out amid the wild-wood, and his speech became song, and he said:—" whereupon the prose gives way to verse.

Morris's use of verse to represent dialogue is very different from how Rossetti uses it to represent Maude's poems. The verse does not represent the inner life of a single character, but a shared, communicative event. In Morris's idealized world, art is not something that must be sequestered from the world, but rather it is something that emerges spontaneously between people. It is not silently written down and hidden, but is part of oral, public culture. Far from being the lyric poetry of privacy and subjectivity as described by Warner, or of timelessness as described by Cameron, this poetry is a public act meant to be spoken aloud, and it is anchored in the moment in which it is spoken. Therefore not every example of poetry-prose interpolation is meant to delineate the distance between the social self and the private self. Rossetti uses genre mixing to do so when she makes the poetry a matter of silent communion between Maude and her locked book, while the social world is depicted in prose.

Just six years after Rossetti wrote *Maude*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning published what she called her "novel-poem," *Aurora Leigh* (330). Another experimental combination of the novelistic and poetic forms, *Aurora Leigh,* strangely, has not been often discussed in relationship to *Maude*. There are many similarities between the two as well as key differences. Both describe the coming of age of a young female poet. Both reflect anxieties about the public persona of a female writer. Barrett Browning and Rossetti both use elements of poetry and the novel to create a portrait of a young artist. But whereas Barrett Browning's "novel-poem" fuses genres, creating a novel *in* verse, Rossetti creates a novel *interrupted by* verse, resulting in a genre collision rather than a genre hybrid. These formal differences are directly related to each work's thematic outcome: while Barrett Browning's Aurora finds a way to balance her art with a happy life, Maude's unhappy fate shows Rossetti's belief that art and life cannot coexist harmoniously.

Like Rossetti, Barrett Browning does not shy away from using introspective, autobiographical material. What differs is that rather than making verse and prose

compete with each other by revealing different kinds of truth, as Rossetti does, Barrett Browning chooses to blend poetry and novel to attempt a truth that transcends either genre on its own. To be sure, Barrett Browning was protective of her privacy, being sure to qualify her work by calling it "an autobiography of a poetess—(not me)" (330). But she seems not as guarded as Rossetti, who uses a third-person narrator to create ironic distance from the confessional poet, whereas Barrett Browning foregoes a third-person narrator in favor of the intimate first-person voice of Aurora.

As in *Maude*, art and life compete for the attention of the character Aurora, and as Rossetti does, Barrett Browning uses poetry to represent the realm of art while at the same time using a novelistic structure to reveal modern life. Writing on *Aurora Leigh,* Barrett Browning claimed that the novel could accommodate both "philosophical dreaming & digression" and ordinary life ("drawing rooms and the like"), both of which are aspects of modernity she wanted to combine with the form of an epic poem (329–330). The difference from *Maude* is that Barrett Browning sees the potential for art to suffuse every aspect of life, and thus she puts the entire novel in verse. Rossetti, on the other hand, sees only limited space for art in modern life: i.e., within the locked writing book that Maude is constantly concealing. For Rossetti, only these corners of life are safe from an uncomprehending (even if sometimes overly enthusiastic) public. Everyday life—especially domestic female life with its polite conversations, visits, tea, and drawing rooms—is not an appropriate venue for poetry. (The poetry game at the birthday party is presented ambivalently, as an example of Maude's vanity and self-display.) Maude can only create when withdrawn from everything in her social world—a world that is strongly gendered female in its population (there are no men in the book, except a pastor and the briefly-mentioned fiancé of a cousin) and in its rituals. Although Maude does not live long enough to contemplate marriage, it is probable that she would not have found heterosexual romance a friendly environment for her poetry either.

For the author of *Maude*, life and art are not ultimately reconcilable, a state symbolized by the competition between prose and verse, which verse eventually wins. For Barrett Browning, the two can be reconciled, and her heroine is allowed to continue to live in a woman's body—even finding love—and also follow her artistic vocation. Like Maude, Aurora feels a conflict between "the life thrust on me," the expectations of those around her, and "the inner life," her vocation for poetry (19). But for Aurora, there is not such a rigid distinction between art and life. In fact, she repeatedly claims that the life/art distinction is a false dichotomy: "O life, O poetry, / - Which means life in life!" (31). Still, she finds herself both "Woman and artist, - either incomplete" at the beginning of adulthood, and the struggles of the "novel-poem" have to do with others telling her she cannot be both woman and poet (39). Her cousin Romney, in offering to marry her, claims "your sex is weak for art" but "strong / For life and duty" (49). She rejects him and becomes a successful artist, but comes to regret her solitary life: "Books succeed / And lives fail" (235). By the end, she reconciles with Romney, representing the softening of both Romney's stance of putting life before art and Aurora's of putting art before life.

Explaining how the soul of the art should dictate its form, Barrett Browning writes in *Aurora Leigh,* "Inward evermore / To outward,—so in life, and so in art / Which still is life" (150). Barrett Browning emphasizes this point again in a letter in which she discusses *Aurora Leigh*: "the practical & real (so called) is but the external evolution of the ideal & spiritual—that it is *from inner to outer*" (331). Aurora manages to convince Romney that his practical reforms in the world are secondary to the ideals represented in her poetry, and Barrett Browning, accordingly, writes her whole novel-poem in verse, spreading a blanket of poetry over all of what she called "this real everyday life of our age" (329). The marriage of Romney and Aurora is also the marriage of art and life, and of poetry and the novel. For Rossetti in *Maude*, sadly, art is not life, and one or the other has to go. Maude the girl dies so that "Maude" the author can be born.

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Maude is a complex response to the perceived charge against Rossetti of being a lady poet writing "love personals." Rossetti responds in prose *and* verse, showing through the overlaid fiction that the verses of a lady poet are not necessarily sincere autobiographical representations of an inner self, but at the same time resisting adoption of the "lady novelist" identity in which day-to-day details of the secular world, individual biographies, and the marriage plot and other kinds of temporal trajectories are valued over the more cosmic (and in Rossetti's case, religious) struggles of the poet. Like the protagonist's writing book, *Maude* is "neither" one genre nor the other, but "a compound" (30).

CHAPTER TWO
GEORGE ELIOT, EPIGRAPHER

…I hate a style speckled with quotations.
George Eliot, letter, 22 April 1873

In her 1856 essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," George Eliot mocks the "mind-and-millinery" genre of fiction in which the heroine is a paragon of intellectual brilliance and fashion sense. For the heroine of a silly novel, "it is such a matter of course with her to quote Latin, that she does it at a pic-nic in a very mixed company of ladies and gentlemen" (301, 305). Eliot deems such a lady's citations of Virgil and Horace "of extremely moderate interest and applicability" (305). In contrast, the "really cultured woman…neither spouts poetry nor quotes Cicero on slight provocation…because that mode of exhibiting her memory and Latinity does not present itself to her as edifying or graceful" (317). There is something especially ungraceful, Eliot implies, about a woman demonstrating her knowledge in this manner—that it is a vanity or affectation akin to "having a sort of mental pocket-mirror, and…continually looking in it at her own 'intellectuality'" (316).

Although in this instance Eliot singles out women who use quotation, the practice is not especially recommended to men either. In *Daniel Deronda*, Sir Hugo advises Daniel to avoid getting into the habit of using quotations in conversation: "[M]uch quotation of any sort, even in English, is bad. It tends to choke ordinary remark. One couldn't carry on life comfortably without a little blindness to the fact that everything has been said better than we can put it ourselves" (177). The ever-practical Sir Hugo is being treated with irony here, but more damningly to the cause of quotation, twenty pages earlier the Rector is described by the narrator as morally shortsighted because "some of his experience had petrified into maxims and quotations" (157). Mary Jacobus writes that Eliot found maxims (which resembled, and often took the form of, quotations—both

allude to generalities outside the immediate situation) morally dangerous because, as the narrator of *The Mill on the Floss* phrases it, "the mysterious complexity of our life is not to be embraced by maxims" (quoted in Jacobus 212). Jacobus argues that Eliot is an advocate not of generalizations and fixed rules, but rather specific cases, empathy, and examples. An even more direct condemnation of the practice by Eliot comes in an 1866 letter to a younger writer, Alexander Main, who was overly enamored of quoting Eliot (and who in fact had published a book of her "sayings"): "As to quotations, please—please be very moderate, whether they come from Shakespeare or any other servant of the Muses. A quotation often makes a fine summit to a climax, especially when it comes from some elder author…. But I hate a style speckled with quotations" (Haight 416).

Despite all these pronouncements, however, Eliot became enamored with quotations in the form of epigraphs that begin each chapter of her last three novels. The epigraphs are a mixture of genuine citation of others' words and faux quotations she composed to resemble such fragments—more than two hundred in all. If quotations are unladylike and show off one's learning, if they are petrified generalities that displace real experience, why then did Eliot use so many in the form of epigraphs at the height of her career and literary powers?

In this chapter, I will argue that, much like the poetic fragments in Christina Rossetti's *Maude*, the epigraphs in George Eliot's last three novels allow the author to provide an alternative to the third-person novelistic narrator, one that offers a distinct perspective from this narrator and that can lead to different understandings of characters than do the chapters. Certain lyric fragments among the epigraphs are where female characters' perspectives are most intimately presented, escaping the third-person narrator of the chapters and speaking in direct first-person discourse. The inner lives of these characters can then be seen as quite different from the outer appearances that the chapters describe. Some of the quotation epigraphs, going a step beyond the highlighting of

female subjectivity in the context of the modern novel, even retroactively insert female subjectivity into English literary history.

As with Rossetti, these suspensions of plot are a site at which Eliot confronts issues involved in being a female author grappling with the novelistic form. The epigraphs allow Eliot to claim an authority beyond that of the "lady novelist," whether the authority that comes from being a lyric poet or the authority that comes from being an essayist and literary scholar. In "The Hero as Man of Letters," Carol T. Christ describes the "sage" as a gendered category of male nonfiction writers whose work was hailed by Victorians as "a heroic masculine bulwark set up against a democratized and feminized novel" (26). By including essayistic epigraphs, Eliot can be a sage at the same time that she is being a novelist.

An Overview of George Eliot's "Mottoes"

Before *Felix Holt*, Eliot used epigraphs, which she called "mottoes," sparingly.[1] *Adam Bede,* "The Lifted Veil," *The Mill on the Floss*, "Brother Jacob," and *Silas Marner* are each prefaced with a single epigraph. Starting with *Felix Holt*, there is an explosion of them, with one (sometimes two) at the opening of each chapter. Eliot continues this pattern for two more novels. *Felix Holt* (1866) has fifty-eight epigraphs, *Middlemarch* (1871–72) has eighty-six, and *Daniel Deronda* (1876) has seventy-five. The epigraphs in these three novels include quotations in prose and poetry; quotations in English and other languages; and quotations both contemporary and historical.

When she submitted her manuscript of *Felix Holt*, her editor, John Blackwood, commented on them in a letter: "By the way, how admirable your mottoes are. Many of them I imagine to be your own. I see you have left blanks in many cases. Do you mean to

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[1] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, both "epigraph" and "motto" originally referred to explanatory inscriptions on objects, whether buildings, statues, coins, or coats of arms. Both also came to mean a shorter text placed at the beginning of a longer one, although, judging by the examples provided in the OED, "motto" was the first to be used in this sense.

fill them in?" (*Felix Holt* xxxiv). (It appears Eliot did fill in many in the proof stage: while editing *Felix Holt* she wrote in her diary, "Did nothing but write mottoes to my proofs" (xxxiv).) Blackwood's speculative "Many of them I imagine to be your own" shows that he is not entirely sure they *are* her own, that her imitations of other authors, genres, and styles are convincing enough to leave room for doubt. As I will discuss in more detail, Eliot uses such readerly uncertainty to make a point about the fuzzy boundaries of authorship.

J.R. Tye claims that Eliot was inspired to include epigraphs by Sir Walter Scott, who established "the tradition of chapter tags" in his Waverley novels (235). As Steven Rubenstein points out, however, Scott was not the first English novelist to use chapter epigraphs: Ann Radcliffe preceded him (39–40). In Radcliffe's gothic novel *Romance of the Forest* (1791)—subtitled *Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry*—each chapter is introduced with a verse quotation. Terry Castle describes Radcliffe in the introduction to the similarly epigraph-laden *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) as "the first important English novelist to use poetic epigraphs, interpolated poems, and poetic fragments decoratively, as it were, for their suggestive or mood-enhancing effects" (xiii). Scattered throughout both Radcliffe's and Scott's novels are other textual fragments as well as the epigraphs: old ballads, quotations of apt words from other writers, and poems as they are written or read by the fictional characters. The practice of including such fragments was not confined to the novel: eighteenth-century English periodical writers were fond of including classical quotations as "mottoes" to their essays (Berger 375). In fact, the use of epigraphs and other types of borrowed material as major elements of literary works goes back to the beginnings of both the novel and the essay: both Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Montaigne's *Essays* are full of quotations.[2]

[2] Claire de Obaldia writes that the quotations in Montaigne represent tradition and classical learning, while his own commentaries represent the new Renaissance drive to question received wisdom . According to de Obaldia, Renaissance writers laid a new stress on "particular experiences at particular time, and at particular places," in contrast to the timeless knowledge

Opposing previous scholars who considered Eliot's epigraphs mere Victorian ornamentation, David Leon Higdon describes "four major tendencies" in the epigraphs: "structural allusion, abstraction, ironic refraction, and metaphoric evaluation" (134). He focuses on the distancing and abstracting qualities of the epigraphs: how they detach us from the characters' plights by carving out room for other texts, abstract concepts and metaphors, and ironic commentary. While not disagreeing with these functions of Eliot's epigraphs, I will delineate a different set of functions that emphasizes the multiple ways the epigraphs stand in opposition to the body text of the novels. (For one thing, abstraction is not their only purpose; many of the epigraphs are extremely subjective and draw the reader into a character's consciousness.) I argue not only that the epigraphs are important to the novels' meaning, but also that their presence illuminates gendered tensions within the genre of the novel as a whole. I will discuss four axes around which the epigraphs and the main text present striking contrasts to each other: person, number, genre, and time (Table 1). That is not to say that all of the epigraphs contain all of the qualities listed in the left-hand column in the table below; rather, enough do to provide a sustained juxtaposition to the dominant tendencies in the body of the chapters.

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represented by the commonplace book with its storehouse of quotations (14). Through this lineage, Eliot's epigraphs are at least somewhat descended from the Renaissance commonplace book, a pedagogical tool that students were urged to create as a source of quotations for their own writing.

Table 1. Oppositional Functions of Epigraphs in Eliot's Novels

	Epigraph	**Body Text**
axis 1: Person	First person	Third person
axis 2: Number	Multiple voices	Unity of narrative voice
axis 3: Genre	Verse	Prose
axis 4: Time	Lyric/expository (synchrony)	Narrative (diachrony)

More than just discussing the epigraphs as formal choices, however, this chapter will discuss how the formal choices embodied in the epigraphs mirror thematic aspects of the novels: the ways in which first- and third-person voices illuminate the gulf between objectivity and subjectivity; the ways in which the novels use quotation to raise and address issues concerning authorship; the ways in which the epigraphs expose the limitations of genre; and the ways in which time and history function in the novel. All of these aspects of the novel have highly gendered norms and traditions, and thus the epigraphs help Eliot explore the issues involved in being a woman writer.

First-Person Epigraphs: Women on the Verge of Self-Expression

After laying out the four major tendencies he describes, Higdon adds, "Eliot also uses epigraphs…to present a character's unconscious thoughts…but these epigraphs are few in number" (134). While presenting characters' thoughts may be a less frequent use of epigraphs than the abstracting and distancing uses Higdon describes, it is still important as it is part of a larger strategy of balancing the distanced, indirect narrator by

constructing an illusion of "direct" speech from a character or from an extradiegetic consciousness.

One of the most striking features of the epigraphs in *Felix Holt, Middlemarch,* and *Daniel Deronda* is how laden they are with the pronouns "I," "we," or "you." In *Felix Holt*, 63% of the epigraphs contain one of these pronouns; in *Middlemarch*, 48%, and in *Daniel Deronda*, 49%. When used as a strategy of the narrator, Robyn Warhol calls this type of move "engaging narration," and she links it especially to women writers. She writes that the engaging mode "strives to close the gaps between the narratee, the addressee, and the receiver" (29). Since women were discouraged from taking that direct-address stance in most public discourse (they were normally not allowed to preach sermons, for example), Warhol argues, they used it in novels to exert moral influence over the reader (102).

It may be objected that the "I"s and "you"s in the epigraphs are clearly not the reader or the author—the "I" is Cleopatra, for example, in this quotation taken from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* that begins Chapter 53 of *Daniel Deronda*: "My desolation does begin to make / A better life" (759). But the way they are edited (or written, in the case of epigraphs Eliot invented), the fragment is deracinated, lifted from its context to become more of a naked "I" or "you" statement rather than a dialogue. An "I" in this case becomes free-floating, more like that of a monologue, a "you" more likely to metaleptically hook the reader rather than staying within a fictional world. "My desolation" could then refer to the desolation of Daniel Deronda or his mother (the characters in that chapter), the author, the reader, or humankind in general. (There *are* several cases of epigraphs by Eliot with dialogues preserved as such: a First and Second Gentlemen exchanging words, etc., of which more will be said later.)

That fact that so many of the epigraphs contain first-person pronouns helps balance the usual adherence to third-person narration that dominates the heyday of the nineteenth-century novel. This balancing act between epigraph and narration is similar to

that of Rossetti's *Maude*, in which the stereotypically "feminine" (read: passionate, subjective, etc.) first-person poet is (at least at first) kept in check by the frame of a more objective third-person prose narrator. In Eliot's novels, however, the epigraphs arguably stand more *outside* the narration than *inside* it. The first-person voices that erupt from the epigraphs are for the most part not glossed or downplayed by the narrator, but rather allowed to stand apart. This may give them more power, as they are not framed by the linear thought process of a sensible, omniscient narrator.

Much like the poetry/prose balance in Christina Rossetti's *Maude*, the epigraph/chapter-text balance in George Eliot's last three novels allows the female author to refuse exclusive adherence to either the first-person voice, with its possibly dangerous subjectivity, or the third-person voice, with its authoritative, enframing objectivity. Carol T. Christ argues that Victorian poets used techniques such as the dramatic monologue to achieve such a balance: by attributing highly subjective language to a character distinct from the writer, the dramatic monologue "emphasizes the subjective, historical, and relative nature of truth while it strives to escape that relativity and historicity by separating the poem from the experience of the poet" (*Poetics* 17). My examination of Rossetti's poetic interludes and Eliot's epigraphs shows that prose writers, too, were interested in maintaining this balance between objective and subjective.

This section will focus on *Felix Holt*, the novel of the three that most employs first- and second-person pronouns in the epigraphs, but it will include examples from *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* as well. In certain epigraphs in these novels, the verse fragments attain a level of universality and abstraction through being free of attribution to the narrator or any character, but they are also intimate moments of connection with the reader through their first-person emotional expression. Often such moments of expression seem to find no place other than the epigraphs.

The epigraph at the beginning of *Felix Holt* quotes Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, a late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth-century paean to England:

> Upon the midlands now the industrious muse doth fall,
> The shires which we the heart of England well may call.
> My native country thou... (FH, 2)

The editor of the Penguin Classics edition of *Felix Holt* points out that Eliot makes "minor changes" to the wording of the extract: for example, she changes the line "My native country then" to "My native country thou" (500). This minor change is revealing, however, because it shows that she feels free to make changes, that the text of another writer is not sacred to her the way quoting now entails exact reproduction of the words used. The content of the change is also revealing: changing "then" to "thou" reflects the tendency of Eliot's epigraphs to contain first-person and second-person pronouns.

The 63% of the epigraphs in *Felix Holt* that include a first- or second-person pronoun convey immediacy—the sense that an embodied speaker is addressing an embodied listener at a particular moment. Some of the epigraphs that don't have such pronouns find other ways of attaining immediacy, such as including the word "sir," as in the epigraph to chapter 12: "Oh, sir, 'twas that mixture of spite and over-fed merriment which passes for humour with the vulgar…" (142). The "sir" gives the description the air of an appeal, or a demand for response.

The epigraph to Chapter 1 of *Felix Holt* is a verse rendering of the anxious thoughts of a mother awaiting the return of her grown son:

> He left me when the down upon his lip
> Lay like the shadow of a hovering kiss.
> "Beautiful mother, do not grieve," he said;
> "I will be great, and build our fortunes high,
> And you shall wear the longest train at court,
> And look so queenly, all the lords shall say,
> "She is a royal changling: there's some crown
> Lacks the right head, since hers wears nought but braids."
> O, he is coming now—but I am grey:
> and he— (12)

In the chapter we are introduced to a modern, middle-class, realist-novel version of such a mother, Mrs. Transome, whose "figure was slim and finely formed, though she was between fifty and sixty. She was a tall, proud-looking woman, with abundant grey

hair, dark eyes and eyebrows, and a somewhat eagle-like yet not unfeminine face" (13). Mrs. Transome in the first pages of *Felix Holt* is delineated in her outward appearance, objectified by the gaze of the narrator, but not until after the epigraph presents what a reader might assume to be an approximation of her inner thoughts. It is as if she had a monologue in which she turned and spoke directly to the audience before beginning the action onstage. She is presented as a subjective being, speaking in her own voice, before she is presented as part of a fictional world described by a more or less objective third-person narrator.

The pattern of a first-person voice of a female character whom the chapter proceeds to describe in the third person is repeated at the beginning of *Middlemarch*: a melancholy female voice saying—

> Since I can do no good because a woman
> Reach constantly at something that is near it.

—precedes the narrator's crisp introductory statement, "Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress" (7). The narrator takes a perspective on Dorothea that she could not possibly have on herself, one that is essentially the perspective of an outside viewer, but the first-person epigraph gives voice to the intimate thoughts she may be having beneath that beautiful exterior. The epigraph is neither explicitly presented as being in Dorothea's thinking or speaking voice, nor in the narrator's. Yet it provides a strong "I" that highlights the first-person voice while separating it from the running story.

This juxtaposition of inside and outside creates a fruitful contrast because the outside of Eliot's female characters so often does not correspond to the inside. Inside, Dorothea has high religious aspirations, though to the outside world she is known as being "bewitching…on horseback," whereas "proud-looking" Mrs. Transome, in reality, quivers before her son (*Middlemarch* 9–10, *Felix Holt* 13). The dash that ends the epigraph "And he—" at the end of Mrs. Transome's monologue is an almost violent

cutting off of her first-person tale by the third-person narrator, and the chapter casts us into the outer sphere of the appreciative or less appreciative public that also assesses Dorothea. This perspective does not have insight into the character's inner thoughts and motivations. For instance, the narrator describes Mrs. Transome as rising because "prompted by some sudden thought or by some sound" (14). The narrator, in a moment of what Dorrit Cohn would call reduced psycho-narration, does not inhabit her consciousness at this moment and so must guess at her motivations (*Transparent Minds* 21). This limited psycho-narration, though temporary (George Eliot is more amenable to plumbing her characters' minds with free indirect discourse than is Christina Rossetti), only highlights the extreme intimacy of the lyric "I" in the epigraph.

Thematically, this inside/outside contrast becomes especially important in *Felix Holt* because Mrs. Transome's main trouble with Harold, her returning son, is that he does not know or care about his mother's internal state: "his busy thoughts were imperiously determined by habits which had no reference to any woman's feeling; and even if he could have conceived what his mother's feeling was, his mind, after that momentary arrest, would have darted forward on its usual course" (19). Like the narrator cutting short the epigraph, he cuts off any investigation of her internal feelings. At the end of the chapter, however, the narrator draws close to Mrs. Transome again and confides, "No one…divined what was hidden under that outward life" (30–31). And finally the reader is delivered again to her thoughts, in quotation marks, as if resuming the epigraph's monologue: "The best happiness I shall ever know, will be to escape the worst misery" (31).

Other epigraphs in *Felix Holt* offer similar first-person glimpses into the mental state of a character. A chapter on the widower Mr. Lyon that describes his relationship with his late wife begins with a quotation from Marlowe: "Though she be dead yet let me think she lives, / And feed my mind, that dies for want of her" (73). A more humorous epigraph presents the point of view of Mr. Lingon, a comic minor character who in the

chapter defends his change of party from Tory to Radical: "Consistency?—I never changed my mind, / Which is, and always was, to live at ease" (198). In these examples, the epigraphs convey sentiments that Mr. Lyon and Mr. Lingon probably would not display in public, in one case because it is too intimate, and in the other because it is too honest.

But the inside/outside contrast is greatest for the female characters. Mrs. Transome is described as keeping "all these things hidden in her heart" while outwardly figuring in "a charming picture of English domestic life" (112). In a chapter in which she has an emotional encounter with her former lover Matthew Jermyn, one of the epigraphs is from King Richard II:

> Methinks
> Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,
> Is coming toward me; and my inward soul
> With nothing trembles. (113)

There is nothing keeping Eliot from including the gist of this emotion in the body of the chapter: she could easily have written, "Mrs. Transome was feeling…" and include exposition on her character's inner state. And she does indeed use this strategy at other times. But the epigraphs allow for a more distilled presentation of ideas and emotion: they are taken out of a specific context, whether moment, interaction, or event. They come to define a character's being, rather than a moment-to-moment state. They also take advantage of the metaphorical possibilities of poetry—the "unborn sorrow" foreshadowing the later plot development in which secrets about Mrs. Transome's choices about motherhood are revealed.

Much as characters' thoughts are presented in both epigraph and chapter (at times via free indirect discourse), the terms "I" and "you" are used in both epigraph and chapter. Eliot's narrators sometimes say "I" in referring to themselves, and frequently say "you" in reference to the reader, but for the most part the narrators stay out of the story and focus on narrating it. This was the direction the novel itself as a genre was going in,

the direction to which the modernists would eventually give their approval. But the epigraphs are like the ghost of earlier, more didactic novels in which the narrators would more frequently appear and summon the reader.

Another snippet of monologue, this one by Eliot herself instead of Shakespeare, introduces Chapter 34 of *Felix Holt*:

> The fields are hoary with December's frost.
> I too am hoary with the chills of age.
> But through the fields and through the untrodden woods
> Is rest and stillness—only in my heart
> The pall of winter shrouds a throbbing life. (325)

At the beginning of a chapter that takes place in December, the epigraph could be a poem written by Mrs. Transome, if she were capable of poetry. Instead, her epigraphs are like windows into her suffering soul—as is some of the prose in the chapter, but with the addition of the first-person voice (and poetic form) to allow her to tell her own story. There is no "She thought" frame around the epigraphs to limit them to belonging to one person—they are allowed to hover over the chapter like an aura.

This spectral voice is so important to Mrs. Transome because she is the most silenced of the characters in a book that is deeply concerned with the ability or inability to speak. Mr. Lyon and Felix Holt are gifted speakers; the political plot turns on speeches; the inarticulate deacon runs away from a proposed religious debate with Mr. Lyon; uneducated Mrs. Holt speaks up for her son in front of the gentry; and Esther's finest moment is when she speaks in court to save Felix. Mrs. Transome has been silenced by the secret of her son's birth, and when he confronts her, she cannot speak even then. The epigraphs are an outlet for this silenced voice.

Esther, the young heroine, is in constant danger of becoming such a silenced woman, and she has her share of epigraphic monologues. The one epigraph in *Felix Holt* written by a woman (other than George Eliot herself) is that which prefaces Chapter 32. It is a sonnet by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that begins:

> Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand

> Henceforward in thy shadow. Never more
> Alone upon the threshold of my door
> Of individual life, I shall command
> The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
> Serenely in the sunshine as before
> Without the sense of that which I forebore—
> Thy touch upon the palm… (306)

The sonnet reflects the position of Esther in the chapter, who has to hear Felix all but declare his love and yet renounce her. She can say little in the moment, since she is "a woman waiting for love, never able to ask for it" (309), but the sonnet presents the reader with the depth of her emotions.

A later epigraph (to Chapter 41) expresses Esther's frustration at being judged by Felix:

> He rates me as a merchant does the wares
> He will not purchase—'quality not high!'—….
> 'Tis wicked judgement! for the soul can grow,
> As embryos, that live and move but blindly,
> Burst from the dark, emerge regenerate,
> And lead a life of vision and of choice. (388)

This impassioned defense even seems to subvert the narrator, who seems convinced of Felix's correctness in most things—as does Esther too, usually. The epigraph exposes his limitations in seeing Esther's potential. It takes the side of the female character more than even the narrator does, who along with Felix can be hard on Esther. (The reference to "embryos" also is an echo of the "unborn sorrow" that afflicts Mrs. Transome, and the theme underlying the whole book of tragic parenthood, although Esther puts herself in the more empowered place of the embryo who develops into a free being.)

Another instance in which the epigraph takes a female perspective even more than the narrator does is in *Daniel Deronda*, when the epigraph to chapter 2 presents Gwendolen's view of her encounter with Daniel:

> This man contrives a secret 'twixt us two,
> That he may quell me with his meeting eyes
> Like one who quells a lioness at bay (15)

This analysis of Deronda's motives in redeeming Gwendolen's necklace from the pawnshop exposes the power dynamics—rich/poor, male/female, and gazer/gazed at—that the narrator and even Gwendolen herself later gloss over, preferring to construe the event as charity on Deronda's part.

By *Daniel Deronda*, however, not as many epigraphs take Gwendolen's view as took female perspectives in *Felix Holt*. For example, rather than begin the first chapter of *Daniel Deronda* with a verse epigraph reflecting the inner life of an otherwise initially opaque female protagonist (as in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*), Eliot begins *Daniel Deronda*'s first chapter with a meta-excursis on narrative: "Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning…" (7). It is not until Chapter 2 that we get a rendering of her perspective—the "This man contrives a secret 'twixt us two" epigraph. Then it is not until Chapter 14 that we hear her perspective again, before the chapter in which she learns of Mrs. Glasher and resolves not to marry Grandcourt:

> I will not clothe myself in wreck—wear gems
> Sawed from cramped finger-bones of women drowned;
> Feel chilly vaporous hands of ireful ghosts
> Clutching my necklace; trick my maiden breast
> With orphans' heritage. Let your dead love
> Marry its dead. (145)

An epigraph in chapter 26 expresses her resolve in equally dramatic language (just before she changes her mind), and then Gwendolen's viewpoint is abandoned until the first-person epigraph by Coleridge to chapter 56 shows her anguish after Grandcourt's drowning:

> The pang, the curse with which they died,
>   Had never passed away:
> I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
>   Nor lift them up to pray. (687)

However, the fact that the quotation is from Samuel Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" emphasizes that the importance of the anguish lies in its retelling to a listener. Eliot does not depict the event of Grandcourt's drowning itself, but only Gwendolen's retelling of it to Daniel. The subtle emphasis on the listener in this epigraph

is one of many ways in which Daniel has become the central consciousness of the book, not Gwendolen. Thus the epigraphs, while still maintaining an interest in unspoken female experience, shift in this last novel away from a private female existence towards a public male existence—Daniel's.

In the Introduction to *Felix Holt*, Eliot writes, "The poets have told us of an enchanted forest in the under world" where "the power of unuttered cries dwells in the passionless-seeming branches" (10–11). She adds: "These things are a parable," inviting readerly interpretation. One comparison that can be made is between the enchanted forest and the women in *Felix Holt,* who often have placid exteriors concealing internal suffering. Eliot might also be comparing her book as a whole to the passionless branches, drawing on the origin of paper in trees. The narrative in the pages of a novel can choose to focus on exterior appearances, leaving the interior alone, in which case the pages are just as opaque as their source material—or, as in *Felix Holt,* the book can offer glimpses, as do Eliot's epigraphs, of the most hidden interior life.

Multiply-Voiced Epigraphs: Against the Hegemony of the Narrator, For a Female Place in Literary Tradition

In this section, I will discuss the polyvocality that the epigraphs—both the quotations and the faux quotations—bring to the novels. In all three, around half of the epigraphs are actual citations of other works (46% of the epigraphs in *Felix Holt*, 62% of those in *Middlemarch*, and 56% of those in *Daniel Deronda*): those of literary authorities of the past for the most part. These allow Eliot to place herself (as a female author, and her female characters) within literary tradition. They bring up the question of authorship and whether anyone—either Eliot or her characters—can create a new text or an original life. They question the ideology of the independent, freely-choosing subject. The epigraphs are also polyvocal in other ways: they are often dialogic within themselves, and taken as a whole they create an "epigrapher-voice" that differs from and challenges the

narrator's voice. This section will focus most on *Middlemarch* because it is so thematically tied to the concept of quotation.

Middlemarch may be Eliot's novel that most explicitly discusses the politics of quotation. The heroine, Dorothea Brooke, is an adept user of quotations: she "knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensées* and of Jeremy Taylor by heart" (8). In very different ways, Casaubon and Rosamond are also collectors of quotations. Casaubon, the scholar, can always supply "an appropriate quotation" (33). Rosamond, who has had the deficient education given young ladies, yet "knew much poetry by heart" (167) and keeps a "private album for extracted verse" (268). Dorothea's uncle praises Will Ladislaw because he "remembers what the right quotations are" (329). Amidst all this quotation amongst characters, what does it mean that Eliot herself amasses dozens of quotations and pseudo-quotations in the epigraphs to her chapters? It is not just the characters who are expert quoters, it is Eliot herself. The fact that the characters are always quoting shows that they are in dialogue with literary tradition, as is Eliot. Everyone, whether Eliot or her characters, is self-consciously influenced by the past and by what they have read.

Being constantly in dialogue with other work means accepting somewhat fluid boundaries around one own purity and originality as an author. Quotations trouble the idea of authorship. Who is the author of a quotation: the person who originally wrote it, the person who quotes it in a new work, or some combination? This authorial fuzziness can be an advantage if an author wants to draw upon quotations to color her work with their greatness, or in turn color the entire tradition with her own new perspective. It cannot be said that Shakespeare, to give one example, is the only person voicing the Shakespeare epigraphs in *Middlemarch*. Eliot has selected and placed them, and therefore, she is claiming partial ownership. Epigraphs are spoken partially by their original authors, partially by the author who has borrowed them. More than that, they may be assumed to be similar to the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, or of the characters—or neither of these, depending on the reader's interpretation. Eliot's narrator

rarely tells readers how to interpret the epigraphs, leaving them open-ended.[3] They have some of the indeterminacy of free indirect discourse: just as it can be unclear in free indirect discourse whether the narrator or the character is speaking, the epigraphs are not easily attributable a single entity.[4]

Sixty-two percent of the epigraphs in *Middlemarch* are attributed to outside sources, primarily Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dante, and other literary authorities. Therefore, in more than half of the epigraphs in *Middlemarch*, the answer to "who is speaking?" is someone besides and in addition to Eliot, most likely a well-known man of letters—there are no women writers represented in the *Middlemarch* epigraphs (besides Eliot). One main function of the epigraphs, then, is to locate the book within established literary tradition. Most of the writings sampled in the epigraphs are from before the nineteenth century, with Renaissance drama and poetry favored. Choosing these quotations allows Eliot to assert that her novel is on the same footing with these earlier genres.

However, Eliot alters this male tradition subtly, making room for her female protagonist in the canon. The epigraph for Chapter 2, a quote from *Don Quixote*, describes Quixote revering a metal dish on a peasant's head as the golden helmet of Mambrino. In this chapter, Dorothea speaks rapturously of Causabon's "great soul" (20). Eliot's implied assertion, with her choice of epigraph, that Dorothea is like Quixote shows a belief that women can be just as mistakenly idealistic as men, and that

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[3] The narrator *occasionally* does seem to be aware of the epigrapher, as when she references the Milton epigraph in the body of Chapter 3, saying that Casaubon "had been as instructive as Milton's 'affable archangel,'" but this acknowledgment of an epigraph is rare (MM, 24). It happens again in *Daniel Deronda*'s Chapter 42, when the epigraph is translated into English in the first lines of the chapter, and then Daniel is described as thinking of that passage. Garrett Stewart describes in *Dear Reader* how this epigraph–chapter crossover enacts the novel's theme of transmission (320-321).

[4] Ginsburg also compares epigraphs to free indirect discourse in their multiple voicing, although her argument about their polyvocality in *Middlemarch* focuses more on the inability to find any objective truth, whereas mine pursues the question of originality.

Dorothea's romantic idealization is analogous to Quixote's heroic delusions. A similar move appears in Chapter 77 when Eliot chooses a quote from *Henry V* voicing the King's disappointment with Falstaff:

> And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,
> To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
> With some suspicion. (770)

The central event of this chapter is that Dorothea goes to talk to Rosamond and discovers her in a tête-a-tête with Will Ladislaw. Again, Dorothea's emotion is contrasted to one in previous literature that had been assigned to a man, this time Henry V's sense of betrayal, whereas earlier it had been Quixote's idealization. Eliot shows that women as well as men have emotions that fit the models in literary tradition, even though in Dorothea's case they relate not to war or quests but to romantic relationships.

Eliot even alters a quotation to create space for Dorothea's experience in the literature of the past. The epigraph for Chapter 3 uses clever editing to substitute Eve for Adam as the actor in a quote from Milton. The original quote from Chapter 7 of *Paradise Lost* is:

> Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael,
> The affable Arch-Angel, had forewarned
> Adam, by dire example, to beware
> Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
> To those apostates; lest the like befall
> In Paradise to Adam or his race,
> Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
> If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
> So easily obeyed amid the choice
> Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
> Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
> The story heard attentive, and was filled
> With admiration and deep muse, to hear
> Of things so high and strange…

Eliot condenses it to:

> Say, goddess, what ensued, when Raphaël,
> The affable archangel…
> Eve
> The story heard attentive, and was filled
> With admiration, and deep muse, to hear
> Of things so high and strange. (24)

With ellipses, Eliot excises Adam from the scene, and Eve is the only one left listening to Raphael. This suits the chapter's portrayal of Dorothea listening raptly to Casaubon as if to someone descended from heaven.

By quoting great authors, Eliot shares authorship with them, in a way, thus gaining prestige through their works, and also retroactivally inserts female experience into that tradition. This kind of shared authorship may have been appealing because authorship was especially vexed for a woman writers. A woman's literary work might be looked down upon, and therefore the reflected glory of male authors might help. Also, because of prejudice against woman's unseemly "self-display" as an author, a female author might be interested in not putting herself forward as the single "genius author" of Romantic tradition but rather as part of a collective tradition.[5]

The characters, too, with their constant quoting of the past, often struggle with the idea of whether they can be authors of their own lives or whether they are formed by society. Eliot writes of Dorothea: "For there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it" (838). Dorothea ends up restricted, because of the limitations on women's lives, to having an effect on those around her and not the world as a whole. Lydgate also initially fights against society's expectations but ends up succumbing to a conventional marriage and career. Both Eliot and her characters live uncertain of their own originality.

Turning now to the epigraphs in *Middlemarch* written not by another author but by Eliot herself (almost half of the total), these epigraphs also raise interesting questions about authorship. If quotation could be said to be borderline plagiarism, than faux quotations are borderline forgery. For example, there are several epigraphs that are

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[5] Another motive for not being overly concerned about strict divisions of intellectual property could be that women were not allowed to have property to begin with. Clare Pettitt argues that Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot "embraced a model of philanthropy and charity" for their writing rather than economic models (214).

dialogues between a "First Gentleman" and a "Second Gentleman" that appear to be taken from a longer work, but were actually apparently written by Eliot herself. Both plagiarism and forgery play with the boundaries of authorship: plagiarism claims authorship of someone else's work, whereas forgery claims that someone else authored one's own work.

The First and Second Gentlemen are not characters in the book, and yet their dialogues in the epigraphs form a sort of running commentary on the action. An imitation of Renaissance drama, they are like the unnamed pairs of gentlemen in Shakespeare's plays (e.g., *Cymbeline, Measure for Measure,* and *Henry VIII*) who appear onstage for a few minutes to provide the perspective of a chorus or stand in for the audience. They have no presence in the action, but provide a distanced commentary from outside the fictional world of the novel. In this way they are like the narrator, except the dialogic nature of the two gentlemen allows for a splitting of point of view. The narrator can't easily argue with herself, but the two gentlemen can, as in the epigraph to Chapter 4:

> *1st Gent.* Our deeds are fetters that we forge ourselves.
> *2nd Gent.* Ay, truly: but I think it is the world
> That brings the iron. (35)

With this dialogue, Eliot has it both ways. The epigraph includes opposing philosophical points of view: that of individual responsibility and that of social determination. These dialogic snippets are a microcosm of the book itself. The narrator is constantly interrupting herself, searching for a different perspective, as she does most famously in the sentence, "One morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick, Dorothea—but why always Dorothea?" followed by a discussion of Casaubon that asserts that he too, though the less appealing character, has "an intense consciousness within him" (278). The epigraphs of the two gentlemen are a way of spatializing this difference of perspective into two distinct persons.

The epigraphs contain many voices to add to Eliot's overall web, but certain of them, taken together, make up a unique voice of their own. Even though the epigraphs as

a whole lack an individual “speaker,” they yet have a distinct tone in opposition to the voice of the narrator. The “epigrapher” is more exhortatory than the narrator, demanding that the reader see, hear, notice, etc., whereas the narrator occupies more of an abstract, disembodied role, more often calling upon the reader to think or reason. When the narrator does exhibit a character, it remains a consistent voice of reason and compassion (if tinged with irony). This is the narrator who recommends that we “think no ill of Miss Noble” (169); who professes “fellow-feeling with Dr Sprague” (157); who asks that the faults of Lydgate will “not, I hope, be a reason for the withdrawal of your interest in him” (149).

Some of the epigraphs—especially those by Eliot—are more judgmental and more cutting. One example is Chapter 6, in which the body of the chapter contains the narrator’s mild warning, “Let any lady who is inclined to be hard on Mrs. Cadwallader inquire into the comprehensiveness of her own beautiful views, and be quite sure that they afford accommodation for all the lives which have the honour to coexist with hers” (60). Meanwhile, the epigrapher has versified for this same chapter, presumably with reference to Mrs. Cadwallader, “My lady’s tongue is like the meadow blades, / That cut you stroking them with idle hand” (52). In this chapter, the third-person narrator neither references herself nor the reader; the epigrapher, in contrast, uses “my” and “you,” thus embodying herself and the reader, and the metaphor incorporates a more violent tone into the discussion of the character of Mrs. Cadwallader.

Similarly, in Chapter 43, when Dorothea and Rosamond meet for the first time, the epigraph is nine lines of poetry that describe what appear to be two art objects, one a “figure” of “high price” but in “pure and noble lines / Of generous womanhood that fits all time” and the other also “costly ware”: “The smile, you see, is perfect—wonderful / As mere Faience! a table ornament / To suit the richest mounting” (431). The metaphor allows Eliot to perform an economic reading of woman’s place in society: whether worthy of aesthetic reverence or an ostentatious ornament, either way women are

objectified for their appearance. This is harsh criticism of patriarchal society, but the epigraph censures Rosamond, too, for her active participation in this system: Dorothea is of "high price" but Rosamond is portrayed more crassly as "costly ware."

Epigraphs by other writers can also serve this more judgmental function, allowing the female characters, the narrator, and even George Eliot to avoid showing an "unladylike" asperity. In Chapter 42, for example, Eliot presents this epigraph from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*:

> How much, methinks, I could despise this man,
> Were I not bound in charity against it! (417)

The chapter begins by discussing Casaubon's suspicious jealousy about Dorothea. The narrator seems neutral, even sympathetic, to him, interjecting, "Instead of wondering at this result of misery in Mr. Casaubon, I think it quite ordinary. Will not a tiny speck very close to our vision blot out the glory of the world, and leave only a margin by which we see the blot? I know no speck so troublesome as self" (418–19). The narrator universalizes the emotion rather than isolating it in Casaubon. But the aura of the epigraph and its claim that "I could despise this man" lingers about the chapter. It is the chapter in which Casaubon considers changing his will to Dorothea's disadvantage, and later snubs her by holding his hands behind his back when she tries to take his arm (425). Is it the narrator who "could despise" Casaubon at this point? Or Dorothea? Dorothea is not given such strong language as "despise," as she is too good to feel other than pity for her husband, but the strong first-person voice of the epigraph supplies the direct emotion the female character and the female narrator do not allow themselves to display.

The epigrapher cultivates a direct relationship to the reader by often including inside jokes and irony as if in an aside from behind the scenes. This can extend to explaining characters' names. In chapter 9, for instance, which introduces Will Ladislaw, the epigraph's First Gentleman describes a land called "law-thirsty," and the second adds that human souls themselves are law-thirsty (73). Will, a young man with an uncertain

vocation, is a lad who is thirsty for some kind of law in his life, and his appearance will in time inspire the passion that Dorothea will be thirsty for, so she in her way will be "[Ladis]law-thirsty." Similarly, in Chapter 34, the epigraph explains the name Peter Featherstone. The First Gentleman says "such men as this are feathers, chips, and straws, / Carry no weight, no force"; but the Second Gentleman warns that this lightness is in itself a weight in that it can cause grave consequences (323)—hence, Eliot seems to be explaining to the reader, the "stone" in Featherstone.

Of course, Eliot does not depend wholly on epigraphs to provide polyvocality within her novels. As Bakhtin explained, novels are inherently heteroglossic through variations in narratorial speech and the insertion of characters' voices ("Discourse in the Novel" 263). But even if the author blurs the line between character and author through the use of free indirect discourse, nonetheless, the narrator remains in control, framing other voices. When epigraphs are used, they stand outside of this contextualizing frame and help destabilize the dominant voice of the narrator.

Epigraphs in Alternate Genres: Questioning the Novel's Limitations

While prose dominates the body text of Eliot's last three novels, verse dominates the epigraphs: 73% of *Felix Holt*'s epigraphs, 77% of *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs, and 61% of *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs are in verse. Why introduce so much poetry into what is essentially a prose form? The previous section discussed how Eliot drew on the status of canonical authors, and she may have liked also to draw on the status of the poetic genres to shore up the relatively new genre of the novel. Victorians, Monique Morgan writes, still lived with the legacy of the Romantics, who "valued poetry…and viewed narrative as contingent and subservient" (918). But the juxtaposition also highlights the limitations of genres. By contrasting poetry with prose, Eliot points out to what extent they do overlap and to what extent they never can.

The verse epigraphs differ in several ways from the prose body of the novel. Lyric poetry's non-narrative quality can mean that it can be easily quoted without confusion. Its metrical closure can make it detachable from the rest of the text and able to stand alone as a maxim or sententia. Lyric poetry can be a site of "deep subjectivity" and "absolute privacy," as Warner describes it (80–81). Poetry can be bolder about metaphors and propose ones that will not necessarily work in the narrative itself. This widens the sphere of the novels from the domestic scenes in which they are usually set. In Chapter 19 of *Middlemarch*, about Lydgate's first deviation from his principles at a community meeting, the epigraph raises the possibility of "pestilence" and "scurvy" (177). Even if we are to take this to mean moral pestilence only, the words themselves open the door to other possibilities and dangers beyond the horizon of this particular novel. These possibilities are not always necessarily bad: Chapter 44's epigraph describes a desire to "steer / out in mid-sea" (438), which can connote freedom as well as lack of direction. These metaphors widen the world of *Middlemarch* to include many more kinds of experience.

As discussed earlier, the first-person voices that erupt from the epigraphs are for the most part not glossed or downplayed by the narrator, but rather allowed to stand on their own. This may seem to give them more power, as they are not framed by the sensible omniscient narrator. But as in *Maude*, these interjected first-person statements are usually in verse. It is interesting that the voice of the silenced woman, in particular, is represented in verse, as if another genre entirely were needed to allow someone like Mrs. Transome to communicate. Lyric poetry seems to be a more acceptable outlet than prose for emotion—Wordsworth described it as "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (661). Eliot herself writes in "Notes on Form in Art" that "poetic form begins with a choice of elements, however meagre, as the accordant expression of emotional states" (435). In fact, according to Eliot's character Will Ladislaw, poetry has a unique capacity to integrate knowledge with feeling: he claims that in the poet's soul, "knowledge passes

instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge" (*Middlemarch* 223). In the case of the poetic epigraphs, feeling arises from the first-person, lyrical voice, whereas knowledge appears in the authority of their provenance, as well as in their formal dexterity. The epigraphs thus mirror the knowledge-feeling connection in the narrative, in which the characters' plights provide feeling, and the narrator's ironic distance provides objective knowledge. Another *Middlemarch* character, Dorothea, also looks for a combination of knowledge and feeling, originally thinking she sees it in Casaubon: "He thinks with me…And his feelings too, his whole experience—what a lake compared with my little pool!" (25). Her desire for a reconciliation between knowledge and feeling reflects Eliot's own. Eliot wants to write intimate stories of individuals that yet have universal application, and the epigraphs allow her to bridge that gap. The epigraphs move the level of discourse from the individual to the general. Not able to be pinned down to being voiced by a single character, or the narrator, or a literary authority from the past, the epigraphs' assertions attain a universality: not only is Dorothea feeling this, the reader might say, but others have as well. The epigraphs become evidence of widely-shared emotions and experiences.

The formality of poetic language—especially poetry that comes from or seems to come from an earlier time—may have helped reduce the personal tone of characters' emotions by filtering it through stylized language. For example, the epigraph to chapter 8 of *Middlemarch* is as follows:

> Oh, rescue her! I am her brother now,
> And you her father. Every gentle maid
> Should have a guardian in each gentleman. (67)

The quote (unattributed and hence presumably by Eliot) appears to be a first-person distillation of what the character Sir James Chettam feels as he helplessly watches Dorothea prepare to make a terrible match with Casaubon. Although in first person, this quotation is distanced from immediate feeling by the archaic language of the older literature of which it is an imitation.

The verse epigraphs also reveal the very different types of action possible depending on genre. By showing Sir James as a hero of Renaissance drama trying to rescue Dorothea (in the epigraph), and Sir James feeling those same remnants of chivalry today (in the body of the chapter), Eliot shows that though the underlying human tendencies are the same, their expression and outcome must be quite different. In the modern world, Sir James cannot declare "Oh, rescue her!" and jump into the fray, perhaps challenging Casaubon to a duel. Instead he must coax his neighbors into speaking against the impending nuptials, but he fails to accomplish even that.

The switching between prose and verse in the three novels is also important because the heroes and heroines are all in search of a genre according which to live their lives. Esther in *Felix Holt* "found it impossible to read in these days; her life was a book which she seemed herself to be constructing—trying to make character clear before her, and looking into the ways of destiny" (383). At first Harold Transome thinks she will not make a "ballad heroine" of herself by marrying out of her rank (417). She tells him he is "in quite another *genre*" as compared to Felix, saying Harold is "not a romantic figure" and rather belongs in "genteel comedy" (420). Later in the conversation Harold does seem more like a Byronic hero when he claims his first wife "had been a slave—was bought, in fact," but Esther is appalled rather than fascinated by this resemblance to the poems she used to enjoy (421). In the end, she rejects both the Byronic genre and the genteel comedy that Harold represents alternately, and becomes a "ballad heroine," as he puts it, by choosing Felix.

She asks herself, considering Felix, "Did he want her to be heroic? That seemed impossible without some great occasion. Her life was a heap of fragments, and so were her thoughts: some great energy was needed to bind them together" (173). She is like an epigraph without a book. She needs the third-person narrator to bring together all the first-person threads, and the moral energy provided by Felix to provide structure to her life (that he is a watchmaker is no surprise, as he is identified not with the atemporal

epigraphs the way Esther is, but with the ever-forward-moving narrative of the chapters). But not all of her experience can be contained within the novelistic narrative, and the epigraphs provide an alternate space. By the end, when Felix comes back to her, we are told pointedly that Esther is "not reading, but stitching" (472). The epigraph for that chapter is:

> The maiden said, I wis the londe
> Is very fair to see,
> But my true-love that is in bonde
> Is fairer still to me. (472)

This simple poem that seems to be part of the oral tradition rather than the written tradition of poetry is where Esther chooses to be, genre-wise: not in a sophisticated Romantic poem but in a simple ballad.

Similarly, in *Middlemarch*, the inclusion of verse epigraphs is a formal version of the book's thematic preoccupation with genre and its limitations, especially for women. The Prelude begins with praise of the heroic impulses of St. Theresa but questions what would become of such a woman today: "Theresa's passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life," and yet, we are, Eliot implies, no longer in the time of the epic but the time of the novel. Hence, what this modern Theresa has to look forward to is "a life of mistakes"—which would be as apt a summary of the novel genre as any. This genre problem is also one of time, what Eliot calls the "varying experiments of time" (3). Today's St. Theresa is living in the wrong genre because she is living in the wrong time. Eliot assumes that people have an unvarying nature that either flourishes or is stifled depending on the genre and the time. Dorothea is living in the wrong genre (she should be in an epic or in the biography of a saint) and in the wrong time (she should be in the fifteenth century).

Genre can limit one's freedom: a new Theresa, born in modernity and in the time of the novel, cannot achieve what an epic, premodern Theresa did. The rest of *Middlemarch* contains many more critiques of genre, especially in terms of the danger it

can pose for women. While Theresa turns away from the "many-volumed romances of chivalry" (3), it is unclear whether a woman today can turn away from the "favorite love stories in prose and verse" that enforce a perceived uniformity of female experience (4). To some extent, Dorothea does turn away, seeking knowledge, but Rosamond identifies with love poems' stereotypes of womanhood, allowing them to limit her life aspirations to making a dazzling marriage. Eliot frequently points out the limitations of the poetry genre, which have "consecrated" images of young love (27). She also attributes endless use of romantic love as a subject matter to "excess of poetry or of stupidity" (144). Poetry is not the only offender, as Eliot points out that "favorite love stories" can be in prose as well as verse. She seems aware that her novel is not exactly bereft of love stories, so the critique of the genre is in part a self-critique. The epigraphs provide a space outside the novel's main narrative that are less beholden to the unfolding of the marriage plot.

The reduction in verse epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda* has important ramifications. Rather than choosing nearly 80% verse epigraphs, as in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*, Eliot has just over 60% of her epigraphs in verse in *Daniel Deronda*. In effect, an emphasis on lyrical rhythm and imagery has given way to prose epigraphs that tend to emphasize reason and argument, thus allowing Eliot to inhabit the "sage" role: the (usually male) Victorian nonfiction writer. Some of these prose epigraphs are quite long. The average length of an epigraph in *Daniel Deronda* is 54 words, whereas the average length in *Middlemarch* is 41 words, and in *Felix Holt* 40 words.

Unlike the admonitory and opinionated character that emerges from many of the epigraphs in *Middlemarch*, the epigraph writer of *Daniel Deronda* is given to philosophizing and meditation. This character is more distanced from the action: rather than passing judgment on characters' foibles, the epigraph writer seems to want to drop the storyline altogether and simply philosophize. (No wonder that Eliot's next project after *Daniel Deronda* was a collection of essays.) The epigraphs that fit this new profile range over all of human history and experience, rather than confining themselves to

specifics: for example, the quotation that begins chapter 32 starts with, "In all ages it has been a favourite text that a potent love hath the nature of an isolated fatality, whereto the mind's opinions and wonted resolves are altogether alien…" (360). This is the voice of a scholar seeking general truths.

In addition to containing speculations on "human history" (403), these expository, essayistic epigraphs also interrogate the nature of narrative. Eliot has not completely dropped the first-person monologues that so effectively allowed for the speaking of unspeakable female experience in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*, but there is a new competition between these kinds of epigraphs and those in an essayistic voice.

The fact that Daniel rather than Gwendolen becomes central is intimately tied to the way the epigraphs lean towards the prosy and expository rather than the lyric and personal. Like the young characters in *Felix Holt* and *Middlemarch*, both Daniel and Gwendolen are searching for a genre in which to live their lives. Esther settles on a simple ballad rather than a decadent Romantic poem, Dorothea is born to be the heroine of an epic but lives out the "life of mistakes" of the modern novel, and Gwendolen's "horizon was that of the genteel romance where the heroine's soul poured out in her journal is full of vague power, originality, and general rebellion, while her life moves strictly in the sphere of fashion…" (53). Daniel challenges her to transcend this way of life as being overly personal and self-involved. He chastises her for her narrow aspirations: "It is the curse of your life—forgive me—of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it" (451). For himself, he seeks a life of more historical import.

The essayistic epigraphs lead the reader out of the strictly personal as Daniel would lead Gwendolen out of the prison of the personal. They leave the world of the novel's characters and discuss issues on a more abstract level. The narrator introduces the phrase "citizen of the world" early in the book (22), and Gwendolen repeatedly fails to achieve this status whereas Daniel eventually does (or thinks he does), through a

dedication to ethnic and nationalistic ideals: “their two lots had come in contact, hers narrowly personal, his charged with far-reaching sensibilities” (621). The universalizing discourse of the essayistic epigraphs mirrors Daniel’s acceptance of the genre that he will live out: a religious and philosophical text that is handed down to him through his grandfather and his mentor in Judaism, Mordecai.

That is not to say that Daniel, and this novel, entirely forsake the realm of the personal, but rather both try to merge the personal and the political. Daniel tells Gwendolen to find “a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge” (451). He himself contemplates “the blending of a complete personal love in one current with a larger duty” (623). Luckily for him, the plot offers a solution in the form of marriage to Mirah. By marrying her, he participates in the marriage plot while also fulfilling what he sees as a larger impersonal destiny in the service of an idea. At the end of the book, there is a closing quotation from Milton that is practically another epigraph, as Stewart points out, “as if to the next chapter that never comes” (*Dear Reader* 310). It never comes because Daniel’s private life has disappeared into a larger public tradition, as represented by Milton and his Old Testament subject matter.

Atemporal Epigraphs: Against Narrative Momentum

Whether poetic or essayistic, the epigraphs operate outside of narrative time, apart from the action of the narrative. The reflection, meditation, and evaluation they encourage allow for a break from the relentless press of time in the story. Leah Price writes that the nineteenth-century anthology’s aesthetics of “scattered fragments” led to a “stop-and-start rhythm of reading” that set up a “contrast between two paces of reading—a leisured appreciation for the beauties and an impatient, or efficient, rush through the plot” (4–5). With her epigraphs, Eliot takes advantage of both these kinds of reading: the reading-in-time of the plot, and the detachment from time to contemplate of the epigraph.

An epigraph can serve to distill a character into an atemporal essence, whereas the plot of the novel shows the development of the character through time.[6]

Eliot also uses these breaks from narrative time to show the work of composition and share insights into the writing process. The smoothness of fictional narrative—what Émile Benveniste describes as "events seem to narrate themselves" (208)—effaces the fact that there is a real writer involved, who is involved in real labor. It is as if Eliot is trying to educate readers, especially women readers, not to fall completely under the spell of narrative; writing is not a commodity that should be fetishized—magically existing on its own with no producer. The cautionary tale of the failed writer is Casaubon. He is mired in taking notes endlessly, with no argument of his own ever emerging. When Mr. Brooke (who has his own problems assimilating information) asks how Casaubon arranges his documents, he answers, "In pigeon-holes partly" (19). This method recalls the Renaissance commonplace book. Erasmus, a strong proponent of the commonplace book, wrote in support of them, "you will have ready to hand a supply of material for spoken or written composition, because you will have as it were a well organized set of pigeonholes, from which you may extract what you want" (Moss 111). Casaubon never gets to the next step of writing his own book. Eliot does, with *Middlemarch,* but by including epigraphs she shows the framework from which creating one's own work begins: the reading, contemplating, and selecting of the writing of others.

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[6] In *Felix Holt, Middlemarch,* and *Daniel Deronda,* paintings or imagined paintings are made to show this atemporal essence as well. Mrs. Transome in *Felix Holt* is described in an imagined painting: "The scene would have made a charming picture of English domestic life, and the handsome, majestic, grey-haired woman (obviously grandmamma) would have been especially admired" (112). Dorothea in *Middlemarch* stands motionless in an art museum, causing Naumann to say, "Come here, quick! else she will have changed her pose" (188). In *Daniel Deronda,* Gwendolen in a beautiful pose inspires the reverie "Sir Joshua would have been glad to take her portrait" (117), and later Hans does paint Mirah's portrait as "Berenice exulting in the prospect of being Empress of Rome" (457). The difference is that the portraits all show the women as being looked at from the outside, often explicitly by men. The verbal tableaux in the epigraphs present the women not as they are looked at, but as they look; they are moments of female subjectivity rather than objectification.

Drawn from several centuries, the epigraphs disrupt time in another way, by bringing into Eliot's novels different historical eras. We see on the first page of Chapter 1 of *Middlemarch* an epigraph from a 1619 play, followed by the beginning of a nineteenth-century prose narrative. The past and the present are thus immediately juxtaposed. Then, in the first paragraph of Chapter 1, Dorothea in her plain dress is described as having "the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper" (7). Both Dorothea and the epigraph come from an earlier time; both are valued; and both are imported into a present that is less special and more commonplace. That Dorothea is described in this way signals us to pay attention to the quotations from "elder poets" in the epigraphs to each chapter. Even in a single text, all that is written is not equal: there are some passages that rise above, the way Dorothea rises above her society. With the constant interruptions of the epigraphs, time does not proceed in an orderly, linear, progressive fashion. Quotations from the past, whether textual or in the form of a person, can arise to disrupt the present. This is valuable because modernity, Eliot implies, is like a newspaper, full of information but not of wisdom. In her letter to Alexander Main, even as she derides "a style speckled with quotations," she provides an exception: quotations are acceptable if there is "a certain remoteness in the English as if it came from long departed prophets" who "had our thoughts before we were born" (Haight 416). Quotations from the past give us solidity.

There is yet another layering of time: between the time in which Dorothea lived in the near past, and the time of the reader and narrator. The narrator frequently notes that the time in which Dorothea lived was not the current time, but "those ante-reform times," prior to the First Reform Bill (27). The three times—Theresa's, Dorothea's, and the reader's—are thus mixed and layered together, and the epigraphs model the temporal disjunction involved in having a historical sense: living in the present but always being aware of one's role in a historical trajectory.

The combination of effects that epigraphs produce—stopping narrative time, presenting alternatives imaginable in other genres, referring to literary tradition, and emphsizing first-person subjectivity rather than third-person objectivity—work together as a counterweight against the movement of the characters towards the marriage-or-death outcomes of the female bildungsroman. Although Esther's story ends in marriage, Dorothea's story begins with religious aspirations and ends in marriage, and Gwendolen's story begins with a girl whose "thoughts never dwelt on marriage as the fulfillment of her ambition" and ends in marriage followed by (symbolic) death as she is excised from the protagonist role, the epigraphs tell a different story (*Daniel Deronda* 39). The epigraphs' excursions into other genres—e.g., the ballad, religious texts, Shakespearean drama—denaturalize the novel by showing there are other options possible in human life than the modern novel's "life of mistakes." In some cases, the plaintive first-person subjectivity of the epigraphs shows a different, less temporally based, side of the characters than the characters presented in the narrative, which tends to identify them with their outcomes. Finally, the epigraphs' deep immersion in literary tradition reveals the existence of a female consciousness separate from those of the characters, that of an epigrapher who is not bound by the marriage-or-death outcome of the characters but instead ambitiously pursues knowledge and erudition.

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In *Paratexts*, Gérard Genette writes that a paratext is any "threshold" that stands between the main text of a literary work and the reader: the author's name, the title, the preface, illustrations, etc. (1–2). He devotes a chapter to epigraphs, describing four possible functions: explication of a title, explicit or oblique commentary on a chapter, establishment of connection with a previous author, and positioning of the novel into a cultural tradition (156–158). With the exception of the first function (her chapters lack titles), Eliot's epigraphs fulfill all of these functions at various times.

Claire de Obaldia describes Genette's concept of the paratext as "a fragment in relation to the text which it (re)presents; it conveys the non-exhaustive, the unwritten, the extratextual, the non-fictional" (20). As a kind of paratext, the epigraphs reach out beyond the closed narrative of the novel and gesture towards the world of which the novel is just a fragment. Genette advised that authors looking for "realist transparency" avoid the paratext because of its destabilizing qualities (*Paratexts* 128), but the otherwise adamantly realist Eliot does not do this, even in what could be considered the epitome of the realist novel, *Middlemarch*. Why jeopardize the transparency of her fictional worlds by pointing out that other genre possibilities exist? In this chapter, I have argued that there was something more important to her than maintaining the fictional illusion she created—that epigraphs allowed her to pursue the goals of direct connection with the reader, engagement with literary tradition, and exceeding what can be accomplished by a novelistic narrator.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE UNCLOTHING OF THE SOUL": INTERRUPTED NARRATIVES IN OLIVE SCHREINER

> And when we came nearer I saw them walking, and they shone as they walked. I asked God how it was they wore no covering.
>
> God said, "Because all their body gives the light; they dare not cover any part."
>
> Olive Schreiner, *Dreams*

Three decades after *Maude* and one decade after *Middlemarch*, South African writer Olive Schreiner also used narrative interruptions as part of her fictional toolkit in her 1883 novel *The Story of an African Farm*. At key moments alternate voices intersect with the more impersonal and clinical view of a third-person omniscient narrator working in the realist mode. Like Rossetti and Eliot, I will argue, Schreiner not only wanted the novel to *describe* female experience, but also wanted the language of the novel to *formally represent* such experience in a way that did not fit the mold of the nineteenth-century realist novel. I contend that a third-person omniscient narrator on its own would not have met Schreiner's needs in terms of depiction of female subjectivity and the contradictions of female lives, nor was a first-person narrator on its own the solution. Instead, fragments of first-person discourse interrupt the unfolding third-person narrative, and allegory interrupts the realist narrative.

Schreiner went on to continue experimenting with the mixing of different kinds of writing in works as widely varied as her book of allegories, *Dreams* (1891), her short story "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" (1923), and the unfinished novel *From Man to Man* (1927). In these works, embedded allegories and first-person fragments interrupt larger narratives, novelistic introductions frame allegories, first-person speakers bracket third-person narratives, and extended essayistic letters and diaries bring plots to a halt. The result is a disruption of the unfolding of the typical nineteenth-century realist narrative in

ways that reveal possibilities outside its usual scope, possibilities that include a collective identity, a direct relationship between storyteller and listener, universal pronouncements, and an escape from narratives of development and their limited number of options for women. In all these cases, third-person realism remains a useful technique for Schreiner, but only when somehow destabilized.

Schreiner's experiments with allegory and other types of lyrical prose often have been received poorly by critics. In the introduction to the Penguin edition of *Story of an African Farm*, Dan Jacobson calls the beginning of Part Two—which contains both the impressionistic "Times and Seasons" chapter and a chapter devoted to allegory—"second-hand lyricism"; he prefers the "broad farce" of Part One, which follows a more linear storyline (23, 20). Even otherwise sympathetic biographers Ruth First and Ann Scott disapprove: "When [Schreiner] wanted to find a way to express her political vision, she took up the form of allegory typical of the Victorian hypocritical high-mindedness she had rejected along with religious beliefs" (4). In the preface to *Story of an African Farm*, Schreiner alludes to contemporary criticism: "It has been suggested by a kind critic that he would better have liked the little book if it had been a history of wild adventure; of cattle driven into inaccessible 'kranzes' by Bushmen; 'of encounters with ravening lions, and hair-breadth escapes'" (xxxix–xl). Clearly the novel did not—and in some cases still does not—meet readerly expectations.

But the pressure Schreiner puts on the novel form—almost to the point of breaking the cohesion of event and character—are worth understanding as a complex reaction to gender constraints on the female fiction writer. Her techniques are also worth understanding because of their tremendous popularity with readers: *Dreams* went through twenty-five editions in forty years (Chrisman 126). In her 1933 autobiography *Testament of Youth*, Vera Brittain called *Story of an African Farm* "the strange little novel which had become our Bible" (132). There was something in the strangeness of her work that touched a chord with certain readers.

As Elaine Showalter points out, writers from the 1880 and 1890s were not as beholden to the structure of the three-decker novel as earlier writers (182), thus putting Schreiner in a different position from earlier novelists such as George Eliot. However, I would argue that there were conventions of fictional writing that Schreiner sought to transcend with formal experimentation in a way that puts her work on a continuum with Eliot's. Schreiner, too, created a balance between embodied and disembodied narrators, subjectivity and objectivity, and feeling and thought. She frequently conjures a temporary "autobiographical moment" in her use of first person. She uses genre to reflect on the boundary between public and private, to chafe against the stereotype of the lady novelist, and to reveal the limitations of the novel.

Stopping the Clock in *African Farm*

A Victorian novel generally had two possible endings for its female characters: marriage or death. In a sense, *The Story of an African Farm* fulfills this convention: Lyndall dies and Em gets married. However, the road that Schreiner takes to this ending includes several extended detours. Rachel Blau DuPlessis recognizes this anti-bildungsroman stance of *The Story of an African Farm,* and thus she includes it, although it was published in 1883, among her examples of twentieth-century women writers finding alternatives to the marriage-or-death outcome for female characters. DuPlessis's analysis focuses on the frustration of expectations in the plot of *African Farm*. Schreiner's strategy, according to DuPlessis, was to "evoke stories with a powerful cultural presence"—quest narratives, romance plots, struggles between good and evil characters—only to "rupture the continuity of their narrative existence" (29). She creates narrative expectations only to let them die.

My analysis will focus on how genre mixing, not just foiling plot expectations, contributes to the disruption of the model of the female bildungsroman. For two chapters in particular, Schreiner suspends the forward momentum of plot and conventions of the

realist novel such as individuated characters. The book breaks its own narrative spell with interruptions that resist narrative or that substitute an entirely different kind of narrative from the one the reader has become used to.

For its first half, *The Story of an African Farm* uses a third-person omniscient narrator to describe the life of two girls, Lyndall and Em, who are brought up by their stepmother on a remote ostrich farm in South Africa. Their one playmate is Waldo, son of the farmhand Otto. The main action of Part One concerns the appearance of a con man, Bonaparte Blenkins, who takes control from the adults and tyrannizes over the children of the farm. Schreiner emphasizes the linearity of the plot in Part One with simple, declarative chapter titles that tell their own story in brief, such as "He Shows his Teeth," "He Snaps," etc. Part One ends as Blenkins reveals his true nature and is driven from the farm, but not before severely abusing Waldo and driving Otto to his death. The last sentence of Part One ends "…and from that night the footstep of Bonaparte Blenkins was heard no more at the old farm" (100). As if the novel is freed to move in different directions once the patriarchally-dominated central storyline has ended, Part Two immediately shifts in narrative momentum as it changes focus to the children and women who were mostly passive victims of the plot in Part One.

Part Two begins with an epigraph that repeats two sentences from Part One: "And it was all play, and no one could tell what it had lived and worked for. A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing" (101). The sentences in Part One had described the plight of a beetle who had its head bitten off by Doss, the farm dog. By quoting from earlier in the novel, the epigraph signals that time is now folding in upon itself (since we are returning to an earlier incident); that its pattern is now circular, not linear; and that the forgotten corners of life that remain at the level of an aside in typical novels—like the miniature drama between the beetle and Doss—will assume centrality. The writer is intruding more into the story by providing this epigraph, interacting more directly with the reader and shaping the reading process.

This epigraph signals a change in the book from Part One (which did not have an epigraph) and also a subtle critique of Part One. By bringing forward two sentences from Part One that would have likely been quickly read and forgotten by the reader, Schreiner shows how the central narrative in a novel can efface secondary details. This epigraph fits within Genette's understanding of the paratext as a "threshold" that "offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" (*Paratexts* 2). It reaches out to the reader in a way that the more self-enclosed main text does not, providing commentary on the text and interacting with the reader on its behalf.

The division between Part One and Part Two recalls Lukács's description of the struggle against the power of time in the novel. The relentless succession of events in Part One—"He Snaps," "He Bites," etc.—shows Part One's dependence on time, as does its very first section, "The Watch," in which Waldo fears his father's watch: "It never waited; it went on exorably; and every time it ticked *a man died!*" (3, italics in original). Time in Part One does lead to his father's death, and the Waldo who opens Part Two resists the forward movement of the story, instead ruminating on the past.

After the epigraph, the first chapter of Part Two, "Times and Seasons," begins with "Waldo lay on his stomach in the sand. Since he prayed and howled to his God in the fuel-house three years had passed" (101). No longer is the novel providing a more or less day-by-day unfolding of events, as it had in Part One. Instead, as if growing in complexity along with its now nearly grown main characters, Part Two provides long gaps in time, varied points of view, and complex layering of flashbacks. Quickly leaving Waldo as he lies on the sand, the narrator steps in with this rumination:

> They say that in the world to come time is not measured out by months and years. Neither is it here. The soul's life has seasons of its own; periods not found in any calendar, times that years and months will not scan, but which are as deftly and sharply cut off from one another as the smoothly-arranged years which the earth's motion yields us.
>
> To stranger eyes these divisions are not evident; but each, looking back at the little track his consciousness illuminates, sees it

> cut into distinct portions, whose boundaries are the termination of mental states.
>
> As man differs from man, so differ these souls' years….And it may chance that some, looking back, see the past cut out after this fashion:- (101)

What follows is a numbered series of seven sections in which the story of childhood on the farm is told again, but in a very different way than before. At first, the sections describe disconnected "pictures of startling clearness" from early childhood; as the child grows, the sections get longer and more detailed (101). Waldo is not named, nor are any other characters; instead, there are shadowy adult presences described as "some large figure" or "one" (102). The sections, each of which begins with variations of the phrase "a new time rises," describe fluctuations between religious faith and doubt and a persistent underlying spiritual communion with nature. The first-person plural narrator, in describing "our" experiences, skips over large events that were detailed in Part One while magnifying other, seemingly insignificant events. Interpersonal contact and biographical facts are put aside as this story focuses on the imagery such as "the feel and smell of the first orange we ever see" (102).

"Times and Seasons" privileges individual experience, but at the same time it reaches toward the universal; it is thus both more and less intimate than the rest of the novel to this point. By disconnecting events and dissolving characters, Schreiner prefigures modernist work such as Virginia Woolf's memoiristic writing that tries to present impressions of childhood as they are retained in memory.[1] The change in perspective shows how different the speaker's memories are from an objective third-person account, and thus how different all of our interior experiences are from what is

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[1] The childhood memories in Virginia Woolf's essay "A Sketch of the Past," in *Moments of Being,* has many similarities to Schreiner's "Times and Seasons" chapter. Woolf describes a number of disconnected, seemingly insignificant images and sensations: "red and purple flowers on a black ground—my mother's dress…hearing the blind draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out…fighting with Thoby on the lawn" (64–71). Other people and even the self are not as distinct as these images: "I am hardly aware of myself, but only of the sensation" (67).

perceivable from the outside. The contrast between Part One and "Times and Seasons" is similar to the contrast that Lukács describes as being inherent to the novel: Part One shows a "world of events"; "Times and Seasons" reveals to what extent the "soul is a stranger" to this world (36). Dividing up experience in the extreme way that Schreiner does emphasizes this dual focus of the novel.

Although "Times and Seasons" focuses on how the idiosyncratic features of one person's memory do not fit in the novelistic pattern, it also makes gestures to universality. Essentially a monologue, it is told from the perspective of a first-person plural consciousness "we" instead of the more expected "I." This plural monologue appears to describe Waldo's experience, since it repeats some of the events that happened to him in Part One. For example, the "we" character is described as "profoundly religious; even the ticking watch says, 'Eternity, eternity! hell, hell, hell!'", which refers back to the first chapter of Part One, in which Waldo anxiously listens to his father's watch as its ticking seems to say, "Dying, dying, dying" and "Eternity, eternity, eternity" (104, 3–4). And yet, despite this evidence that the story is Waldo's, the use of "we" implies a commonality of experience between multiple people. The specific outrages of Bonaparte Blenkins detailed in Part One are omitted; instead "our" troubles are referred to as "new-made graves with the red sand flying about them; eyes that we love with the worms eating them; evil men walking sleek and fat" (113). This level of generality makes the experience identifiable for a large number of readers—much like how Eliot's epigraphs cannot be attributed solely to the characters, the narrator, or the author, but instead seem to be making universal assertions. It is not just Waldo's particular experience that is important to Schreiner, but the common element. The specific and personal, which a novel is so adept at presenting, gives place to the universal.

Rossetti and Eliot use lyricism to present women's experience, but "Times and Seasons" seems to reflect the experience of a male character, Waldo. However, Schreiner leaves the identity of "we" unclear. Are we to take it as Waldo, or Waldo plus the

narrator, or Waldo plus the narrator plus the reader? Or is it a compendium of the experiences of all the child characters in the book? Some of the memories in "Times and Seasons," in fact, seem more similar to memories Lyndall has from childhood. For example, the narrator of "Times and Seasons" recalls:

> We, standing in a window to look, feel the cool, unspeakingly sweet wind blowing in on us, and a feeling of longing comes over us—unutterable longing, we cannot tell for what.…We cry as though our heart was broken. When one lifts our little body from the window we cannot tell what ails us. (102)

The use of the adjective "little" is striking here because "little" is a word normally used to describe Lyndall. Later, in Part Two, when Lyndall is speaking to Waldo of social constraints on women, she relates a similar memory:

> We sit with our little feet drawn up under us in the window, and look out at the boys in their happy play. We want to go. Then a loving hand is laid on us. "Little one, you cannot go," they say; "your little face will burn, and your nice white dress be spoiled." We feel it must be for our good, it is so lovingly said; but we cannot understand; and we kneel still with one little cheek wistfully pressed against the pane. (155)

Although the memory is not exactly the same, it similar enough to make us ask if the "we" of "Times and Seasons" is meant to integrate the oppressive experiences of a working-class male and a lower-middle-class female—not to mention another group of oppressed people in this novel: children. The first-person plural voice speaks confidently of personal experience, but by being plural it claims a scope beyond the personal.

"Times and Seasons" shows that much experience is not capturable in a linear narrative such as is used for novels, and requires a more lyrical framework. Although the experiences documented are very private, however, the use of the first-person plural "we" attempts to build an imagined public space in which such shared private experiences can be communicated. The reader is not trapped in the "I" of individual feeling, as in the head of Rossetti's suffering poet in *Maude*, but is invited to be part of a group that is already designated plural and that extends an invitation to the reader to see herself or himself as part of the "we" collective.

In her narratological study *Fictions of Authority,* Susan Lanser describes three modes of narration: authorial (usually known as third person), personal (first person), and communal (what Lanser defines as "a spectrum of practices that articulate either a collective voice or a collective of voices that share narrative authority") (21). We have seen how Rossetti and Eliot have embedded the personal mode within the authorial mode through interpolated poetry and epigraphs. Schreiner is the first author I have discussed to use the communal mode within the authorial mode. As Lanser describes it, the communal mode is "primarily a phenomenon of marginal or suppressed communities" (21). This observation fits well with Schreiner's use of "we" in "Times and Seasons," as the "we" character is marginal in a variety of ways: age, class, gender, colonial situation. Schreiner merges all of these types of marginality into a common voice that gains narrative authority through its very multiplicity. By embedding this personal, but plural, passage in what is otherwise a novel told from a third-person, omniscient point of view, Schreiner also holds onto the narrative authority that comes from the authorial mode.

The "Times and Seasons" chapter stretches out a single moment: the next chapter, "Waldo's Stranger" begins, "Waldo lay on his stomach on the red sand" (119), putting us in the same scene as before, but with an entire life story told in the meantime. This accords with Schreiner's claim that time is an individual, subjective phenomenon, rather than being portioned out by the calendar. The repeated story of Waldo in awe of the ticking clock is significant in that he feels oppressed by clock-time, the same clock-time that rules over novelistic narrative, with the reader constantly reading to find out what happens next. Schreiner's repetition and folding back on itself of the story shows an attempt to overcome the tyranny of the clock through imaginative uses of time. "Times and Seasons" becomes a stopping of the clock, a series of frozen moments that encapsulate a life without the use of linear narrative. To use Cameron's words, these lyric fragments include moments that are "arrested, framed, taken out of the flux of history" (71).

Schreiner anticipates this overthrow of the book's narrative rhythm in her Preface, in which she writes that her method is not the "stage method" of most stories. Instead, in her fictional world, "[t]here is a strange coming and going of feet. Men appear, act and re-act upon each other, and pass away. When the crisis comes the man who would fit it does not return. When the curtain falls no one is ready. When the footlights are brightest they are blown out; and what the name of the play is no one knows" (xxxix). If readers expect to be stage-managed through a typical formulaic narrative, Schreiner warns, they will be disappointed.

The chapter after "Times and Seasons," "Waldo's Stranger," is mostly given over to an allegory that Schreiner republished later in her book *Dreams* as "The Hunter." The novel sets up the allegory when a stranger to the farm stops to rest his horse and asks Waldo what he is carving, and then proceeds to interpret the wooden object on which Waldo has been working. The stranger claims the carving depicts the story of a hunter searching for a beautiful white bird. An old man who declares his name to be Wisdom advises the hunter that the bird is named Truth and the search will be a difficult one. After years of effort, and of making his way past various allegorical obstacles—Sensuality, Excess, Despair—the man fails to reach the bird but, on the verge of death, is rewarded with a single feather.

The allegory draws attention to Schreiner's own storytelling role and educates the reader in how she wants her book to be read: not to be entirely absorbed by the specifics of the plot and characters but to consider the characters as more abstract than individualized, similar to allegorical figures in that they represent more than themselves. Just as the reader is supposed to see his or her own oppressions in clauses like "evil men walking sleek and fat" instead of becoming overly involved in the particular, fictional story of the evil man Bonaparte Blenkins, the reader is supposed to identify with the quest for the white bird, which could describe a number of struggles. The allegory is linked to the "we" narrator of the previous chapter in that allegory "retains a modality

grounded on the voice of the impersonal and collective, rather than on the individual creative artist" (Chrisman 129). Allegories do not have characters with individualized names, unique personalities, and stories that unfold in a specific historical period, the way novels from Schreiner's time tend to. Nor is allegory associated with the genius-author figure of Western literature; instead, it is passed down by the unnamed and anonymous. The wood carving is like the sections of interpolated lyrical prose in *African Farm*: both are self-enclosed aesthetic objects that attempt to depict truth without the use of linear time. Unlike the "tick tick tick" of the clock that terrified Waldo as a child, the carving is ahistorical and atemporal, meant, like the stranger's story, to represent an unchanging truth.

To modern readers, the allegory may seem too easy because it interprets itself: the bird is Truth, the old man is Wisdom, etc. Such transparency is unlike the early modernist drive toward "evasions, equivocations, enigmas, and obliquities" as described by Allon White in *The Uses of Obscurity* (3). But Schreiner had complex reasons for writing such seemingly transparent allegories. For one thing, they harked back to simpler ways of communication, what Walter Benjamin in his essay "The Storyteller" called a dying form of art in the age of the novel: "experience that goes from mouth to mouth" (84). Indeed, one anecdote about Schreiner's allegories is that they were read aloud by suffragettes in prison, a validation of their power as an oral form (First and Scott 185).

To Benjamin, the work of the true storyteller "contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, in a proverb or maxim" (86). Benjamin considers storytelling antithetical to the novel. But Schreiner's readers—and Eliot's, in the case of her epigraphs—may have been more receptive to getting "something useful" from their novels. Benjamin describes the storyteller's stories as having a "chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis" (91). According to Benjamin, the compactness of the story allows the listener to remember and repeat the story later, ensuring its

survival. Schreiner wrote that "Sometimes I find that by throwing a thing into the form of an allegory I can condense five or six pages into one, with no loss but a great gain to clearness" (First and Scott 182). The effect of the allegory of the hunter in *The Story of an African Farm* is a genre hybrid that Benjamin would find paradoxical: the oral fable or folktale within a modern, alienated novel. To Benjamin, novels express not useful information but instead "the profound perplexity of the living" (87). Inserted into a novel that describes this perplexity, the allegory of the hunter gives the reader a hint of the communication and mutual understanding that is absent in the remainder of the novel.

It is ironic that the allegory is told by a character who could be a refugee from a typical Victorian novel—the Stranger on his horse is in temporary exile from "civilized life, where at every hour of the day a man might look for his glass of wine, and his easy-chair, and paper; where at night he may lock himself into his room with his books and a bottle of brandy, and taste joys mental and physical" (120). The stark landscape of the South African countryside elicits from the Stranger a folk wisdom that would be out of place in his own world. It strips away the superficiality of his life and brings out his philosophical side, of which "the world knew nothing" (121).

The somewhat awkward framing device—in which the Stranger tells the allegory as a way of interpreting Waldo's carving—is significant as well. Schreiner here reveals her aesthetic aspirations: to create a work of art that speaks in a way that even the artist cannot anticipate. Waldo himself is inarticulate—he speaks with "broken breath" and in "short words" that Schreiner does not reproduce—but his story gains its existence and his work gains meaning through the hermeneutic participation of the Stranger (123). Schreiner thus puts pressure on her reader to be equally active and participatory. Perhaps, as another type of refugee from the typical Victorian novel, Schreiner's reader will find new depths in him- or herself just as the Stranger did.

Waldo's carving is treated as a kind of writing in that it tells a story. In valuing a kind of inscription other than books (although she values books too, as seen in the present

the Stranger makes to Waldo of an "old brown volume" (137)), Schreiner follows a tradition that goes back to Wordsworth praising the carved word in "Essays Upon Epitaphs." All the writers discussed so far in this dissertation have valued certain alternative kinds of writing. Rossetti valued handwritten poems in *Maude*; Eliot described learned conversation as "the inscription on the door of a museum which might open on the treasures of past ages" in *Middlemarch* (32–33). In both cases, the valued type of writing is one-of-a-kind and not commodified, unlike the book industry. They have a Benjaminian "aura" in their uniqueness. While the books Waldo gets his hands on are valued for their introduction to a world of education and culture, the "writing" he produces tells a story that Schreiner found essential as well. The other inscription that Schreiner treats this way is the cave paintings, which Waldo thinks have a mystical power: "Lyndall, has it never seemed to you that the stones *were* talking to you?" (15). That the stones and wood are the carriers for this valued type of writing is important, as it relates to the enduring role of nature in her novel. In contrast, the writings of people—such as letters—in *African Farm* tend to be fragmentary and unfinished.

Waldo's carving and the cave paintings also point to the value of indigenous expression to Schreiner, although she has an ambivalent relationship to such expression based on her colonial position: the cave paintings do not speak on their own, and Waldo's carving requires the interpretation of a "civilized" outsider. Critics such as Robin Hackett have pointed out the ways in which Schreiner's evolutionary beliefs worked against her anti-racism, creating "contradictions and paradoxes" in her beliefs (40). Without denying these contradictions, Joyce Berkman calls Schreiner's use of multiple genres "literary miscegenation," which posits that her formal technique was a kind of anti-racist political action (195). Berkman argues that Schreiner's desire to bring together genres was another outlet for her desire to unify humanity. Genre distinctions would dissolve along with sexual and racial distinctions in her ideal world. This is a more positive assessment of Schreiner's use of disparate genres than what some readers find is a "disabling tension in

her thinking between realism and allegory, between art for its own sake and her desire for reform, or most persistently of all, between England and Africa" (Monsman 51). I think genre mixing is more complex than its inclusion into a progressive or reactionary political agenda would imply, but it does reflect tension between her different beliefs on race—just as genre mixing is neither necessarily feminist or anti-feminist, but reflects anxieties and paradoxes about gender in the culture.

After this moment of unlikely communion between Waldo and the Stranger, the rest of Part Two has a pronounced motif of failed communication and understanding between characters, culminating in Waldo's return to the farm and his beginning a letter to Lyndall, unaware that she is dead. The novel ends with a similar misunderstanding: Em leaves a glass of milk near a seemingly sleeping Waldo, not realizing that *he* is dead. The novel leaves its characters isolated, as Benjamin claims novels tend to, but it offers the allegory as a genre through which Waldo can briefly find meaning in his experience.

The allegory of the hunter is part of Schreiner's overall feminist strategy to step away from linear time. Patricia Murphy characterizes linear narrative as male and claims that "allegory resonates with female temporality" (205). As Murphy argues, this move away from linear narrative critiques Victorian ideas of teleology, progress, and evolution that map themselves onto the traditional novel (210). Part One of *African Farm*, which follows a strict linear narrative, does closely follow the actions and desires of the male villain. Once he is gone, the linear narrative breaks down, and the lyrical and allegorical sections appear. The parody of a marriage plot that dominated Part One disappears as well. Thus Schreiner calls into question whether the traditional novel, and being a traditional authoress, is appropriate given her goal of female liberation. The kind of time she favors is the one represented in Waldo's carving, which tells a story but not using time. Claire Kahane describes Schreiner's departure from the narrative of Part One as a kind of "hysterical paralysis" resulting from "a contradiction in desire"—desire among the subjects of the narrative being what moves a narrative forward (82). But is this

breakdown of narrative necessarily a kind of pathology? Rather, Schreiner seems to imply that the connection between desire, time, and action is open for critique, since the most desiring and active person in Part One is Bonaparte Blenkins, who represents violence, patriarchy, and the domination of the strong over the weak. If "narrative" means "marriage plot," then Schreiner would rather not have narrative.

Another reason Schreiner favored allegories, besides nostalgia for an oral form and critique of novelistic time, was that she believed they were a solution to the problem of how to present emotion. As the *Quarterly Review* article I described in my introduction shows, emotion and female writers were a difficult combination. Schreiner told a friend that allegories could express "the *passion* of abstract ideas…humanity, not merely this man or that" (First and Scott 182, my emphasis). Elsewhere she wrote: "While it is easy…to express abstract thoughts in argumentative prose, whatever emotions those thoughts awaken I have not felt myself able adequately to express except in…[allegory]" (Heilmann 120). For her, allegories combined emotion and abstraction, personal immediacy with abstract ideas, thus becoming a technique that stood somewhere between argumentation and self-expression. Schreiner's adoption of allegory as a feminist technique is complex because it was neither positivist and identified with the "male" genres nor, in her mind, does it reject abstract argumentation.

Schreiner considered her allegories poetry, and she wrote, "only poetry is truth….As soon as there is the form and the spirit, the passion and the thought, then there is poetry, or the *living* reality" (Heilmann 120). That poetry was a proper repository for emotion was a common nineteenth-century assumption. The allegory of the hunter expresses more emotion than a mere summary can show: the story, as Schreiner relates it, is suffused with the yearning of the hunter, his loneliness, his bitterness, and his (arguably hollow) triumph. Hearing it, Waldo expresses more emotion than the normally stoic characters in this novel tend to reveal: "At every word the stranger spoke the fellow's eyes flashed back on him—yes, and yes, and yes! The stranger smiled. It was

almost worth the trouble of exerting oneself, even on a lazy afternoon, to win those passionate flashes, more thirsty and desiring than the love-glances of a woman" (128). The allegory brings up so many emotions that it even provokes a reference to the emotion that Schreiner found the most dangerous: female sexual desire.

And yet, the fable can be claimed to be "about" more than just emotion: its explicitly allegorized figures make it about abstract concepts like Wisdom and Truth as well. Therefore it counters the pathos in which the reader threatens to drown, like Waldo whose tears fall on his carving after he hears the story, with a clear moralizing of the need for hard work. Schreiner found in allegory a way to contain "passion" in "thought."

Isobel Armstrong describes nineteenth-century poetry as a the product of an "affective culture" feminized and denigrated by modernism and questions if affective poetry is as conservative and simple-minded as its detractors assume ("Msrepresentation" 3). Assumed to be merely "personal and passionate," the woman poet is considered only capable of grasping reality on an individual and emotive level, not through abstraction and analysis (6–7). Although Schreiner's allegories and her lyric interludes fit into the category described by Armstrong as "oceanic monody," which "presents itself as *flow*, as unmediated secretion of feeling naturalized as effusion" (16–17), Schreiner forces the reader to consider abstract concepts while experiencing embodied emotions.

By including lyrical sections and allegory, Schreiner questions the traditional novel's ability to express a full range of feelings and experience. Similarly to the emotion that threatens to break through from the allegory, first-person voices in Part Two of *Story of an African Farm* threaten to take over the third-person narrative that encloses them. There are other first-person voices than in the "Times and Seasons" section and the stranger's story: the new farmhand, Gregory, contributes several quasi-monologues in the form of letters to his sister; Lyndall reappears on the farm after years at school and speaks in a near-monologue to Waldo; Waldo writes his long unfinished letter to Lyndall. And yet, despite all this epistolary and first-person activity, the novel ends with a scene—that

of Waldo's death—told by a third-person omniscient narrator. By using the overall form of a third-person novel, Schreiner balances her need to present subjectivity with the mandate to ultimately see the world as a coherent whole that can be presented from an objective viewpoint.

Realist Frames and Frames Around Realism

For the most part, Schreiner's collection of allegories, *Dreams,* strips away this objective framing device. *Dreams* includes the Hunter allegory, but the situation of its telling in *African Farm*—Waldo, his carving, and the Stranger—is removed. For the most part, the allegories are told without preliminaries. But there are vestigial remnants of this kind of novelistic set-up in several of them: "Three Dreams in a Desert," "In a Ruined Chapel," and "The Sunlight Lay Across My Bed." In each of these allegories a first-person narrator describes falling asleep and dreaming. Commentators tend to ignore these framing devices, moving straight to discussion of the striking, otherworldly imagery of the "dreams." But the framing anchors the allegories in novelistic realism. (Even when the allegories are not introduced with a framing device of a narrator falling asleep, the title *Dreams* implies the presence of a dreamer.)

When they appear, these framing scenes are all in first person. They are specifically located. In "Three Dreams in a Desert," the narrator begins, "As I travelled across an African plain the sun shone down hotly" (67). He (the sex of the dreamer-persona is only specified once, when characters in a dream that is part of "The Sunlight Lay Across My Bed" refer to the narrator as "he") falls asleep and dreams of a desert in which a female figure, under the "burden of subjection," is loosed from the "band of Inevitable Necessity" and may rise (70–71). The narrator wakes, and then falls asleep and has another dream, which again features the desert. This time a woman must cross an African river to reach the "Land of Freedom" (76). The narrator wakes again, finding the heat of the sun waning, but then falls asleep again. The last dream involves "brave

women and brave men, hand in hand. And they looked into each other's eyes, and they were not afraid. And I saw the women also hold each other's hands" (84). The dreamer asks a guide, who has been there explaining everything to him, "When shall these things be?" and he answers, "IN THE FUTURE" (84). The narrator then wakes up and "all about me was the sunset light" (84). The framing narration gives the dreams a temporal trajectory: from the beginning to the end of a day. They also anchor it in the experience of a realistic character and in an actual geographical setting.

The dreamer in "In a Ruined Chapel" is similarly located in a realistic space. As previously, he is in a hostile terrain—only this time it is a hike to the ruin of an Italian chapel: "the midday sun shone hot" and "the way seemed steep" (101). The chapel walls are full of Christian imagery, but it is from a vanished time: the roof is gone and "no one stops to pray here" (100). The sleeper dreams of an angel helping a man forgive his enemy by showing him the enemy's soul:

> For God had given it to that angel to unclothe a human soul; to take from it all those outward attributes of form, and colour, and age, and sex, whereby one man is known from among his fellows and is marked off from the rest, and the soul lay before them, bare, as a man turning his eye inwards beholds himself….Now God had given power to the angel to further unclothe that soul, to take from it all those outward attributes of time and place and circumstance whereby the individual life is marked off from the life of the whole. (108–109)

When the unforgiving man sees this vision, he is healed. The dreamer wakes and his physical surroundings are again transformed—not as harsh—and he feels less oppressed by them. Walking down the path, he feels a sense of brotherhood with a passing peasant boy.

The unclothing of the soul is a good metaphor for what Schreiner seeks to achieve with her "dreams" or allegories. Personal attributes are removed from the allegorical figures; their place and time of origin are uncertain. This parable implies a certain critique of the novel, a form in which every soul is clothed in "the outward attributes of form, and colour, and age, and sex" as well as "time and place and circumstance."

Schreiner sees these attributes as what keeps humanity at odds. With techniques such as her allegories and her use of the unspecified "we" narrator in "Times and Seasons," she abolishes personal difference. (She often hopes to remove sex differences even outside the world of allegory: "I am not a woman speaking to a man," the protagonist of *From Man to Man* says, "…we are two free souls" (quoted in Casey 132). In *Story of an African Farm,* Lyndall tells Waldo, "When I am with you I never know that I am a woman and you are a man; I only know that we are both things that think. Other men when I am with them, whether I love them or not, they are mere bodies to me; but you are a spirit…" (210).)

In the allegory "The Sunlight Lay Across My Bed," the dreamer is in a city: "I heard the policeman's feet beat on the pavement; I heard the wheels of carriages roll home from houses of entertainment; I heard a woman's laugh below my window" (134). Falling asleep, the dreamer visits Hell, accompanied by God. There, amid beautiful surroundings, men and women work to sabotage and poison each other, and drink wine made from human blood. Then the dreamer visits Heaven, where people labor to raise gardens and create beautiful objects. Once again, when the dreamer wakes, his physical setting is transformed and he is no longer fighting with it. The noises of the city with their allusion to conflict (the policeman) and frivolity (houses of entertainment) becomes a symphony of feet striking the pavement to the sound of "We are seeking!—we are seeking!—we are seeking!...The Beautiful!—the Beautiful!—the Beautiful!" (181–182). As these allegories show, the point of *Dreams* is not just to describe a utopian future, but to transform the person who is living in the present. The vestigial novelistic framing sections tie this collection of non-novelistic allegories to the world of the novel, but promising a more transformational outcome to the reader than the novel does.

Schreiner's short story "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" also has a curious framing device. It starts and ends with a first-person monologue in an imperative voice unlike the narrator of rest of the story. "Cover her up! How still it lies!" exclaims the speaker of the

first paragraph. This speaker asks questions about the dead figure of a woman: “Was she really so strong as she looked? Did she never wake up in the night crying for that which she could not have?” The speaker then opines, “I do not think she would have liked us to look at her….Cover her up! Let us go!” (43). After a section break, the story re-commences in a more traditional manner:

> Many years ago in a London room, up long flights of stairs, a fire burnt up in a grate. It showed the marks on the walls where pictures had been taken down, and the little blue flowers in the wallpaper and the blue felt carpet on the floor, and a woman sat by the fire in a chair at one side. (43–44)

This new, more measured voice puts time and distance (“many years,” “up long flights of stairs”) between the reader and the scene, and puts a long sentence between the reader and the protagonist of the story, who is only introduced after the wallpaper and carpet are described—she seems swallowed up by the scenery.

Through conversation between this woman and a male visitor, we learn that she is soon to leave for India. He asks if she is going to “[m]arry some old Buddhist priest, build a little cottage on the top of the Himalayas and live there, discuss philosophy and meditate” (46). They discuss male-female relationships in abstract terms, but with an undercurrent of personal yearning. She theorizes the difference between men and women as a difference between openness and covertness of sexuality: “You may seek for love because you can do it openly; we cannot because we must do it subtly” (52). Despite this declaration, she ultimately asks the man to kiss her, after which she slips out of the room and out of the house, not to return, presumably on her way to India. The more traditional narrator winds the story up with “That was eight years ago,” after which the imperative voice from the beginning of the story adds, “How beautiful life must have been to it that it looks so young still!” (57).

This framing voice leaves many questions unanswered: who is the speaker? What happened to the woman? How did she die? What happened between the “eight years ago” of the story and the scene the speaker describes? The immediacy of this speaker mocks

the more sedate, disembodied, third-person omniscient narrator who tells most of the story. It destabilizes the idea that an "objective" narrator can tell the whole story. The male and female protagonists initially seem as affectless and objective as their narrator, speaking of their lives as if of scientific specimens, with passion only breaking through at the end. The first-person voice of the beginning and end demonstrates much more emotional engagement. It's possible that the voice belongs to the only other character in the story, the old caretaker of the building where the woman lives, as it reflects a maternal care for the woman similar to when the caretaker urges her to drink a cup of tea. The gesture is appreciated: "The young woman at the fire did not thank her, but she ran her hand over the old woman's from the wrist to the fingers" (44). This feminine sympathy, Schreiner seems to be saying, is what saves the New Woman from utter isolation—her male interlocutor, her own theories, and even the objective narrator of the story all let her down. Therefore, Schreiner gives this voice the first (and last) word, undercutting the authority of the more traditional narrator. As with the lyrical passages and allegory of *African Farm*, and the moments of wakefulness in *Dreams*, the framing of "The Buddhist Priest's Wife" reveals a dialectical tension between techniques of the realist novel and more experimental types of writing.

Embedded Genres in *From Man to Man*

Schreiner's unfinished masterwork, *From Man to Man*, includes variations of many of the same narrative and anti-narrative techniques that appear in her earlier works. Allegories and other forms of storytelling, dreams, diaries, and letters break into the overarching narrative frequently. Janet Galligani Casey writes that Schreiner's inclusion of extended diary and letter sections by the protagonist Rebekah is destabilizing: "Schreiner does not merely describe or suggest this…literary output; rather, she manifests it in the narrative by transcribing fully Rebekah's extensive literary writings, effectively shattering the shape and balance of the book as a *story."* Rather than calling this a failure

of control on Schreiner's part, as other critics have, Casey describes it as intentional, arguing that Rebekah's increasing use of nonfictional genres as she gets older shows her increasing power in breaking through the ideologies that fiction propagates. Casey connects these interruptions in typically nonfiction genres to Schreiner's desire for the novel to become "less and less of what you call 'art.'" "Art" to Schreiner is a contrived production in which the artist's hand is visible throughout: a form "in which I can clearly *see* the artist manufacturing the parts and piecing them together." The more fragmentary creation she offers depends on the "living and real," not the contrivance of the artist (129).

While I agree with Casey's conclusion that Schreiner desires "both to *participate in* and simultaneously *reject* the dominant means of narration" (130), I would not limit the sphere of effective antinarrative devices to nonfiction, although it is true that *From Man to Man* includes embedded "nonfiction" genres (diaries, letters) to an extent that her earlier work does not. But other genres, as well (prose poems, dreams, allegories), present an alternative to the structure of the realist novel.

Much like *Story of an African Farm, From Man to Man* revolves around the lives of two sisters. The book opens with a Prelude called "The Child's Day," in which five-year-old Rebekah deals with the birth of her younger sister Bertie and Bertie's dead twin. Ignored by her parents on that day, treated as a nuisance by her nanny, Rebekah falls asleep and dreams of meeting Queen Victoria, gaining possession of her own island, and discovering a baby of her own on the island, to whom she tells a story of a girl being befriended by wild animals in the bush. This embedded dream allows Rebekah to process the experience of the day, re-conceive of the adults and the physical environment around her as friendly and welcoming, and later to assert herself in asking to hold the baby. The effect on the reader of this extended interruption of the waking world is to reveal the richness of the inner life of the little girl, who might otherwise be perceived more

simplistically. Later, embedded genres will similarly allow Rebekah to wrest control of the book from the third-person narration and present her inner life.

The remainder of the book is called "The Woman's Day." It opens with a scene of Rebekah preparing to leave the farm and get married. Bertie and Rebekah share a last moment together when the scene is interrupted by this first-person paragraph, set off by section breaks from the narrative that precedes and follows it:

> Sometimes I think, if one should live to be ninety, and all the sights and sounds of the world about become dim to one, that then, as one sits alone in the firelight dreaming, or out in the sunshine, the child sister who was young with us will come back and sit with us there. No one will see her; and we two shall sit there alone, she with her long, flowing hair; and we shall look out at life together with our young eager eyes that have known no mighty sorrow. I think it is, perhaps, that she may sit there with us, that we treasure her memory so all life through. We two shall be always young when we are together. (59)

In one possible interpretation of this first-person outburst, this narrative intrusion briefly gives a more embodied existence to the teller of this story, who otherwise stays behind the veil of third-person objectivity. The narrator is revealed to have a personal emotional investment in the story, and her revelation implicitly calls upon the reader to enliven the story with his or her own associations and reflections. The other way of reading it is that Rebekah's first-person voice briefly escapes the third-person narration, without being introduced by "She thought" or confined by quotation marks or the blending of narrator and character that occurs in free-indirect discourse. Either way, the fragment reveals another dimension of character and consciousness previously unseen by the story.

Both Rebekah and Bertie go on to have unhappy lives. But, as Rebekah tells Bertie's potential suitor, Bertie's whole life is wrapped up in personal relationships, whereas "[s]ome women with complex, many-sided natures, if love fails them and one half of their nature dies, can still draw a kind of broken life through the other. The world of the impersonal is left them…" (92). In other words, Bertie is the kind of woman who is

created in and by novels that emphasize female fulfillment through the marriage plot. Because Schreiner wishes to offer an alternative to this trajectory in the form of Rebekah, it makes sense that she would also wish to escape the formal structure of that type of novel. Rebekah, who is capable of making use of "the world of the impersonal," makes brief escapes from her own failed marriage-plot through the other genres she inhabits.

One such escape takes place when Schreiner reproduces the process of Rebekah writing a long passage in her diary in which she contemplates various abstract questions. The section is preceded by a description of her domestic tasks, and the diary itself is described as intermittent due to the distractions of childrearing: "generally there were only short scraps: outlines of stories never to be filled in, and short diary notes of a very practical nature…" (151). The unfinished quality of the diary mirrors the unfinished quality of *From Man to Man* itself; it is not only that Schreiner never finished *From Man to Man*, but the narrative interruptions resemble the "short scraps" in Rebekah's diary. The description of the diary points to Schreiner's overall aesthetic project of reproducing the fragmentary quality of female experience due to the interrupted rhythms of their days.[2]

But Rebekah ultimately manages to transcend her distractions in the extremely long diary entry that Schreiner includes. Among other topics, Rebekah contemplates the search for truth, the decline of religion, the question of whether civilization will inevitably fall, and the case against eugenics and for protection of the weaker by the stronger. These contemplations, plus an unfinished allegory Rebekah scrawls down before stopping for the night, take up over fifty pages of *From Man to Man*, which is a 463-page book. The story then returns to Rebekah's outward life and her domestic

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[2] In this way the project resembles Christina Rossetti's project in *Maude* of not only describing a woman's writing book within the novel ("neither Common-Place Book, Album, Scrap-Book nor Diary; it was a compound of all these" (30)) but making the overall novel iteself resemble such a commonplace book, with the implication that such a fragmented form reveals truths about female identity.

concerns, but the monumental diary entry stands as an escape route from her day-to-day existence into intellectual activity.

The book's other extended intrusion by another genre is an extremely long letter (47 pages) Rebekah writes to her husband. As Casey points out, "[Schreiner] admitted in her journal that Rebekah's longest letter to her husband could not have been written in the single night accorded to the task in the novel" (129). Since she admitted this, it was most likely not an error or misjudgment that caused Schreiner to include such a long letter, but a deliberate attempt to disrupt the expectations of the reader and undercut the ongoing narrative. The letter allows Rebekah's first-person voice to again gain control for an extended time. Until this letter, the reader knows little of the marriage between Rebekah and her husband Frank. The novel mainly presents the marriage as it is seen from the outside, which comes into sharp contrast to the anguished case that Rebekah presents of her husband's infidelity in the letter. Schreiner thus shows how the public face of a marriage or family can be very different from its private reality, and how the inner lives of women can be different from their outer appearances. In this way, Rebekah's letter recalls the first-person poetry in *Maude* or the first-person epigraphs in Eliot's novels. All three writers use formal variation to allow an opportunity for female self-expression within the novel with minimal interference from the third-person narrator.

The letter becomes part of the "search for truth" that Rebekah had described as a universal desire in her diary entries, as she pleads with Frank to be honest with her. Towards the end, she writes, "Oh, can't we speak the truth to one another just like two men?... I do not ask you to love me, only to speak the truth to me, as you would if I were another man" (275). Rebekah here offers to take their marital problem beyond the sphere of personal relationship, and deal with it as if it were a question of truth between two abstract, sexless beings. The abstract, almost sexless inquirer-after-truth that she proposes to become is not unlike that proposed in the "unclothing of the souls" allegory. Unclothed

of all their personal attributes, people will be able to recognize what they have in common and be able to overcome their differences.

Frank refuses to read Rebekah's letter, exclaiming, "What on earth should I read letters for from a person who is living in the same house with me and whom I can see every day!" (225). Rebekah then writes a new letter of just a few lines laying out the alternatives of divorce or a marriage of convenience. A similar self-censorship may have occurred to Schreiner—that the long letter may have been too much for her readers and that she could condense it—but ultimately she lets the length of the letter stand as a testimony to the extent of Rebekah's suffering in her own words. But she does seem to realize the difficulty of such a long digression: Frank as stand-in for the reader objects to the length of the letter, which he calls a "book" (281). Even though Rebekah shortens the letter, she does not do away with the idea of writing down her thoughts, as it has a permanence that words do not. She achieves her goal in that Frank does read the shortened letter and must consider her perspective on the marriage.

Writing gives Rebekah a kind of power that her sister Bertie never has. Frequently Bertie wants to reveal her sorrows to others, but they stop her. One relative says to Bertie, "If a woman has made a mistake there is only one course for her—silence!" (308). Rebekah refuses to be put in the position of the silenced woman, and writing helps her achieve this aim. Schreiner aids her character by reproducing her writings in full, even if they destabilize the overarching storyline. Eventually Rebekah achieves a kind of equanimity through motherhood—at the end she is shown teaching her children with anti-racist allegories—and by way of a platonic friend with whom she can have philosophical conversations. Meanwhile, Bertie enters the downward trajectory of the fallen woman. Rebekah turns her writing outward, sharing the ideas in her journals with her children and with her companion. Writing is what allows her to escape her personal situation and develop the ideas that allow her to ultimately re-engage with the world of the personal. It

is not just the non-fictional work that Rebekah produces that allows her to endure; it is her ability to disconnect from her daily situation and inhabit a separate interior world.

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Schreiner's full presentation of Rebekah's thoughts creates a contrast between an embodied speaker (Rebekah) and a disembodied one (the third-person omniscient narrator of the overall book). This is very similar to the first-person speakers who interrupt narrative with discourse in the lyrical outbursts in *Maude*, in certain of Eliot's epigraphs, and in Schreiner's own "Times and Seasons" section in *Story of an African Farm* and in her unnamed narrator/mourner who frames "The Buddhist Priest's Wife." However, it is not just the emotions and passions that rule in Rebekah's narrative interruptions; the essayistic diary entry displays Rebekah's capacity for analysis and reflection. Through Rebekah's abstract musings, Schreiner can inhabit the "sage" role usually reserved for male writers in a similar way to how George Eliot inhabits the role of the sage in her essayistic epigraphs. Likewise, in the following chapter on Virginia Woolf's *The Pargiters,* we will again encounter a first-person voice that intrudes onto a third-person fictional narration with an essayistic voice of analysis (which also happens to be a first-person voice that makes claims to embodiment and to an emotional connection with the reader). The result is not to redeem one particular character, as Rebekah is redeemed, but to redeem both the writer and reader of the novel by plucking them from the conventions of the novel.

CHAPTER FOUR

"SHUT ONE EYE TO THE DETAIL": VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *THE PARGITERS*

> If the secret history of books could be written, and the author's private thoughts and meanings noted down alongside of his story, how many insipid volumes would become interesting, and dull tales excite the reader!
>
> William Makepeace Thackeray, *Pendennis*

On October 11, 1932, Virginia Woolf wrote on the first page of a notebook: "THE PARGITERS: An Essay based upon a paper read to the London/National Society for Women's Service." She soon crossed out "An" and inserted the words "A Novel-," so that the subtitle read: "A Novel-Essay…" (xvi). Woolf worked on the "novel-essay" for two months, over which time it grew to include six essays alternating with five novelistic chapters. She wrote approximately sixty thousand words according to this scheme before abandoning the project (xvii). Woolf eventually used the fictional material in her novel *The Years* (1937), while some of the historical information from the essay sections resurfaced in her book-length essay *Three Guineas* (1938). While *The Pargiters* is often studied only to gain insight into *The Years* (Stephens 172), it deserves attention on its own merits, despite its unfinished status.

Attention to the genre-crossing strategies in *The Pargiters* can lead to fresh insights into all three works: *The Pargiters*, *The Years*, and *Three Guineas*. *The Pargiters* is often described as an inevitable failure in genre blending, but I discuss what is fruitful about the collision of genres in *The Pargiters,* even if it fails at the typical aesthetic goals of the realist novel (narrative flow, creation of a complete fictional world, readerly absorption and suspension of disbelief). Analysis of genre experimentation in *The Pargiters* can lead to new consideration of the play of genres in *The Years* and *Three Guineas* as well.

In her 1927 essay "The New Biography," Woolf seems to discourage the blending of factual and fictional genres, which she describes as granite and rainbow. "For though both truths [granite and rainbow, or fact and fiction] are genuine," Woolf writes in that essay, "they are antagonistic; let them meet and they destroy each other….Let it be fact, one feels, or let it be fiction; the imagination will not serve under two masters simultaneously" (233–234). Many critics claim that *The Pargiters* is an example of this prediction about the incompatibility of genres coming true. Mitchell A. Leaska notes that one definition of "pargeter" is "one who glosses or smoothes over," and he reads that title as a description of Woolf's task as a novelist-essayist: to smoothly integrate fact into fiction. He writes that her project was to erase the chasms that divide "historical fact from immediate feeling," and that this was not possible unless she moved from the intermittent structure of *The Pargiters* to the more smoothed-over structure of *The Years* (174). Similarly, Pamela Transue argues that Woolf needed to excise the essays from the project because fact and fiction should be well integrated, as they are in *A Room of One's Own*. Therefore, "[Woolf's] attempt to create a distinction between essays and fictional chapters in *The Pargiters* was…inevitably doomed to fail" (158). Grace Radin simply claims that the essays "were a clumsy device that impeded the narrative flow of the novel" (33). Anna Snaith argues that fact and fiction *can* coexist peacefully, but not in the form of *The Pargiters,* in which "the essays impeded the flow of the novel" (109). Snaith holds up *The Years* as a more successful integration of fact and fiction because the historical research Woolf did is present, if only in the background.

My argument is more aligned with critics who focus on the productive effects of the conflict between genres, although my arguments differ from theirs as well. For example, Rebecca Stephens writes of how, despite Woolf's claim that granite/fact and rainbow/fiction will "destroy each other," this mutual destruction may not be such a bad thing (171). Stephens focuses on how Woolf interrupts the flow of what Bakhtin called "primary genres" (those connected to everyday life) into "secondary genres" (those of

literature) in the service of grounding the reader historically (173). Though I am more interested in the contrast between first-person discourse and third-person narrative in *The Pargiters* and the bonds it creates between writer and reader as well as the limitations of the novel (and the novelist) it exposes, I share her reliance on Bakhtin's notion of the dialogue of genres in the novel and her conclusion that this dialogue of genres is an innovative way to present female experience.

Another critic who is more interested in deviations from aesthetic unity is Victoria Middleton, who addresses the frequent charge that *The Years* is "Virginia Woolf's worst novel" (158). Middleton argues that rather than a failure to achieve a coherent whole, it was a deliberate attempt to fail in that task, so as to question "the possibility of literary creation and communication" (161). Woolf does this, Middleton writes, through false clues to a structure that does not ultimately exist (e.g., the weather descriptions that precede each chapter have no relationship to the chapters) and repetitiveness that does not build toward a larger pattern: by the end, "characters in search of an author confront the chaos of their lives" (163). Middleton interprets Eleanor's last words—"And now?"—as something of a joke: "We know what to expect from the future, for the novel has shown us that this cycle of lives will simply repeat itself. The feeling of entrapment in an inexorable process which has neither outlet nor end is our final experience of the novel" (169). She calls the "extraordinary beauty, simplicity and peace" of the dawn that ends the novel a parody of novelistic fulfillment and pronounces *The Years* "an anti-novel" (170). While I agree that *The Years* has limited allegiance to novelistic conventions, I will show how a greater attention to *The Pargiters* can shed light on some of the details in *The Years*—e.g., the weather descriptions, the question "And now?"—that may otherwise seem inexplicable.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis is another critic who would argue against the "worst novel" label for *The Years*. She finds *The Years* an example of "writing beyond the ending" of the female bildungsroman in that it follows not just a single protagonist, but a

whole family, and it focuses on kin relationships and friendships rather than romantic relationships. And, as in *Story of an African Farm*, plot expectations are dashed and dramatic moments that would seem central to the typical novel are avoided. But as with her analysis of *Story of an African Farm*, DuPlessis does not pursue the idea of genre mixing as a component of "writing beyond the ending," even though she cites Woolf's desire to "[break] the sentence" and "[break] the sequence" (31). DuPlessis thus considers the genre-mixing *The Pargiters* just a step on the way to the more successful *The Years*.

In contrast, this chapter will describe how *The Pargiters* features the "I," "you," and "we" pronouns of direct discourse to create a feeling of directness and immediacy with the reader. In fact, discourse is dominant over narrative in this book in which chapters of narrative are inserted into an overarching frame of discourse. Woolf creates a sense of an embodied writer/speaker and embodied reader/listener as well as a concrete communicative situation. Rather than encouraging the reader to look down, godlike, into a self-contained fictional world, the first-person voice of the essays calls upon the reader to connect the fictional world to the "real" world, both the historical past and the reader's current life. While the persona of the lecturer is an observing and reporting one, it is also a feeling one that is attempting to make a direct sympathetic connection with the reader/listener based on their shared experiences as women. Woolf evokes the "face" of the female writer as do Rossetti, Eliot, or Schreiner in their lyric discourse sections, but Woolf's persona is ultimately more essayistic and argumentative than it is lyrical. In this it resembles the essayistic fragments in Eliot and Schreiner, in which the female writer takes on the didactic voice of the male nonfiction-writing sage.

The counternarrative Woolf presents within the story of the Pargiter family is the conversation between author and reader, in which the reader is constantly asked to think of her own life and that of the author as being affected by the same problems that face the fictional Pargiters. The first-person voice of the essays balances out the third-person,

disembodied narrator of fiction. This third-person realist narrator appears to be objectively describing the world, but the discoursing lecturer reveals that the narrative is actually a result of subjectively inspired choices.

My reading of *The Pargiters* will also show that the use of essay and fictional sections shows the contradictions between women's inner lives and outer appearances. The works discussed in previous chapters compared the inner lives and outer appearances of one or more characters internal to the story. *The Pargiters* compares the inner life and outer appearance of the female writer. Woolf contrasts the self-assured product of the successful novelist—a convincing fictional world—with the self-censorship and uncertainty of the novelist herself. Fighting against the narrative flow of the story of the Pargiter family, Woolf enacts the Lukácsian struggle between essential and temporal. The "details" that the reader is asked to shut one eye to are the specific events and individuals. The "essential" is not so much an eternal soul or core character, as in Rossetti and Eliot respectively, but rather the larger historical picture that encompasses everyone, including the reader.

By highlighting the author's role as a participant in the novel, Woolf asserts the author's existence in breaks from the "story tells itself" third-person narration. Woolf brings the women writer into the public gaze by referring to her in the essay portions of *The Pargiters*, causing the "face" of the writer to "appear" (the aspect of women's writing that troubled Victorian critic Henry N. Coleridge, as described in my introduction) (375). She further asserts the writer's place in the public sphere by imagining her as a lecturer, giving a speech in person before an audience. Not only is this writer a public presence through her writing, but she is personally on display through public speaking. This "publicizing" of the author is not the only way the boundaries between public and private get contested in *The Pargiters*; we will see how Woolf tries to bring private female lives into the more public sphere–oriented discipline of history.

Lastly, my reading of *The Pargiters* will show that Woolf attempts to increase her writerly authority by stepping outside the role of the novelist and bringing in the abstract and universal pronouncements of the critic and essayist. Not that she did not already possess such authority—she published hundreds of essays over the course of her career—but *The Pargiters* is a uniquely ambitious attempt at combining the authority of the novelist and the essayist. She seeks to draw attention to the novel's limitations as a genre as well as exploit its ability to make the reader care about a set of abstract issues through its focus on the individual and the texture of everyday life. By using multiple genres, Woolf reveals how both the novel and the essay by themselves are inadequate to describe the complete range of female experience. The female bildungsroman that Woolf creates avoids the marriage-or-death outcomes of the genre, but it still transcends the limited possibilities for women inside the novel by showing the possibilities for women outside the novel's story: both the imaginative power of the female writer and the power of the female reader/listener to apply the lessons of the Pargiter women to her own life.

Rather than pursue the experiment of *The Pargiters* to completion, Woolf chose to excise the discourse sections in remaking the project as *The Years*, and this chapter will lastly explore why she ultimately found the forms of discourse and narrative incompatible. Quentin Bell writes that the Pargiters project, begun with such speed and enthusiasm, ended up causing her—once she abandoned the essays—to feel "thwarted, baffled, anxious, and miserable in her writing" as never before (172). I will look at how she tried to incorporate some of the aims of her original vision into *The Years* and *Three Guineas*.

First Essay: Female Speaker and Female Audience

According to Gérard Genette, while "narrative" usually features past tense and the third person, the category of "discourse" tends to include present tense, the pronouns "I" and "you," and adverbial indicators such as "here" and "now" (*Figures* 138). Throughout

this dissertation, we have seen the grammatical forms associated with discourse overrepresented in the interpolated poetry, epigraphs, and lyrical prose of Rossetti's, Eliot's, and Schreiner's otherwise third-person, past-tense novels. Similarly, the essay sections of *The Pargiters* include the first-person "I," the "you" of direct address, and the present tense. Before Woolf scrapped the project, one working title for *The Pargiters* was *Here and Now*; that it ultimately became *The Years* gives a clue to how fully the project changed from being discourse-centered to narrative-centered: "here" and "now" are among the terms associated with discourse; "the years" implies a closed segment of time told in retrospect, like a traditional novelistic narrative.

Woolf begins *The Pargiters* in the here and now of a communicative situation: the first sentence of Essay One is, "When your Secretary asked me to come here tonight to give you some account of my professional experiences, it would be untrue to say that I accepted with pleasure." Woolf goes on to sketch out both the persona of the speaker and the composition of her audience. The voice of the First Essay is that of an author not unlike Woolf who has been asked to deliver a speech to a society of working women.[1] The speaker believes that speech making is "intoxicating to vanity, obstructive of truth," but has accepted the invitation out of respect for her audience, "young women who are

[1] On January 21, 1931, Woolf had given a speech to the London/National Society for Women's Service. This speech, although acknowledged by Woolf in her subtitle of *The Pargiters* as the inspiration for the "novel-essay," is not quite the same as the "speech" in Essay One. In both she describes her experience in the profession of writing as less challenging than that of women in other professions, but in the earlier speech she describes the necessity of writers and, by extension, other women in the professions to kill the Angel in the House that requires them to be pleasing to men, something she does not mention in the much shorter Essay One (*Pargiters* xxxi). In the earlier speech, she also writes of the need to practice one's profession from the perspective of female experience, traditions, and values. She urges her listeners to adopt that "difference of outlook" and thus transform their professions (xxxvi). She then describes how the writerly imagination wants to describe female experience in full, but is stopped by the self-censorship of convention. Having described these experiences, she urges that her listeners not become bitter in their quest to work in the professions. She cannot predict what the outcome of their efforts will be, but ends with this scene of the professional woman in her rented room: "You will hear somebody coming. You will open the door. And then—this at least is my guess—there will take place between you and some one else the most interesting, exciting, and important conversation that has ever been heard" (xxxxiv).

earning, or trying to earn, their livings in the professions" (5). Woolf's speaker compares her lot to that of her auditors and finds her profession of writing an easier one to have entered as a woman because it can be done cheaply and unobtrusively.

This opening places the communication between writer and reader on a more visible level than if the book had opened immediately inside the narration: in Genette's terms, it opens with a section of discourse in which "someone speaks," as opposed to a narrative section in which "*no one speaks*" (*Figures* 140, italics in original). The "someone" who speaks in the essays is a woman writer delivering a talk to a working women's group; the "no one" is the third-person omniscient narrator of the fictional story.

The speech-maker proposes to use the only profession she knows—writing—to evoke the "historical preface" that will allow understanding of the current situation for women in the professions: "I am going to read you chapters from an unfinished novel which I am in the process of writing, called 'The Pargiters.'" This novel, she continues, "tries to give a faithful and detailed account of a family called Pargiter, from the year 1800 to the year 2032" (9). Such a date range playfully hints that this novel may not actually exist, since to give a "faithful and detailed account" of a family from 1800 to 2032 would make for an incredibly long novel. But it also shows that she is trying to exceed the boundaries of what is considered thinkable for a novel. Not only will it be "faithful and detailed" beyond previous novels, but including the future to 2032 indicates that this novel, unlike most others, not only includes the past and present, but tries to imagine (and by doing so perhaps even shape) the future. (By the time the project became *The Years,* it would cover only the period 1880 to "Present Day.")

The speaker of the First Essay proposes to "show you what you were like fifty years ago: to provide that perspective which is so important for the understanding of the present," and she argues that her novel is an appropriate form of historical evidence: "If you object that fiction is not history, I reply that though it would be far easier to write

history—'In the year 1842 Lord John Russell brought in the Second Reform Bill' and so on—that method of telling the truth seems so elementary, so clumsy, that I prefer, where truth is important, to write fiction." She adds that *The Pargiters* is "not a novel of vision, but a novel of fact": that it is based on "old memoirs" and that thus "there is not a statement in it that cannot be verified" (9). Indeed, many of the essays that follow the chapters echo elements of the fictional scenes with quotations from historical sources such as Victorian women's memoirs. The First Essay ends by setting the scene for the excerpt she will present: "It is the 16th of November 1880, about five o'clock in the afternoon; and the Pargiters are at tea" (10).

While most novels would begin inside the scene of the tea party, Woolf takes the time to create embodied characters out of both the writer and her audience. The writer is someone not only with an individual viewpoint on the page, but a visible body (visible to the audience at the lecture). This writer, Woolf reveals to the reader, has deliberately chosen what to include in her novel. It doesn't tell itself; it is told by a particular person. The result is that the reader is not allowed to imagine the narrative as a transparent representation of an objectively-viewed reality. Nor does Woolf let the reader believe that the novel is merely a figment of the writer's imagination, divorced from reality. Instead she emphasizes its grounding in historical facts. With her essays, Woolf superimposes a second drama over the drama played out in the Pargiter family: that of the novelist and the novel reader struggling against the limits of the novel.

London Chapters: "Don't Be Caught Looking"

The First Chapter (titled "Chapter Fifty-Six" to show that it is taken from the middle of the imagined manuscript) begins in this scene as observed by an absent third-person narrator:[2]

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[2] When quoting chapters from Leaska's *The Pargiters: The Novel-Essay Portion of The Years,* I have included the spelling and punctuation errors, deletions, and insertions the editor reproduces from the manuscript. The system Leaska uses is this: a word editorially supplied is in

> "I wish the tea would boil" said Milly.
> "Why cant one make tea without boiling water?" asked her [*sist*] Eleanor. "I don't think anyone would know." [*Wilkins*] The door opened & [*Wilkins*] Susan brought in a covered dish of hot cakes<.> (11)

The lecturer and her audience are nowhere to be found in this chapter, and instead there is a fictional world in which teenage sisters Milly, Delia, and Eleanor sit down to a family tea with their brothers, father, and younger sister Rose. Their invalid mother is resting upstairs. Waiting for the tea to boil becomes a metaphor for the three women waiting for something to happen to change their lives. Currently they are in a situation of enforced domesticity in the family circle, financially dependent on their father, even though they are old enough to start living their own lives.

Tea is an awkward affair in which the children are ever alert to the moods of their father, Colonel Pargiter, who dispenses money to his son for good grades but chastises his daughters for spending money at the department store. Afterwards, left to themselves in the drawing room, Milly and Delia peek out of the window at a passing man, and Eleanor warns, "<Dont> be caught looking" (18). The atmosphere is tense and restless: "There was a wildness in the spring evening which made it hard for the girls to settle [*to anything*] <down to any occupation>….They had had no exercise—except a short walk to Whiteleys & back" (18–19). When a similar scene appears near the beginning of *The Years,* it is preceded by a description of the weather outside, a scene of their father's visit to his mistress, and a short sketch of what is happening in the street. It is also interrupted by a scene that follows Rose upstairs. The original chapter in *The Pargiters*—which opens in the drawing room and stays in it—intensifies the girls' sense of claustrophobia.

The essay that follows focuses on this claustrophobia as well. The lecturer voice re-emerges with, "This then is what happened at 56 Abercorn Terrace on March 16th

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square brackets; a word crossed out by Woolf but editorially restored is in square brackets and italics; a word inserted by Woolf is in angle brackets; and a word inserted and later crossed out by Woolf but editorially restored is in square brackets, angle brackets, and italics.

1880—a long time ago, you will say—over fifty years ago." The speaker describes the girls as "young and healthy" but having "nothing to do." She assumes that these characters from fifty years ago "rouse pity and contempt in you," and imagines her modern audience asking why the girls did not go to college (28). Citing memoirs, she argues that Colonel Pargiter would have likely either forbidden his daughters from going to college on ideological grounds or pled poverty after paying for his sons' education. Unlike the narrator of the chapters, who stays close to the action, the narrator of the essays pulls back from the individual case and moves towards the larger society, claiming that this family is important because it represents many others. While some might read the sisters' inaction as bourgeois idleness, she rewrites it as enforced ignorance. Woolf's speaker thus tries to correct what she sees as gaps in her auditors' knowledge of history.

More than that, though, she sees the study of history itself as full of gaps. Her case study of the Pargiter family cannot be sufficiently explained by what is traditionally considered "history": e.g., Lord John Russell, the Second Reform Bill, etc. In this way, Woolf indicts the narrative that has been supplied by historians and tries to build an alternate feminist social history out of the memoirs that underlie her novel.

But the speaker of the Essays does not always stay at the level of historical evidence and larger pictures. In the midst of discussing Colonel Pargiter's representativeness, Woolf's essayist-narrator wanders back into the fictional world she has created: Pargiter "did not like the idea" of ladies studying art seriously because it would involve painting from the nude, i.e., seeing naked men, so "[Milly's] most successful sketch—of a cottage in Surrey—was hung in the dining room over the mantle piece under the dagger."[3] Then she stops, as if to admonish herself for letting herself re-enter the fictional story:

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[3] This sketch, like the embroidery in *Maude,* the imagined and real paintings in Eliot's novels, and the carving in *Story of an African Farm,* is a static item that represents atemporal truth within the narrative-based truth that flows around it. In this case, the sketch represents

> But we do not want to spend too much time over these details. In reading a novel, if it is a novel of any value, we must now and again shut one eye to the detail, and try to realise the structure; that is, the conviction which, though never explicitly stated, is yet always there, in a novel of any merit, controlling the apparently inevitable succession. It is the same, with obvious differences, in life. (30)

In other words, the way to interpret either fiction or real life is not to pay exclusive attention to the details, which can vary widely, but to step back and recognize the deeper common structures.

Returning to the more abstract concerns of the essayist, Woolf goes on to isolate "money" and "love" as the controlling elements of her drawing-room scene: familial love, money that the father controls, and "street love, common love"—i.e., sex—the enforced ignorance of which keeps Victorian women indoors, unable to walk alone (36). When Eleanor warns, "Don't be caught looking," her sisters blush because "they wanted to look at the young man; they knew it was wrong to look; they did look; they were caught looking; they disliked being caught; they were ashamed, indignant, confused" (38). Woolf unpacks this tumble of emotions from a brief incident in the chapter that would have been easy to overlook. It is not part of the novelistic project to explain the historical legacy of sexual repression that afflicts the Pargiter girls, but Woolf undertakes to do so in this Second Essay. Their father's—and society's—requirement that they be kept in sexual innocence leads to confinement and neurosis. Thus, in this first chapter/essay pairing, Woolf implies that novels may not supply the whole picture (since the Essay is needed to supplement the Chapter). She also proposes that readers analyze novels (and their own lives) for concepts that lie beneath the surface detail.

Transformed into *The Years*, the sisters' desires and frustrations become much less explicit. Delia of *The Pargiters*, after exclaiming "Oh my God!" is told by Eleanor that she should ask their father to send her to college, and she counters that she would

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Milly's inability to get a real art education, and by extension, the limits placed around female artistic imagination.

rather study music in Germany (19). Delia of *The Years* says nothing after "Oh my God!", and this is the response:

> "Look here, Delia," said Eleanor, shutting her book, "you've only got to wait…" She meant but she could not say it, "until Mama dies."
> "No, no, no," said Delia, stretching her arms out. "It's hopeless…" (19)

In this passage, it is unclear what exactly Delia wants, and what is hopeless about it. The barriers to the sisters' happiness could just as easily be psychological as political. Unfinished sentences and ellipses become quite common in *The Years*, liberating the reader in some sense to fill in the gaps, but at the same time losing the pointed cultural criticism of *The Pargiters*.

The visual sphere is an important aspect of *The Pargiters*. The Woolf-like writer giving a lecture makes herself visible to her audience, which helps embody both writer and audience. Since "don't be caught looking" is the admonishment that keeps the Pargiter girls in their place, and Milly is forbidden from looking at nudes, Woolf seems to encourage female looking, whether among women artists in search of subject matter or among women readers who look into this novel for insight into their lives. Nevertheless, the lecturer instructs readers to "shut one eye to the detail." Woolf seems to be encouraging a disciplined looking, one that does not stop at the surface of the visual world but rather seeks out underlying concepts such as financial control and repressed sexuality. Only one eye is shut in this scenario, allowing women to both see everything they need to see and retain their critical faculties, not getting absorbed in the individual characters and events as novel readers are typically encouraged to do.

The Second Chapter concerns ten-year-old Rose, who does get caught looking. Escaping from the house, she walks down the street alone at dusk to buy a toy at a nearby store, passing a man at a pillar box who "smiled <very queerly> at her." On the way home, "When she reached the pillar box there was the man again. He was leaning against it, as if he were ill, Rose thought, filled with the same terror again; [*but*] he was lit up by

the lamp. There was nobody else anywhere in sight. As she ran past him, he gibbered some nonsense at her, sucking his lips in & out; & began to undo his clothes…" (43, ellipses in original). Rose flees in terror; later at home, she "could not possibly tell Eleanor what she had seen. It was not only that she had been very naughty, running out alone. It was that she was terrified, not only terrified: somehow, it was horrid, nasty, what she had seen: she could not tell anyone: not even Eleanor. He had undressed…" (48, ellipses in original). Like the sentences describing the feelings of Milly and Delia when they are "caught looking," the pileup of short clauses in these sentences describing Rose's reaction to the exhibitionist represents the intensity of feelings surrounding this event, as states of mind are described only to be soon superseded by new feelings.

The Third Essay returns to Woolf's theme of "street love" as one of the types of love that determine and constrict the Pargiter girls' lives. To counteract the scene's fictional provenance, the speaker-essayist affirms that it is based in fact: "that children of Rose's age are frequently assaulted, and sometimes far more brutally than she was—is familiar to any one who reads the Police Court news" (50). She laments that novelists have not been able to portray the truth of experiences like Rose's: nothing of the kind, the essayist notes, is described in the novels of Trollope, Gaskell, Oliphant, or Meredith. The "three dots" after the sentence "He unbuttoned his clothes" represent "a convention, supported by law, which forbids, whether rightly or wrongly, any plain description of the sight that Rose, in common with many other little girls, saw under the lamp post by the pillar box in the dusk of that March evening."[4] Although the essayist seems nearly as reticent as the novelist to pinpoint what Rose saw, the essay makes it clear to an extent

[4] November has become March. Although *The Pargiters* never went beyond the draft stage, and thus inconsistencies are to be expected, this slippage may be a further, if unconscious, way of interrupting the reader's belief in the fictional world the novelist has created—or of historicizing the fictional: if such episodes regularly happened to girls on the streets of London, for it to be described as happening in both November and March would be reasonable. The single event is being raised to the level of the trend.

that the novel chapter does not: the essayist tells us that Rose begins to seek out her father's books on tropical diseases, because they contain "certain pictures" (51).

The speaker compares the ellipses-using novelist to Rose: both are too traumatized to recount the experience and must trail off into speechlessness. By arguing that the conventions of novel-writing have been inadequate to represent sexuality, once again the speaker urges the reader to step back from the novel, this time not to realize its deeper structures, but to realize its absences. Novelists themselves are part of the society in which women are told, "Don't be caught looking."

Woolf thus trains the reader not to count on the novel for a full picture of experience, especially female experience. The verisimilar details that are the novel's strength make claims for the completeness of the fictional world presented, but Woolf shows that the novelist, herself, is a human being who has been traumatized by patriarchy in much the same way as her characters have been. The essayist-lecturer, on the other hand, can reach an understanding of those limitations along with her listener-reader.

Oxford Chapters: Gendered Pedagogy

The remaining three chapter/essay pairs in *The Pargiters* take place, not in London, where the Pargiters live, but in Oxford. The Third Chapter focuses on the Pargiter girls' older brother Edward, an undergraduate at Oxford University. In his comfortable rooms, drinking port supplied by his father, he dreams of winning a fellowship and "stay[ing] at Oxford for ever. Nothing in the whole world seemed to him so desirable" (59). He is distracted from reading *Antigone* by thoughts of his cousin Kitty, on whom he has a crush; the "abstract reverence for womanhood that the thought of Antigone and Ismene inspired" easily transitions into feelings of "the same wonder and awe" for Kitty (68). He writes her a love poem in Greek, throws it in the fire, and is visited by two fellow undergraduates who are rivals for his attention, pondering, as he watches them bicker, "the extraordinary complications of college life—how impossible

this sort of thing makes it to settle down & get on with one's work" (74). Later that night, he removes a photograph of Kitty from his complete works of Byron and thinks her "the loveliest, the purest, the most exalted of women" (75).

The speaker of the Fourth Essay points out that the preceding chapter is "inevitably imperfect"; it cannot adequately portray the extent of Edward's immersion in the male educational tradition, as the novelist is an outsider to that tradition. Not only women, but foreigners and working-class men, would be unable to fully understand this tradition, she notes (78). With this, she reminds the reader that novels are written by individuals and thus invariably have blind spots, while emphasizing how exclusive the traditions are that surround Edward. The self-assured fictional world that the novelist has presented is really just a product of her limited experience. Thus Woolf reveals the inadequacies of the novelist that underlie her attempts to describe the world.

After that caveat, the speaker examines how Edward has been brainwashed by public schools and Oxford, "which had been working upon [him] ever since he was a boy of ten" (76). Moreover, his feelings for Kitty are based not on actually knowing her, or knowing women at all, but on his reading of classical love poetry and on seeing her "half a dozen times in his life at dances and dinners and picnics" (82). Any sexual feelings he might have towards her have to be sublimated into writing Greek poetry, in accordance with the training he has received from his headmasters (and also in accordance with this training, he must judge his poem, declare it bad, and burn it). Thus the Fourth Essay emphasizes that the men of the era are not exempt from the social conventions that constrain women.

The Fourth Chapter focuses on Kitty, who, though slightly older than the Pargiter girls (she is twenty-one), also lives in a stifling domestic situation: at home with her parents, the Master of St. Katherine's College at Oxford and his wife. Kitty's sense of oppression from endless academic dinner parties is relieved only by her weekly lessons with her history tutor, Miss Craddock. Though according to Miss Craddock Kitty has

"Quite an original mind," she struggles to keep up with the assigned reading, because "though she had certainly not tired herself by reading hard for eight hours a day" like her cousin Edward, she is tired from days filled with taking visiting professors' wives to see the sights of Oxford and pouring tea for the awkward undergraduates her father invites to the Lodge (101–102). Nevertheless, Kitty is energized by her lessons with Miss Craddock, who makes her feel that "learning was a wonderful thing: or was it that Miss Craddock was a wonderful woman; or was it both together?" (102). Only to Miss Craddock can she confide her hatred of Oxford and desire to live in the country—a desire that is bound up in Kitty's mind with a memory of a trip to the country in which a farmer's son kissed her.

The Fifth Essay explains that the income Kitty's father receives from Oxford is modest enough to require great skill from Kitty's mother to keep up appearances and keep visiting dignitaries comfortable—and to require Kitty to assist her mother in these activities—and that thus they make up part of the unpaid labor that keeps Oxford running (106–108). This unspoken determining factor of money can also be seen in the threadbare rooms of Miss Craddock, who though educated is excluded due to her sex from the more comfortable life Kitty's father enjoys at Oxford.

Love is also present in Kitty's world, if unspoken: Kitty has been constrained since childhood "from saying anything or doing anything which could suggest even remotely that she felt physically or ideally attracted" to a boy (109). It is her variation of being told "Don't be caught looking." Love also appears in the bond Kitty feels for Miss Craddock, whom she idolizes as a "woman who had fought her way, as Kitty would like to fight her way, through obstacles." But it is more than that: "Kitty…when she fell in love with Miss Craddock was falling in love with something which seemed to her wonderful, new, exciting—the disinterested passion for things in themselves; so that however much she scamped her history, she knew that history to Miss Craddock was a thing to starve oneself for; to drudge after; to love for itself" (112). Kitty's reading of

history with Miss Craddock is not on a level to impress her father and his colleagues, however: and here Woolf's lecturer quotes a professor from the 1880s, who reported shutting down wearisome young ladies trying make intellectual conversation at dinner parties with the remark: "Your conversational utterances are feeble" (123).

This pair of chapters on Edward's and Kitty's lives at Oxford presents glimpses into the different formal and informal educations that young upper-middle-class men and women received in 1880. Always pushing against the reader who may feel "pity and contempt" for her Victorian characters, Woolf reveals the pressures on both Edward and Kitty to conform to the expectations of the previous generation: Edward is being molded into an Oxford don with little knowledge of the world outside books, like Kitty's father, and Kitty is being taught to be pleasing and self-sacrificing and practical, like her mother. On a material level, Edward has the money, leisure, and solitude to pursue his studies, while Kitty in essence has an unpaid job at home helping her mother. The knock on Edward's door that signals interruption by his friends is something Kitty doesn't experience, as she has no door separating her interior world from the social world.[5] Her private life (and home) are permeable to the demands of family and guests. The space of the Lodge is already populated, as Woolf shows in detail, with a complex society including Kitty's parents, tea-drinking undergraduates, and the servants.

These different experiences have led Edward and Kitty to develop different styles of thought. While Edward moves from abstract to concrete—the abstract contemplation of Woman in *Antigone* to the specific example of Kitty, for example—Kitty is surrounded by the concrete details of everyday life and can only occasionally move into the abstract. Realizing this, Miss Craddock is able to transform Kitty's schoolgirl

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[5] This knock on the door recalls the guest at the door in Woolf's January 1931 speech, the one that precedes "the most interesting, exciting, and important conversation that has ever been heard" (*Pargiters* xxxxiv). Women like Kitty are shut out from this kind of interaction because they do not have a room of their own to which they can admit people by their own volition.

idolization of her into a more general attachment to history, and thus gives Kitty the gift of "the disinterested passion for things in themselves." And this, I would argue, is exactly what Woolf hopes to give the reader via the history lessons she provides in the Essays of *The Pargiters*. Like Miss Craddock, channeling Kitty's love for her into a love for history, Woolf seeks to depersonalize the readers' feelings: to channel them away from attachment to one character or another and towards attachment to the larger historical narrative that underlies the characters' individual lives. This larger narrative would not then be seen as dry, disconnected facts, but as intimately connected to everyday life.

This mobilization of feeling to enhance thought recalls George Eliot's use of epigraphs to integrate knowledge with feeling in order to achieve the state in which "knowledge passes instantly into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge" (*Middlemarch* 223). It also recalls Schreiner's description of allegory as "the passion of abstract ideas" (First and Scott 182) and Rossetti's insistence that feelings can be best expressed in technically skilled verse. All four authors use formal variations on the novel to integrate the supposedly female strength in matters of emotion into a kind of knowledge that they would claim is enhanced, rather than being impaired, by feeling.

The Fifth Chapter presents one last interior, the household of Kitty's friend Nelly, where Kitty is invited to tea. Nelly is "Lucy Craddock's favorite pupil," a much more hard-working student than Kitty; she is also "the daughter of a poor man, and was going to earn her living as a doctor" (129). At tea, Nelly's father asks, "You're reading history with Lucy Craddock?" without the condescension or irony Kitty hears at the Lodge; it is her first encounter with a man who respects education in women (136). Although Mr. Brook does not have her father's status in the academic hierarchy—he rose from the working class and is "attached to the University in some nondescript way"—he is still an educated person, and thus his respect impresses her (137). A few pages later, the manuscript breaks off, and then Woolf rewrites the scene, expanding this exchange—she adds Mr. Brook asking,"You're fond of history?"—and highlighting the entrance into the

room of Nelly's brother Jo (140). Arriving with a "shaving of wood" in his hair, as he has been mending chicken coops, Jo serves himself tea, which gives Kitty—whose job is usually to pour tea for undergraduates—the feeling of "being on a spree" or having "given her nurse the slip" (144). The chapter ends with Kitty back at home and drawing a circle around September 1st in her calendar "as if to [emphasize] the fact that whatever happened, she would force herself to find a way of becoming a farmer & leaving Oxford" (149).

The speaker of the Sixth Essay does not step to the foreground immediately, but begins by still focalizing through Kitty: "Kitty was puzzled" as she stands in the Brooks' living room—she had thought her parents' lives were the best lives imaginable, yet the Brooks have different attitudes that Kitty finds refreshing. The speaker breaks in—"There was perhaps some excuse for Kitty's bewilderment"—and describes how limited her reading and her experience have been (150). Kitty's bewilderment returns in free indirect discourse, in the amazed statement, "Mr Brook was actually proud of his daughter's brain" (153). Then the speaker describes some of more progressive viewpoints in Oxford from which Kitty would have been sheltered. She cites as an historical example the working-class scholar Joseph Wright, an example that stretches into several pages, longer than any of the previous historical examples in *The Pargiters,* with extensive quotations from Wright's letters. Untainted by the five-hundred-year-old public-school-and-Oxbridge tradition, Wright was free to draw his own conclusions about the proper roles of men and women, and he decided they should be equal. A letter to his wife expounding on these ideas breaks off, and the next paragraph brings back Kitty: "But Kitty Malone never had the honour of knowing Joseph Wright or of hearing his views on education, society, and the proper conduct of life" (158). Nevertheless, she comes home from tea with the Brooks full of new thoughts:

> Sympathy does not necessarily mean self-effacement. Money is not everything. Love….but by the time she reached that word, Kitty, who, it must be remembered, though she had been

> having tea at Pinbright Road had been dining at Balliol…her mind was such a whirl of questions and doubts and difficulties; she felt so young, so excited, so strong, so adventurous; so fettered, so impeded; so indignant; so flattered: so full of excitement and envy, and hope and fear....All these thoughts and ideas and sensations beat such a tattoo in her brain—but none of this could by any possibility be spoken to anybody—that there was nothing for it but to take her pen, dip it in red ink, and draw another circle, very firmly, round September the 1st. Partridge shooting begins." (159)

And so Kitty falls asleep at the end of the day, seemingly drawn back into the circle of upper-middle-class leisure, or perhaps attempting to break away from her tea-pouring duties at Oxford by pursuits in nature and in the country. Interestingly, this whirlwind of feelings resembles in syntactical form the feelings experienced by Milly, Delia, and Rose Pargiter after they are "caught looking." Kitty, too, has seen something new that inspires her fear and desire: a model for equality between men and women. However, like them, she does not have the wherewithal to "shut one eye" to the various stimulating things she has seen, and seek out their larger meaning. If she and the Pargiter sisters had this capacity, they would not be so swept up in their feelings; they would instead have the feeling/knowledge balance that Woolf advocates. Woolf tries to give the reader the opportunity to achieve this balance by interrupting the action with analysis and contemplation.

After the Sixth Essay, *The Pargiters*, as novel-essay, breaks off. The fiction that Woolf continued to write about the Pargiter family became part of *The Years*; she wrote no more essay sections.

Abandonment of the Project

Like in the texts by Rossetti, Eliot, and Schreiner, Woolf alternates an "I" speaker with an invisible omniscient narrator. This "I" speaker carries with it a more embodied and immediate sense of point of view than the narrator, who must balance any desire for editorial comment with an ideal of transparency. In Woolf's case, this "I" speaker is represented as a writer and as the author of the fictional chapters. The reader is recalled to this fact—the fact of the writer—after each chapter in which he or she might be tempted

to be drawn into the story and forget its origin in the imagination of an individual writer who is full of fallibilities and limitations. Framed by a speaker who is constantly bringing us "behind the scenes" of the realist novel, the novel itself is shown to be a fallible genre as well.

The reader is constantly questioned as to whether the novel is being historically accurate ("fact-checked" by the essays, *The Pargiters* passes this test), honest (*The Pargiters* fails this test when it refuses to name what Rose experiences in her encounter with the man under the streetlamp), and complete (novels proliferate in superficial details to which readers must "shut one eye" to perceive deeper structures). Perhaps Woolf hoped the reader thus trained could apply this understanding of novelistic narrative to future novels he or she consumes: to find novel-reading useful for understanding one's own experience, as the speech-making "I" persona hopes the members of the Society for Women's Service will, as well as to realize the novel is at times limited in what it can describe. Perhaps the reader can supply the "essay" portions on his or her own when reading future novels.

But ultimately, Woolf seems to have decided that even the reader of this, the Pargiter narrative, should supply any such analysis and discussion on his or her own. The fate of *The Pargiters* provides an interesting contrast to the first text I discussed in this dissertation, Rossetti's *Maude*. Unlike *Maude*, in which the discursive voice outlives the narrative voice (Rossetti put the narrative portions of *Maude* away and published the poems), the narrative voice in *The Pargiters* outlives the discursive voice: Woolf put the discursive portions of *The Pargiters* away and built the narrative portions into a novel (only a small portion of the essay material makes it into *Three Guineas*). That is not to say that Woolf found the mode of discourse inadequate for her needs, for she was a prolific essayist. Her essays frequently made use of narrative, so she did not believe that narrative and discursive modes could never mix. But the "novel-essay" was an experiment she could not sustain.

Why did Woolf attempt *The Pargiters*, and why did she abandon it? I would argue that the Woolf attempted it because she was trying to find a new way to write about public and private concurrently. Rather than a public history of public life—"In the year 1842 Lord John Russell brought in the Second Reform Bill" (9)—she wanted to create a public history of private life. With this mixture, she claims historical value for her account of sisters around a teapot, a type of history quite different from the Great Men version of history. The characters in *The Pargiters* are cut off, in their individual drawing rooms, from the public world, and Woolf tries to bring them into the larger historical picture through a more public kind of discourse involving historical facts and critical analysis. With the information provided by the Essays, Rose and her sisters are no longer just themselves; instead, they represent middle-class English women in 1880: their repressions, their limitations, and their attempts to find meaning in a world of male privilege. Woolf widens the view to take in society's pressure on the characters rather than focusing exclusively on them as individuals. This greater level of abstraction—such as distilling down the details of the Pargiter family to "love" and "money"—encourages the reader (imagined as a woman working in the professions) to ask how such concepts shaped her grandmother's life and are still at work in her own life.

The Years, as it was ultimately published, lacks the pointedness of this analysis. The events that are analyzed with great focus in *The Pargiters* are just part of a great many events that happen to a family over time in *The Years*. It would be possible to read the tea-boiling scene in *The Years* without interpreting the sense of claustrophobia as rooted in women's lack of opportunities, or Edward's evening at Oxford without deciding his limitations are the result of centuries of brainwashing by the male educational system. In short, it is possible to read without generalizing. Characters remain resolutely individual, events contingent.

What *The Pargiters* also loses in becoming *The Years* is the first-person voice of the essayist, the "here and now" purpose of her speech, and the sense that she is speaking

to a particular audience with a particular rhetorical goal. It loses those "margins" of the novel that the female writers discussed in this dissertation found so useful for presenting unspeakable (unspeakable, that is, by the novel as it then existed) female experience.

But ultimately Woolf may have felt that directing the reader in a search for structure was less to challenge the authority of the novelistic narrator than to lay another kind of authority over it. Though she professes suspicion of novelistic detail, her essays in *The Pargiters* are constantly proliferating more details even while they seek to isolate and discuss details from the previous chapters. Even her initial warning that "we do not want to spend too much time over these details" is directly preceded by a most intriguing detail: "[Milly's] most successful sketch—of a cottage in Surrey—was hung in the dining room over the mantle piece under the dagger" (30). That this insipid sketch—the only kind possible since Milly was not allowed to study art seriously—was placed under what is presumably her father's dagger is a most amusing and revealing detail: it reifies, in the form of interior decoration, her subjection to the phallic power of the patriarchy. But Woolf could not possibly note the implication of every novelistic detail. By dropping the essays, she allows the reader the freedom to choose which details to attend to.

Moreover, the speech-maker exercises a type of authority with which Woolf's alter ego appears to be uncomfortable. In the very first sentence of *The Pargiters*, she claims that when asked to give the speech she is now giving, "it would be untrue to say that I accepted with pleasure. It seems to me that the profession of lecturing ought to have been abolished long ago." She continues: "speech-making is an effervescence of foam—intoxicating to vanity, obstructive of truth" (5). We have seen that Woolf aligns herself with Miss Craddock as a historian—rather than, say, with Kitty's father, who chastises Kitty for not "grasping the importance of historical…facts" (93). Miss Craddock is more interactive in her teaching style, more aware of her audience, and more ambivalent about her pedagogical authority: "What can I teach her?...It is for Kitty to teach me" (113). Ultimately this makes her more successful in teaching Kitty history than Kitty's father

had been. Such an unwillingness to "lecture" may be one reason Woolf decides to abandon a project in which readers are led by an authority figure—not unlike an Oxford professor in a lecture hall, perhaps?—in interpreting the deep structures of a novel.

To gain more insight into the demise of *The Pargiters*, it may help to look at what was going on in the manuscript right before Woolf abandoned the project. The breakdown of *The Pargiters* can be seen in the fifth chapter/sixth essay pair. Despite the fact that the essayist feels the need to break in on Kitty's story to fill in what she cannot possibly know, there is an equal pull back into Kitty's consciousness. There is crossover, too, in which paragraphs that are focalized through Kitty include quotations she could not know, from extra-diegetic memoirs that Woolf had cited in earlier essays. The tension becomes most obvious in the long description of Joseph Wright, which is completely unintegrated into Kitty's consciousness. Nevertheless, the essayist appears compelled to return to her, and the final glimpse into her state of mind is full of energy, suspense, and complexity. The essay-novel is becoming a novel.

The fact that the chapter ends with Kitty resolving to leave Oxford and the essay ends with Kitty coming to a much more ambiguous resolution (both marked by the same gesture of circling a date in the calendar) shows how caught up Woolf is in this fictional crisis. The novelist seems to want her to escape Oxford, or at least to give Kitty enough independence from the historical meta-narrative to make the choice herself whether to stay or go; the essayist seems to realize that for Kitty to be representative, she must fail. At this point there is no way for Woolf to move forward without choosing to be either essayist or novelist.

Transformation into *The Years* and *Three Guineas*

Is it the case then, as Woolf wrote in "The New Biography," that "the truth of real life" and "the truth of fiction" are incompatible? Facts and events, which Woolf calls "granite" and which are the staple of history and biography, co-exist uneasily with details

that reveal character, the intangible "rainbow" that exists in fiction (229). *The Pargiters* may be read as evidence that the two cannot meet, but I would read it as a stage on the way to other works that mix fact and fiction—and discourse and narrative—in a way Woolf found more effective. *The Years* and *Three Guineas*, which each use parts of *The Pargiters*, continue her genre-crossing experiments, as does her autobiographical essay collection, *Moments of Being*.

Far from being a dead end because of its genre experimentation, *The Pargiters* is a unique attempt to fulfill the ambitions of Woolf's 1929 essay "Women and Fiction," ambitions that *The Years, Three Guineas,* and *Moments of Being* also take up. In "Women and Fiction," Woolf asks why nineteenth-century women writers, when they were no longer prohibited from writing, tended to make the novel their genre of choice. The reason was that, back then, "a woman lived almost solely in her home and her emotions"—home and emotions being the central foci of the novel: "living as she did in the common sitting-room, surrounded by people, a woman was trained to use her mind in observation and upon the analysis of character. She was trained to be a novelist and not a poet" (46). Today, Woolf writes, the sphere of the woman writer has widened: she is now "a voter, a wage-earner, a responsible citizen," which has given her "both in her life and in her art a turn towards the impersonal" (50). The result, she predicts, will be novels less focused on the home and emotions, and more focused on society, politics, and philosophical matters: "The novel will cease to be the dumping-ground for the personal emotions" (51). More than that, women writers will expand their horizons from the novel to other genres, such as "essays and criticism…history and biography" (52). *The Pargiters* is an attempt to be the type of novel that Woolf predicted: no longer confined to the sitting room and to emotions, it includes—through the essays—both the public space of the lecture-hall in which Woolf's writer-persona addresses her audience of working woman, and the abstract concepts (economics, sexuality, history) that underlie the emotional turmoil of the fictional characters. Furthermore, it is hardly even a novel

anymore, becoming through its genre mixing something more like criticism or an essay—thus coming even closer to Woolf's goal for women writers of total freedom in what they write.

Although *The Years* lacks the essayistic interludes of *The Pargiters*, it would be untrue to say that it has nothing unusual separating the chapters. Instead, the chapters each begin with a description of the weather. The 1880 chapter begins, "It was an uncertain spring"; the 1891 chapter, "The autumn wind blew over England"; the 1907 chapter, "It was midsummer; and the nights were hot" (3, 84, 121). Although the "I" character telling us that the Pargiter family represents many others like them is absent, the descriptions of the weather make the point that people struggle with common pressures and react in common ways: "…in April such weather was to be expected. Thousands of shop assistants made that remark….virgins and spinsters…carefully measured out one, two, three, four spoonfuls of tea" (3). Multitudes of people are described as doing the same thing: "clerks paused with their pens on the ruled page" (84). Everyone is affected by the same atmosphere, whether meteorological or social, so that the activities of the individual may be taken as representative of a larger society. The weather report is how Woolf conveys what she does with corroboration from memoirs in *The Pargiters*. That seasons are described also breaks up the linear narrative by referring to cyclical patterns in time. While the chapter titles—"1880," "1891," etc.—only move in one direction, the seasons recur and repeat. This lyricism is more in line with the discursive sections that Rossetti, Eliot, and Schreiner use to interrupt their novels.

The voice of the essayist also migrates into some of the characters, although they are not as able to articulate or analyze their situations as clearly as a literary critic or historian could. As we discussed, looking out the window in *The Years,* Delia can only say, "Oh, my God!"; we are not told directly that she is not able to walk alone outdoors, or that she is unable to study art (18). Her outburst elicits this response: "'Look here, Delia,' said Eleanor, shutting her book, 'you've only got to wait…' She meant but could

not say it, 'until Mama dies'" (19). The book is full of many half-sentences ending in ellipses or dashes, as if to exploit what Woolf had criticized in *The Pargiters*: the novelist's prerogative to omit, to be opaque, and to allow ambiguity. Other examples of unfinished sentences in *The Years* include Rose saying, "I saw…" to Eleanor when she tries to describe the assault and Kitty saying "I want…" to her father but neither of them finishing her sentence (40, 71).

Significantly, at the end of *The Years*, "And now?" are Eleanor's last words, the last words by any character in the novel (412). It is as if Woolf is bringing us back to the adverbial indicators Genette described ("here," "now," etc.) that have been expunged along with the essays. Very briefly, Eleanor becomes the voice of the essayist, asking the reader to do something with the fiction that has been provided—supply its lacunae and link it to the present and to the reader's own life in the "here and now."

One hint as to why *The Pargiters* failed may be found in a comment of Gérard Genette's in "Frontiers of Narrative": while "narrative inserted into discourse is transformed into an element of discourse, discourse inserted into narrative remains discourse and forms a sort of cyst that is very easy to recognize and locate" (*Figures* 141). As the narrative details proliferated and the story of the Pargiter family got longer and more unwieldy, and started to become the overarching structure of the piece, Woolf may have begun to feel that the discourse sections were increasingly out of place and cyst-like. Unlike narratives that keep sections of discourse as small, contained parts of the whole (in epigraphs, for instance, as Eliot did), Rossetti's and Woolf's discourse sections enter into competition with the narrative. That may have led Rossetti and Woolf to split their narrative/discourse hybrids into their component parts.

On the other hand, "narrative inserted into discourse" does not have that problem, according to Genette. Woolf's previous long essay, *A Room of One's Own,* brings narrative into the discourse smoothly, spinning the tale of Shakespeare's sister as an example of women's lack of opportunity. The narrative sections do not become

sufficiently long to destabilize the frame of discourse. Similarly, in the long essay *Three Guineas*, Woolf does not let the narrative take on a life of its own.

Three Guineas incorporates some of the historical facts, memoirs, and analysis from *The Pargiters* to create an argument that women's liberation from the patriarchal family and Europe's liberation from dictatorship and war-making are inseparable goals. Like *The Pargiters*, *Three Guineas* attempts to connect public and private. It takes a "public" issue—war—and contrasts it with a "private" issue—women's experience in the patriarchal family—and argues they are one and the same, because Fascists and patriarchs both endeavor to "dictate to other human beings how they shall live" (53). Near the end of *Three Guineas*, the letter-writer describes the portrait of a dictator and points out that he is human despite his larger-than-life persona: "It suggests that the public and the private worlds are inseparably connected….For such will be our ruin if you in the immensity of your public abstractions forget the private figure, or if we in the intensity of our private emotions forget the public world" (142). Though the man may be a dictator and may represent abstract evil, he is also a man with a private life. Everyone participates in both worlds at once, and therefore attention must be paid to both to solve the problems of either. With *Three Guineas*, Woolf writes a kind of history neither confined to nor excluding the Great Men, but rather linking the two.

The epistolary form of *Three Guineas* is reminiscent of the lecture/audience form of *The Pargiters*. Like the "I" and "you" of *The Pargiters*, there is an "I" and "you" in *Three Guineas*, although the "I" and "you" in *Three Guineas* are not writer/lecturer and public audience, but writer and individual letter-reader. Rather than the public address of the speech-maker (which made her alter ego uncomfortable in *The Pargiters*), she uses the device of an individual letter-writer writing to an individual recipient, perhaps a less didactic way of being discursive. Nonetheless, the discourse form lends an embodied specificity to the writer and an immediacy to the interaction. As Madeline Hummel writes, one feature of the epistolary form is "its promise to be revelatory…we anticipate

hearing secret truths" (153). This situation of a writer-persona confiding in the reader, and perhaps revealing hesitations and self-contradictions, is similar to the direct communication enacted in *The Pargiters;* both reveal the fallibility of the writer. In both the discursive framing of the two works and the shared preoccupation with public and private, techniques and goals Woolf adapted from *The Pargiters* allow her, in *Three Guineas*, to explore the "bridge which connects the private house with the world of public life" (18).

In another return to some of the goals of *The Pargiters*, Woolf fashioned her autobiographical works to depart from the sense of propriety in Victorian novels, as if to address the silence that Rose and the narrator of *The Pargiters* feel compelled to maintain regarding her expedition to Lamley's store.[6] Several times in her autobiographical writings collected in the posthumously published collection *Moments of Being*, she reveals childhood sexual abuse. In doing so she finds political use in putting one's private experience in the public sphere: exploding the privacy of the Victorian family can give a voice to its less powerful members. A self-deprecating passage in an essay Woolf wrote for the "Memoir Club," a group of her friends, protests that her memoirs are unworthy: "My memoirs, which are always private, and at their best only about proposals of marriage, seductions by half-brothers, encounters with Ottoline and so on, must soon run dry. Nobody now asks me to marry them; for many years nobody has attempted to seduce me. Prime Ministers never consult me" (204). And yet, despite these obstacles, by writing her memoirs down and reading them aloud, Woolf finds the start of yet another way to claim the importance of private life to the public sphere. Once again, she uses the

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[6] Leaska claims that there are more omissions of sexual details in *The Pargiters* than occur in the the scene and discussion of Rose's expedition. He describes Woolf as "pargeting" (in the sense of smoothing over) when she alters various sexual and potentially autobiographical details in the novel-essay. As Woolf replaces the "broader explicitness of prose" by the "high compression of poetry," Leaska writes, the novel becomes "highly ambiguous" (176). Woolf corrects this ambiguity in the straightforward revelations of *Moments of Being*.

discursive "I" persona of the writer to forge a bond with the reader, breaking the Victorian taboo against the author's face appearing (or what Christina Rossetti would call the sin of "display") and the autobiographical moment that ensues.

Another aspect of *The Pargiters* that receives further development in *Moments of Being* is the treatment of time. In *The Pargiters*, Woolf stops the clock of the fictional chapters to step back and reveal, in the essays, the influence of a larger sweep of historical time as well as to explore more abstract concepts that drive society such as love and money. In her essay "A Sketch of the Past," part of *Moments of Being,* Woolf explores the notion that time is not steady, regular, and linear, but instead consists of intermittent "moments of being" in which there is a "revelation…of some real thing behind appearances." These moments reveal to us with a "shock" that "behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this" (72). The rhythm of "A Sketch of the Past" thus is not that of a series of unfolding events, but rather a collection of images, feelings, and sensations that in different ways reveal this underlying pattern.

In her introduction to *Moments of Being*, Jeanne Schulkind describes how this preoccupation with such an underlying pattern pervades Woolf's fiction, citing examples from *The Waves* and *To the Lighthouse* of characters losing their individual consciousness and merging into a larger whole (18). The essays in *The Pargiters* are another instance of such "moments of being" in that they try to show the pattern that lies behind appearances, although the pattern is one more based on history and society—what Woolf would call "fact"—than in the novels. The individuality of the characters in *The Pargiters* recedes to the background in the essays not because they are achieving spiritual communion with nature and the people around them, but as they become part of larger historical forces.

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In *The Pargiters*, Virginia Woolf experiments with putting genres in dialogue with each other in ways that evolve further in *The Years, Three Guineas*, and her autobiographical writings. But *The Pargiters* itself is perhaps the most radical in its refusal to let either "granite" or "rainbow" have the final say. It contains a convincing fictional world, but never lets the reader forget the fallible writer and the limited novelistic conventions that determine this world. It argues for a double vision in the reader, one that balances concrete with abstract thinking, direct emotion with distilled knowledge, and sympathy for individual plights with understanding of social and historical contexts.

CONCLUSION

Novelistic discourse is always criticizing itself.
Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*

In this dissertation, I have argued that narrative interruptions in even traditional "realist" novels are worthy of attention and that reading against the grain of the overarching narrative can lead to a fuller understanding of these works. In the works I have focused on, women writers use genre variations to address gender problems: how to depict the contradictions of women's inner versus outer lives, how to insert other possibilities into the limited trajectories of the female bildungsroman, and how to balance the desire to create an emotional connection with the reader against the desire to speak with a more impersonal authority. In one sense, the fragments of these works in other genres are more intimate and personal than the prose fiction, because of their first-person voice and their subjectivity.

At the same time, they can be more distanced, atemporal, and abstract. For example, the suffering poet in Rossetti's *Maude* lacks the markers of individuality of the character delineated in the prose: the poet's concerns are universal and timeless. Similarly, while some epigraphs in Eliot seem like they could be in characters' voices, by remaining unattributed, they can also be taken as statements with a larger applicability to all of human nature. Schreiner's use of allegory departs from the level of the individual realist character and instead builds stories around personified concepts, leading her to describe allegory as the "passion of abstract ideas" (First and Scott 182). Woolf's author-persona in *The Pargiters* may create a bridge to the reader based on personal sympathy, but she also encourages a wider view of historical trends than does the novelistic narrative, which focuses on one family.

In "the novel proper," Northrop Frye writes in *Anatomy of Criticism*, "the technical problem is to dissolve all theory into personal relationships" (8). The writers I

have discussed reconstitute some of this dissolved theory by balancing the personal relationships on display in the narrative with the more historical or universal statements often contained in the other genres. Combining genres, they exhibit the "disinterested passion" that Woolf describes as the female tutor's pedagogical tool in *The Pargiters* and that Woolf herself uses in *The Pargiters* to educate her reader (112).

Thus far I have confined my arguments mostly to creating new readings concerning each text and drawing connections between them. In this conclusion, I would like to begin to put these four examples in the context of the history of the novel. In one sense, these examples fit very well into the history of the novel as described by George Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin. According to Lukács, the novel highlights the distinctions between individual and society and between the essential and the temporal. These genre-mixed works achieve this goal by contrasting very individual, essentializing discourse with the temporally- and outer-world-focused narrative. Bakhtin describes the novel as defined by its multiple voices, and the mixing of genres is one aspect of this diversity. However, the works I describe are out of the mainstream of novelistic history, involving innovation on the part of the authors. The most mainstream works discussed, George Eliot's novels, still did not inspire succeeding generations of authors to emulate her in the matter of including scores of epigraphs in each novel.

Instead, these authors seem to be taking a page out of the novel's past in choosing their cross-genre interruptions. Rossetti and Eliot incorporate poetry in ways that resemble earlier works like commonplace books or Ann Radcliffe's gothic novels. Schreiner reverts to the techniques of the allegorist and the epistolary novelist. Woolf takes on the voice of the didactic essayist-narrator. These throwbacks to older forms fight against the great power that the realist novel then held by showing literary possibilities that were not contained in the novel as it then existed and by highlighting needs that were not met by the realist structure. In Rossetti's *Maude*, for example, the poems reveal the limitations of the third-person narration to plumb the depth of the character's soul. In

Eliot's last three novels, some of the epigraphs allow for a more subjective and emotional discussion of characters' predicaments than exists in the narration, which prioritizes trying to balance the interests of many characters at once. The epigrapher is a ghost of the intrusive narrator of earlier novels, in which it was more common for the narrator to dub him- or herself "I" and address the reader as "you." Schreiner's allegorist recalls the "storyteller" for whom Walter Benjamin felt nostalgic, the pre-novelistic narrator who has a personal relationship to the listener and intends his story to be of use to its hearer. Woolf's author character in *The Pargiters* shows herself willing to go further than the novelistic narrator in talking about sexual matters tabooed by the conventions of the novel.

Bakhtin argues that genres exist in a state of "struggle," and my argument is indeed that the other genres in the novels I discuss have an oppositional quality ("Epic and Novel" 5). But Bakhtin also writes that the novel is a multivocal genre whose nature is to incorporate other genres into itself. However, these four authors' inclusion of other genres does more than just subsume the other genres into the novel. Rather, the interruptions destabilize the larger work. The works call into question Bakhtin's claim that the novel leads to the "novelization" of all other genres (320–321). Other genres can in fact exert an opposing force on the novel rather than being quietly absorbed into it.

In a sense, the works I discuss are exceptions to the progressive narrative Ian Watt presents in *The Rise of the Novel* of the development of the novel to "maturity." In this book, Watt describes how novels moved in the direction of ever greater specificity and realism. According to this narrative, Jane Austen achieves a "reconciliation" between earlier novelists Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding, with Fielding's strength being his preoccupation with society and Richardson's strength his focus on inner lives (296). Austen achieves a balance between the two when she combines the inner worlds of her characters with a more objective, detached narrator via the technique of free indirect discourse. According to Watt, this breakthrough signaled "the full maturity of the genre."

Watt furthermore commends Austen for establishing the merits of "the feminine sensibility" in the task of novel writing (298). As the four writers in this dissertation show, however, Austen's technique was not the only option for women writers.

I believe that undoing this "reconciliation" that was one source of the novel's great charisma at this time had political implications. This undoing process involved both the disruption of realism and the disruption of free indirect discourse. Linda M. Shires describes "realism" in this way:

> Through the presentation of an intelligible history, classic realism calls forth certain conventional reading practices, precisely because of the text's aesthetic. Often a hierarchy of discourses, in which truth accrues to the implied author, the narrator, and the reader, it relies on third-person omniscient narration. This type of narration tends to efface its status as discourse and promotes a sense of organic, coherent form. (65)

In the works I have discussed, the cross-genre interruptions ensure that the discourse is not self-effacing, that a sense of organic form is disrupted, and that truth does not necessarily accrue to anyone. In Rossetti's *Maude*, separate aspects of the main character are proposed by the poetry and by the prose, and no central "truth" emerges about her. In Eliot's last three novels, the "truth" arrived at by the epigrapher does not always mirror the "truth" arrived at by the narrator: the epigrapher is often more judgmental and less emotionally distanced. In Schreiner's *African Farm*, the completeness of the realist world as interpreted by a third-person narrator is called into question by the sudden appearance of a first-person-plural consciousness. And finally, in *The Pargiters*, Woolf warns that the conclusions prompted by the novelistic sections—for example, readers may feel "pity and contempt" for the Pargiter sisters for not seeking an education (28)—are misleading in light of the historical evidence contained in the essayistic sections.

Disrupting free indirect discourse also had political implications. In *The Novel and the Police,* D. A. Miller looks for traces in the novel of Michel Foucault's notion of discipline, "an ideal of unseen but all-seeing surveillance" (viii). While often seeming to

encourage transgression, he asserts, the novel actually "participate[s] in a general economy of policing power" (2). Miller describes how, in novels such as Balzac's *Une ténébreuse affaire*, the "omniscient narration assumes a fully panoptic view of the world it places under surveillance" (23). This panoptic viewpoint is not itself visible: "We are always situated inside the narrator's viewpoint, and even to speak of a 'narrator' at all is to misunderstand a technique that, never identified with a *person*, institutes a faceless and multilateral regard" (24). Miller similarly indicts the technique of free indirect discourse because "[in] respeaking a character's thoughts or speeches, the narration simultaneously subverts their authority and secures its own" (25). The novel, then, constitutes a "violation of privacy" of its characters (162).

Without their cross-genre interruptions, each of the works I discussed in this dissertation would more closely fit this model. Each would be dominated by a faceless, third-person omniscient narrator with greater or lesser degrees of access to the thoughts of the characters. Instead, the authors make the reader aware that there is a space outside the narrator's surveillance. In *Maude*, rather than combine the narrator's language with Maude's language in free indirect discourse, Rossetti chooses to keep these realms of knowledge strictly separate; even though the narrator is ostensibly guiding us through the locked book of Maude's poems, Maude is allowed to speak in her own words through her poetry. In Eliot's epigraphs, the epigraphs stand outside the main text of the chapters, leading them to appear as separate from the consciousness of the narrator, lending a sense of lyric privacy to the characters' thoughts in the epigraphs. Schreiner's "Times and Seasons" tells the story of childhood from a child's perspective that previously had been inaccessible to the narrator. Woolf's essayist in *The Pargiters* is a separate consciousness from her novelist, and one that comments on the novelist's shortsightedness and inability to reach out to the reader in the same way the essayist can.

I contend that a third-person omniscient narrator on its own, even with the innovations in free indirect discourse pioneered by Jane Austen, would not have met

these writers' requirements for depiction of female subjectivity. In a technique other than free indirect discourse, characters in each of these works—or the author-character, in the case of Woolf—still get their say in first-person discourse sections that often stand outside the frame of the story. The highly personal statements are not processed by a third-person narrator, but instead retain the sense of embodiment and direct connection of first-person discourse. In the cases in which they are not attributed directly to a character (e.g., Eliot's epigraphs, or the lyric sections in Schreiner), they gain an additional level of abstraction and universality from being indeterminate in origin. In each case, however, the genre interruptions make us aware of a residue of consciousness that falls outside of the control of the panoptical narrator. Marginalized in comparison to the larger narrative, these interruptions take advantage of their place on the margin to promulgate an alternate point of view—much like their authors did in negotiating their identities as women writers.

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