

**"[H]e comes back now more as a contemporary": The intertextual
relationship of Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen**

Thomas Breckin

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Leeds Trinity University

School of Arts and Communication

August 2018

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement

The right of Thomas Breckin to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Abstract

This thesis examines Virginia Woolf's relationship with her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, focusing upon the ways in which Woolf alludes to him and his work through her own writing, and how she uses these allusions for very deliberate effect. Specifically, it considers Woolf's ability to characterise Stephen, and thus her relation to him, in different ways through this literary method. It will be demonstrated why and in what contexts Woolf takes these different perspectives on Stephen, with the argument being made that she has no intention in solving the inconsistencies found amongst them. The contradictory nature of these conflicting versions of Stephen is a part of Woolf's method of writing of him; it dismisses the idea of one authoritative truth. In employing this approach to conceptualising her father as a writer, Woolf is also able to claim certain aspects of both the Victorian and modern eras, and allows Woolf to maintain a literary connection with Stephen and her Victorian heritage that has the effect of preserving both. At other times, it sees her employing strategies in her writing that distance Woolf from both Stephen and the past.

This thesis will also look to re-position Stephen by continuing the recent research that has seen him presented as a more positive figure in Woolf's life than past criticism has allowed. It will examine the progressive outlook that frequently guided his life and career, particularly in comparison with Woolf's own often radical nature, and demonstrate that Woolf's reflections on Stephen's ideas can be seen as a continued dialogue between the two. This is a crucial aspect of Woolf's method of reconstructing the dynamic between father and daughter, as it moves their relationship away from the intersubjective and towards the intertextual.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Jane de Gay for her expert supervision and endless encouragement and support. Her guidance has been invaluable and I could not have wished for a better supervisor for my thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Eleanor McNees for her generous time and meticulous feedback on my final chapters.

I would like to thank Leeds Trinity University for funding my PhD, Duke University (and particularly the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library and its kind librarians) for being so hospitable during my research trip, and Gladstone's Library for their scholarship. Thanks also to Dr Anne Reus, Professor Graham Roberts, and Dr Nathan Uglow.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their lifelong encouragement and more recent proofreading, and Sarah and Esmé for their love and motivation.

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgments	4
Table of Contents	5
Abbreviations	7
Introduction	8
Chapter 1: Leslie Stephen	34
Stephen's Life	36
Woolf on Stephen	77
Conclusion	90
Chapter 2: Literary Theories, Histories, and a Re-writing of the Novel	92
Victorian and Modernist Literary Theory: Stephen and Woolf in Context	96
The Literary Theories of Stephen and Woolf	105
Conclusion	132
Chapter 3: Philosophy: English Utilitarians and Kitchen Tables	135
Philosophical Theories	136
Writing Philosophy	161
Ethics	184
Conclusion	198

Chapter 4: Biography: From the <i>DNB</i> to <i>Orlando</i>	200
Stephen on the <i>DNB</i> and biography	202
Woolf and the New Biography	216
<i>Orlando</i>	246
Conclusion	272
Conclusion	275
Bibliography	283

Abbreviations

- APA* *A Passionate Apprentice: The Early Journals 1897-1909*, ed. by Mitchell A. Leaska (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990)
- Apology* Leslie Stephen, *An Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1893; repr. 1903)
- CR1* *The Common Reader: 1st Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925)
- CR2* *The Common Reader: 2nd Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932)
- D* *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell and Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-84)
- E* *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols, ed. by Andrew McNeillie and Stuart Clarke (London: Hogarth Press, 1986-2000)
- English* Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth & Co. (1904)
- History* Leslie Stephen, *A History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1876)
- L* *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols, ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (1975-80)
- LL* Frederic William Maitland, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, (London: Duckworth & Co., 1906)
- MBk* *Sir Leslie Stephen's Mausoleum Book* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1977)
- MoB* *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Jeanne Schulkind, (1976; repr. London: Triad/Granada, 1978)
- O* *Orlando: A Biography* (1928; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2003)
- ROO* *A Room of One's Own* (1929; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)
- TG* *Three Guineas* (1938; repr. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (1966)
- TL* *To the Lighthouse* (1927; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2003)
- VO* *The Voyage Out* (1915; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)

Introduction

I suppose my feeling for her [Lady Ritchie] is half moonshine; or rather half reflected from other feelings. Father cared for her; she goes down the last, almost, of that old nineteenth Century Hyde Park Gate world. Unlike [...] most old Aunts she had the wits to feel how sharply we differed on current questions; and this, perhaps, gave her a sense [...] of age, obsolescence, extinction. [...] I admired her sincerely; but still the generations certainly look very different ways. (Virginia Woolf's diary entry from 5 March 1919) (*D1* 247)

He [Thomas Hardy] did not let the talk stop or disdain making talk. He talked of father – said he had seen me, or it might have been my sister but he thought it was me, in my cradle. He had been to Hyde Park Place [...]. What impressed me was his freedom, ease, and vitality. He seemed very 'Great Victorian', doing the whole thing with a sweep of his hand and setting no great stock by literature; but somehow, one could imagine, naturally swept off into imagining and creating without a thought of its being difficult or remarkable. (Woolf's diary entry from 25 July 1926) (*D3* 100)

The first of the diary entries above, detailing the passing away of her father's sister-in-law, Anny Thackeray Ritchie, reveals a glimpse of a side of Woolf's nature that forms the basis of much of the work to be done by this thesis. When she writes of her aunt, Woolf could well be talking about the Victorian era itself, as though in a way Anny had personified to Woolf 'that old nineteenth century Hyde Park Gate world'. We are thus privy to Woolf's feelings towards that world – intrinsically connected with her father, Leslie Stephen; an admirable age, but now obsolete; and looking in a different direction to the new generation of the twentieth century. The second diary quotation, from Woolf's meeting with an aging Thomas Hardy, provides similar insight but with a contrasting tone. This time, with Hardy now standing in as the personification of the 'Great Victorian', Woolf divulges a different attitude towards the era, deferential to its freedom of mind and its natural effortlessness in creating greatness with just 'a sweep of his hand'. The only common denominator is the reference to Stephen, as though he signified both the great and the obsolete Victorian for Woolf.

Woolf notes her admiration for Hardy again in her essay, 'Modern Fiction' (1925). She writes of the qualities of James Joyce as a writer (and specifically a modernist writer), but follows this with an entirely unfavourable comparison with Hardy (*E4* 161). Woolf's diary also records an intriguing entry on Joyce, describing him and his writing as reminding her of 'some callow board school boy, full of wits and powers, but so self-conscious and egotistical that he loses his head' (*D2* 199-200). It is tempting to see this description as being applicable to how Woolf at times considered the modern age as a whole; exuberant but overly self-conscious, particularly when compared to the effortlessness of Hardy and his Great Victorians.

While, of course, these quotations can also be read as Woolf's personal accounts of Lady Ritchie and Hardy, they do demonstrate her penchant for personifying the Victorian age in her writing. This technique allows Woolf to say much about the period in which she was born and of which she saw the end. Her work, including novels, essays, diaries and letters, demonstrate a writer with a powerful and emotive connection with the Victorian. The prestige of her family heritage, with Stephen and the Thackerays on the one side, and Julia Margaret Cameron and the Pre-Raphaelite circle on the side of her mother, Julia Stephen, makes it seem almost impossible that Woolf could ever have escaped the influences of the Victorian age. And, indeed, she clearly does not; from the story of a daughter both burdened by and lovingly respectful of her familial legacy in *Night and Day* (1919), to her wrangling with Lytton Strachey over the importance of the Victorians in their correspondence (*L2* 45-48), Woolf's oeuvre resonates with a pride in the traditions and achievements of her illustrious antecedents. The question, then, is how this daughter of Victoriana was also defending the necessary 'breaking and falling, crashing and destruction' (*E3* 434) of literary convention, and producing progressive, modernist novels, alongside essay manifestos decrying the form of the traditional Victorian novel and its irrelevance in the modern world. Can the conservative Victorian image of Woolf be reconciled with the radical modern version? This thesis will argue that it can, for Woolf did not exist exclusively as either one

of these polarised and extreme identities. She drew heavily on her Victorian heritage, frequently by engaging with her father's literary legacy, and the argument made here is that it is through the connections Woolf creates with Leslie Stephen's work that her complex relationship with the Victorian period is illuminated. Equally as important, and the focus of this thesis, is what these connections reveal about the relationship specifically between Woolf and Stephen.

Intertextual versus Intersubjective

The significance of both diary entries referencing Stephen cannot be ignored. His influence on Woolf was extensive; he provided her with her first glimpses of the world of literature, either through being read to by him (she wrote that she found it hard not to equate many great writers with Stephen, simply as he had been their voice during her childhood) or via access to his library (*LL*, 476). He acted as Woolf's chief educator, providing a curriculum of books that shaped her method and ideas (as will be evidenced in this thesis), and, in a critical period of his later life, wore her down as he did her siblings as a melancholic, anxiety-ridden presence within the family home (*LL*, 476).

The idea that Woolf related to Stephen on both a literal and a literary level is key to this thesis. Woolf was able to separate how she and Stephen existed towards each other as father and daughter, on an intersubjective level, from how she wrote about his work (and he as author of that work) directly and indirectly through her own, on an intertextual level. The term 'intersubjective' is used here and throughout this thesis to express the social or psychological relation between subjects. The psychologists Roger Frie and Bruce Reis state that it 'refers in the most basic sense to the interaction between two subjects: myself and another person, or self and other.'¹ It is thus contrasted with an intertextual relationship that exists between texts and, to an extent, the addresser and addressee of the texts, and which is observed by textual allusion and reference. Both the terms intersubjective and intertextual

¹ 'Understanding Intersubjectivity: Psychoanalytic Formulations and Their Philosophical Underpinnings', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2001), 297-327 (p. 297) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.2001.10747081>> [Accessed on 4 July 2018]

will be expounded upon further in this introduction, but this thesis will for the main part focus its attention upon the intertextual relationships Woolf creates with Stephen. Numerous studies on Woolf have included within them some form of analysis of the intersubjective relationship between Woolf and Stephen, unavoidably focusing on the fact that they were father and daughter and frequently involving some form of psychoanalytical interpretation. An explanation of why that theoretical reading will not be adopted in this thesis follows shortly, whilst the emphasis on the intertextual over the intersubjective allows this study to concentrate on when and how Woolf's texts engage with Stephen's and what new insight this brings to understanding their literary attachment.

This thesis will identify and explain intertextual links between Woolf's work and Stephen's that have not been studied together before now. It will present a new perspective on their textual relationship, one that allows new readings of texts including, and importantly, *Orlando* (1928). This new point of view is informed by two key ideas; first, that the dialogue between father and daughter demonstrates how Woolf was influenced by Stephen's work, for she draws upon his ideas to support her own (whilst at other times using them as a means for separating from his influence). The second is the idea that Woolf's different responses to Stephen's work are able to co-exist and reveal that, through her use of intertextual allusion, Woolf ensures a literary permanence for Stephen's work.

This thesis will examine this textual connection Woolf had with Stephen, focusing upon the ways in which Woolf alludes to him and his work through her own writing, and how she uses these allusions for deliberate and different effects. Specifically, it will consider Woolf's ability to characterise Stephen, and thus her relation to him, in different forms through this literary method. In some instances Woolf, as modernist, identifies Stephen as an old Victorian, and both he and that era as obsolete; in others she emphasises the positive association she has with her father and the great Victorian past that he embodies. Perhaps most significantly, Woolf at times aligns Stephen with her own, more modern world, casting him, as in the title of this thesis, almost as a contemporary.

Through this analysis, it will be demonstrated why and in what contexts Woolf takes these different perspectives on Stephen, with the argument being made that she has no intention in solving the inconsistencies found amongst them. The contradictory nature of these conflicting versions of Stephen is a part of Woolf's method of writing of him;² it dismisses the idea of one authoritative truth. In employing this approach to conceptualising her father as a writer, Woolf is also able to claim certain aspects of both the Victorian and modern eras, depending on how she positions Stephen, and allows Woolf to maintain a literary connection with him and her Victorian heritage that has the effect of preserving both. At other times, it sees her employing deliberate strategies in her writing that distance Woolf from both her father and the past.

This thesis will also look to re-position Stephen by continuing the recent research that has seen him presented as a more positive figure in Woolf's life than past criticism has allowed. The analysis stays on a subjective level in Chapter 1 in order to establish an accurate idea of Stephen as a person, something which is crucial for understanding why Woolf would choose to engage with his work on literature, philosophy, and biography so frequently in her own. It includes an examination of the progressive outlook that frequently guided Stephen's life and career, particularly in comparison with Woolf's own forward-thinking attitude, as well as establishing that his family life was not limited only to the dark years of the mid-1890s after Julia Stephen's death and that Stephen committed time and enthusiasm to his relationship with Woolf.

The subsequent chapters look at Stephen's positive influence from a literary point of view and evidence the argument that Woolf often found his work to be relevant to hers, and that she referenced it frequently as part of a continued dialogue between the two. This is a crucial aspect of Woolf's method of reconstructing the dynamic between father and

² The idea that Woolf's work was often contradictory is discussed throughout *Contradictory Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-first International Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012).

daughter, as it moves their relationship away from the intersubjective and towards the intertextual and thus onto a platform not pre-determined but open-ended, providing Woolf with control over the direction of this new dialogue.

Chapters

Chapter 1 focuses on a reappraisal of Leslie Stephen, drawing attention to the free-thinking and liberal nature of his character, an aspect commonly ignored in previous descriptions of Stephen, and evidencing the claim that, during his life and after, he had a more positive influence on Woolf than is often credited. This chapter will also demonstrate how Woolf wrote about her father in different ways, both biographical and through textual allusion. In making these arguments, this chapter pays particular attention towards their autobiographical works: Stephen's *Mausoleum Book* and the autobiographical essays contained within Woolf's *Moments of Being*.

Chapter 2, on literary history and theory, makes the argument that Stephen's theorising on how and why literature evolves over time had a strong impact on Woolf's own ideas on literary history, and that she uses his model for explaining literary change in several of her own essays. Furthermore, a connection is evident between Stephen's theories and the ideas behind Woolf's fiction. The argument goes on to state that Woolf moved away from Stephen's influence by writing the kind of innovative fiction which they had both theorised about, something he had never done, as well as turning her ideas on literary development towards its future and towards women writers. Amongst other texts, there is a focus on Stephen's *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1904), for that later text exists as a culmination of his thoughts on the subject, and Woolf's 'An Unwritten Novel' (1920), 'Modern Fiction', *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' (1927), works in which she speculates in different ways on literary development.

Chapter 3, on philosophy, looks at how Stephen and Woolf write about epistemology and ethics. In doing so, the chapter will examine how she represented her

father's ideas on philosophy in her own work, arguing that Woolf does not do this in order simply to reject Stephen and his philosophy, but that she plays out a rather more complex and often positive reaction to these theories in her texts. There are instances, specifically in the ethical works, where Woolf does move away from Stephen's ideas in order to develop them for herself and in line with her own twentieth-century reasoning, and the resulting effect is to position Stephen as an old Victorian patriarch. The prominent texts studied in this chapter include *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), *An Agnostic's Apology* (1893), and *Social Rights and Duties* (1896), Stephen's most significant work on epistemology, theology, and normative ethics. From Woolf, it includes 'The Mark on the Wall' (1917), 'Modern Fiction', *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* (1938), her most relevant philosophically-minded works.

The final chapter examines Stephen's and Woolf's ideas on biography and argues that two of the most fundamental principles Woolf sets out work both to separate her from and, in more subtle ways, align her to Stephen: the significance of obscure lives in biography and how all lives are of equal interest and merit, and the importance in merging facts and fiction to create accurate biographical reflections. *Orlando* is crucial to the discussion, for it exists as the pinnacle of Woolf's biographical work and incorporates within it the key points of this debate: the practical application of Woolf's theories on fictional biography, alongside her meta-commentary on this through the novel's narrator; the parody of nineteenth-century biography and the many nuances of this within the text; and the intertextual links to Stephen's work and how these carry on the dialogue between Woolf and Stephen. Other key texts in this chapter are Stephen's 'Biography' (1893), *Life of James Fitzjames Stephen* (1895), and 'National Biography' (1896), and Woolf's essays, 'The New Biography' (1927) and 'The Art of Biography' (1939), and her biography, *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940).

Literature Review

There is not an abundance of book-length studies on Stephen or on the relationship between him and Woolf, with research appearing instead in journals or as chapters from texts primarily focused on Woolf herself. This thesis will aim to fill this gap in scholarship and provide a more accurate and thorough appraisal of Stephen as a person and as an influence on Woolf than much previous criticism has done. More balanced representations of Stephen have been included in work before now and these will be considered in this review, alongside some examples of the entirely critical scholarship.

Frederick Maitland's *Life and Letters of Sir Leslie Stephen* (1906) is a collection of Stephen's correspondence, edited together into a chronological order with summarising pages of short biography added at key points. Maitland was Stephen's friend (and later relative after Maitland married Stephen's sister-in-law, Florence Henrietta Fisher) and was asked specifically by Stephen to write this memoir-of-sorts. Perhaps due to this, Maitland's study offers no moments of controversy, though he does not avoid drawing attention to matters such as Stephen's anxiety.

Noel Annan's *The Godless Victorian* (1984), first published in 1951 as *Leslie Stephen: His Thought and Character in Relation to his Time*, is the only full-length book devoted to a study of Stephen's life and career.³ Annan states that the book is not a biography per se with it being more concerned with Stephen's work and achievements as a philosopher and critic, though at least a third of it is devoted to Stephen's life. It covers an excellent reading of Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), and the biographical section presents an even-handed evaluation of Stephen as a person. If the book has a drawback it is with Annan's style; his analysis can veer off topic as he contemplates related points of interest, for example going into detail on the rise of German transcendentalism in order to show how it 'began to lap at the rocks below the cliffs on which [Stephen] stood' (p. 164), and Annan's own opinion is prominent throughout the

³ *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1984; repr. 1986). Further references to this book are given after quotations in the text.

often complex discussions. It is, however, an invaluable resource for studies of Stephen. What it does not offer is any extensive discussion on the relationship between Stephen and Woolf, with Annan covering this in only a few pages (pp. 134-37), and nor does it draw any significant parallels between their texts. This thesis will not only demonstrate that such parallels exist but also that they are extremely significant.

John W. Bicknell's extensively-researched collection of Stephen's correspondence over two volumes, *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen* (1996), not only offers additional letters to Maitland's edition but also includes Bicknell's own useful commentary on events.⁴ Again, like Annan's book, this study does not attempt to make any analysis of Stephen's relationship with Woolf or the relationship between their work.

As well as those studies focused on Stephen, there has been some excellent criticism on the links between Stephen's and Woolf's work. Jane de Gay's absorbing study on Woolf's relationship with her literary antecedents, *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (2006),⁵ provides several lines of research which this thesis intends to follow, including Woolf's use of allusion to Stephen's work (which will be explained in detail shortly) and Woolf's complex attitude towards the Victorian era. Eleanor McNees has also contributed research on Woolf and Stephen, showing how the work and ideas of father and daughter not only bear interesting comparison but demonstrate a dialogue between certain texts of theirs. McNees' essay, 'The Stephen Inheritance: Virginia Woolf and the Burden of the Arnoldian Critic' (2015), presents a considered analysis of how Woolf responded to Stephen's critical work and approach, demonstrating a textual dialogue between Woolf, Stephen and Matthew Arnold.⁶

Several critics have discussed in essays how Stephen's work can be seen as an influence on Woolf's, and this thesis intends to continue this discussion at greater length.

⁴ *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen*, 2 vols (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996).

⁵ *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

⁶ 'The Stephen Inheritance: Virginia Woolf and the Burden of the Arnoldian Critic', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 44, Issue 2 (2015), 119-145 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/camqtl/bfv012>>

Beth Rigel Daugherty has presented insightful work on Woolf and Stephen, offering an explanation of the positive relationship between them as well as new research on Woolf's education and Stephen's part in that (for example, see Daugherty's essay, 'Learning Virginia Woolf: Of Leslie, Libraries, and Letters' (1999)).⁷ Katherine C. Hill discusses the influence Stephen had upon Woolf, in her essay, 'Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen: History and Literary Revolution' (1981), particularly with regards to her education and her theoretical work (Hill's essay will be referred to in Chapter 2 of this thesis).⁸ S.P. Rosenbaum has also written on different aspects of the relationship between Stephen and Woolf, acknowledging Stephen's constructive presence as Woolf's primary educator in 'An Educated Man's Daughter: Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group' (1983).⁹ Rosenbaum also makes a case for G.M. Moore's philosophy having been a far greater inspiration for Woolf's philosophical ideas than Stephen's work, a point that is disputed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Woolfian scholarship has tended, however, to state the case against Stephen. Lyndall Gordon's *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* (1984) contains a chapter on Stephen that discusses some of the motivations for Woolf's different opinions of her father, and in doing so addresses some of the ways in which he was an important figure for Woolf.¹⁰ Gordon writes that they shared something 'deeper than the routine bond of child to parent', due to Stephen holding a grip on Woolf's imagination even as a young child. Nevertheless, due to the focus of the book, it tends to draw greater attention to Stephen's 'terrible outbursts of woe' than it does to his adventurous younger life or his 'unconventionality'.¹¹ In a similar vein, Alexandra Harris writes of Woolf's 'extremely strong and conflicted' feelings towards Stephen and of his attentiveness towards his children when time permitted it, but both

⁷ *Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by J Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 10-17.

⁸ *PMLA*, 96, 3, (1981), 351-62 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/461911>> [Accessed on 12 March 2015].

⁹ *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (London: Vision, 1983), pp. 32-56

¹⁰ *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* (1984; repr. London: Virago Press, 2006), pp. 21-33.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 27, 3.

observations are overshadowed by Harris' image of Stephen locked away in 'his study at the top of the house', suffering from periods of crippling anxiety and fits of rage.¹² This thesis will aim to bring a more balanced view of Stephen and a focus on how his work influenced Woolf's.

Jane Dunn's book, *Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (1990), draws more attention to the stateliness of Stephen, introducing him as 'a noted mountaineer, philosopher and journalist with an intellect that was forceful, unpretentious and incorruptible.' She also writes that Stephen 'as an impressive product of the finest educational system in the world, could not but hold formal instruction in the highest esteem.'¹³ Dunn depicts an image of Stephen as the last bastion of Victorian establishment, as well as an ardent Cambridge man. Lillian F. Shankman also associates Stephen heavily with his academic background, remarking at the same time on his financial scruples when she writes of him as being a 'donnish, penny-pinching husband'.¹⁴ In her compelling biography of Woolf, Hermione Lee argues that Stephen's 'very bad habits have become legendary, mythologised' by critical opinion, adding that how it is 'a wonderful example of the Victorian patriarch on whom revenge has been taken by the daughter's writing'.¹⁵

A significant part of the argument that will be put forward by the first chapter of this thesis in particular will be concerned with challenging Stephen's categorisation as either (or both) an entirely conventional Victorian man of letters or simply a self-indulgent and self-pitying husband and father. For example, descriptions of Stephen rarely account for his willingness to live and act in a manner that did not necessarily conform to accepted Victorian standards. Returning to Gordon's study, while she acknowledges that he was not wholly orthodox in his views, she states that 'Stephen never flouted convention' in the way in which his daughters were to do; it will be argued here that, in fact, parallels can be drawn

¹² *Virginia Woolf* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), pp. 16-35.

¹³ *Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell: A Very Close Conspiracy* (London: Virago Press, 2000), pp. 7-14.

¹⁴ *Anne Thackeray Ritchie: Journals and Letters*, ed. by Abigail Burnham Bloom and John Maynard (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), p. 156.

¹⁵ *Virginia Woolf* (London: Random House, 1996), p. 73.

between the often radical nature of the ideas and behaviour of Woolf and those of her father.¹⁶ Much of this reappraisal will be covered in Chapter 1 but it will continue as a theme throughout the course of this thesis, also taking into account the effect it has on the deliberations on Woolf's relationship with Stephen.

Critics have also utilised psychoanalytical theory to interpret the relationship between Woolf and Stephen, with various degrees of success. Louise DeSalvo's *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work* (1989)¹⁷ and Peter Dally's *Virginia Woolf: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1999)¹⁸ have provided controversial examples of this method of reading Woolf's life. Both books are open to the charge of retrospective diagnosis, with DeSalvo receiving criticism for disregarding complex psychobiological explanations: 'DeSalvo's rubric for judging mental states [...] ignores the inconvenient complexity of mind-brain interaction'.¹⁹ There have, of course, also been thought-provoking texts using psychoanalysis to present different ideas on Woolf and her work. Adrienne Rich, Virginia Hyman, and Elizabeth Abel are examples of writers who have done so, with Hyman's work in particular having much to offer even away from the psychoanalytical reading of Woolf and Stephen's relationship, and will be referred to in Chapter 1 of this thesis.²⁰

While this theoretical approach has been popular in the past with Woolfian scholars, there is no intention to adopt it here. Psychoanalytic interpretation, particularly Freudian, necessitates a certain rigidity in the way Woolf must be read as daughter and Stephen as

¹⁶ Gordon, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work* (Boston: Beacon Press (1989).

¹⁸ *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: Manic Depression and the Life of Virginia Woolf*, London: St Martin's Press (2001)

¹⁹ Thomas C. Caramagno, *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic-Depressive Illness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 8. It should be noted that Stephen has never been accused of molesting his daughters.

²⁰ Caramagno, *The Flight of the Mind*; Adrienne Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision', *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1972), 18-30 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/375215>> [Accessed on 5 July 2018]; Virginia R. Hyman, 'Reflections in the Looking-Glass: Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1983), 197-216 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831121>> [Accessed on 12 October 2015]; Elizabeth Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

father. This thesis directs the focus away from the father-daughter relationship and towards the writer to writer paradigm, just as Woolf aimed to do, as well as exploring the plurality and flexibility of Woolf's perspective, particularly as it relates to her textual connection with Stephen. Woolf's allusions to her father's work are numerous and full of potential for interpretation, and this thesis will adopt an intertextual approach to reading and understanding them.

Woolf's use of intertextuality in general has been explored by Beverly Ann Schlack, Brenda Silver, and Elizabeth Steele,²¹ and the intertextual connections between Woolf's work and Stephen's is analysed in de Gay's *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past*.²² De Gay discusses the similarity between ideas that appear in Stephen's *Mausoleum Book*, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* and *An Agnostic's Apology*, and those Woolf explores in her novel, *To the Lighthouse*, particularly around the concepts of presence and absence. De Gay asserts that whilst scrutinising the influence of empiricist and Romantic ideas on these themes, Woolf 'has done so through engaging with her father's texts and has reached remarkably similar conclusions to his,' and concludes with the following statement: '*To the Lighthouse* was a pivotal stage in Woolf's negotiation of her personal and literary pasts: she confronted Leslie Stephen's influence on her in a direct way, but she also drew on his ideas, using them for her own purposes.'²³

The different chapters in this thesis will draw on de Gay's argument that Woolf's engagement with Stephen's work sees her utilise several of his arguments and philosophical points of view, but also expand on this argument by demonstrating that Woolf is creating a more extensive dialogue with her father's work than de Gay suggests by drawing on a wider range of texts by both. Furthermore, it will be argued here that Woolf's intertextual

²¹ Beverly Ann Schlack, *Continuing Presences: Virginia Woolf's Use of Literary Allusion* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980); Brenda R. Silver, *Virginia Woolf Icon (Women in Culture and Society Series)*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Elizabeth Steele, *Virginia Woolf's Literary Sources and Allusions: A Guide to the Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1983).

²² Specifically, 'Chapter 4: *To the Lighthouse* and the Ghost of Leslie Stephen', pp. 96-131).

²³ De Gay, pp. 97, 122, 129.

connections with Stephen tend more towards adjusting her relationship with Stephen, and are less definitive and confrontational than de Gay suggests.

Methodology: Intertextuality, Intentionality, and the Intertextual Net

This section will examine the theory of intertextuality, showing how it is an ideal method for reading Woolf's intricate use of literary allusion. The discussion will identify particular concepts from the theory and explain how these can complement one another through a unified approach, one which this thesis will adopt and which it terms the 'intertextual net'.

Julia Kristeva first introduced the term 'intertextuality' in her essay, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' (1986). The essay exists as a discussion and further development of the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, whose concept of 'dialogism' provided several of the elements from which Kristeva's intertextuality grew and was itself a progression from Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of a linguistic system. It is worth discussing these earlier concepts, not just as they help explain Kristeva's theory but also because Bakhtin's dialogism provides a version of intertextuality that interprets the links between Woolf's and Stephen's work in a different way. While Kristeva's post-structuralist rejection of authorial intentionality is at odds with the approach taken in this thesis, her theorising is still an important influence here. The descriptions and imagery she uses to explain the way in which words and texts connect, and how meaning is conveyed between them, are at times exactly how the methodology in this study, specifically the intertextual net concept, understands Woolf's use of allusion to Stephen's work. Furthermore, her ideas on how the relationship between addresser and addressee has a transformative aspect to it offer a way of reading the changing dynamic in Woolf's and Stephen's textual relationship, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Saussure brought about a fundamental change to the way in which linguistics was studied and explained, with his theory that language was a structural system and should be considered in those terms only, therefore freeing it from association with socio-cultural, historical, or political beliefs. Saussure introduced the notion of the linguistic sign, formed

of the signifier and the signified, as well as its relationship to the referent, and, alongside other significant strands to his theory, the concept of there being a system of language ('Langue') and individual usage of language ('Parole').

Whilst Saussure was ultimately more interested in the wider language system, Bakhtin was drawn to studying the individual instances of language use, dismissing Saussure's belief in the unity of language in favour of his own argument for its multiplicity. For this was a central tenet of Bakhtin's own theorising, underpinning his concepts of dialogism (of which he was a proponent), and monologism (of which he was critical). Bakhtin developed these ideas in his work, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1972), finding the form of the novel, and Dostoevsky's specifically, to be more conducive to dialogism than other, older literary formats. Bakhtin wrote:

*A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event.*²⁴

Dialogic writing contains multiple voices (or 'polyphony' as Bakhtin terms it) belonging to the novel's various characters, autonomous of the author and able to speak freely, independently, and differently to one another. The characters bring a profusion of differing ideologies to the novel, each given its own value and entirely separate from the author's own personal ideology, which is both unknown and irrelevant to the text. Monologism is the opposing concept. Found most frequently in traditional literary forms such as poems or plays, it represents only one authoritative voice and is a closed system, contrasted with the deliberate open-endedness of dialogism. In a monologic text, only the author's own

²⁴ *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (1972; repr. 1984). Italics are Bakhtin's own.

perspective and ideology are given value, though there may be multiple characters; here they are irrelevant and subsumed into the authorial identity.

Bakhtin's dialogism is an ideal model for reading Woolf's use of intertextuality for it draws attention to the potential of a plurality of voices in a text, something that will be argued here very ably describes how Woolf's writing creates a conversation with Stephen's work through her intricate and varied use of references to it. For example, when Woolf alludes to Stephen's biography of Alexander Pope in *Orlando* (1928), it is in a way that causes her novel to engage with his study and from the Bakhtinian perspective reflects that both are using the same textual material. The account of Orlando's meeting with Pope directly references Stephen's description of Pope, both his physical appearance and his habits. When Woolf later criticises Pope for his misogyny, she alludes to Stephen's own, perhaps unexpected, chastisement of the poet's attitude towards women. Stephen's voice is thus heard in *Orlando*, a Victorian biographer in a parody of Victorian biography, showing the deliberate ambivalence of Woolf's novel and her desire to highlight this textual connection with her father's work.²⁵ The idea of the dialogue between them is one that carries on through this thesis, and Bakhtin's dialogism provides its theoretical basis.

Kristeva's essay, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', was a development of Bakhtin's theories, and her theorising is used here to explain the emphasis of the text over the subject. While Bakhtin's work was predicated on the belief in the autonomy of the text, Kristeva's intertextuality challenged that position. As Raphaël Ingelbien explains: 'The insight afforded by intertextuality is twofold: both the text and its producer are denied the autonomy and the unity they were thought to possess.'²⁶ Kristeva argues that a text could never exist independently of other discourse, stating instead that an individual text is formed from 'a

²⁵ The full discussion of this dialogue on Pope is in Chapter 4.

²⁶ 'Intertextuality, Critical Politics and the Modernist Canon: The Case of Virginia Woolf', *Paragraph*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Nov 1999), 278-292 (p. 279) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43263573>> [Accessed on 28 July 2017].

permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text';²⁷ a conception of the interweaving nature of literature that Woolf writes of in a similar fashion when she describes the meaning of words as 'flowing into each other like reeds on the bed of a river' (*E6* 94).

I am reading six books at once, the only way of reading; since, as you will agree, one book is only a single unaccompanied note, and to get the full sound, one needs ten others at the same time. (*L3* 516)

The above passage demonstrates Woolf's belief in the way books could and should overlap, building upon one another 'to get the full sound.' Woolf develops this thought, discussing the way in which texts are imbued with meaning through the specific selection of words, sentences, structure and genre, all of which reference other texts. In her essay, 'Craftsmanship' (1937), Woolf writes:

Words, English words, are full of echoes, memories, associations – naturally. They've been out and about, on people's lips, in their houses, in the streets, in the fields, for so many centuries. And that is one of the chief difficulties in writing them today – they're stored with other meanings, with other memories, and they have contracted so many famous marriages in the past. (*E6* 625)

Woolf is considering here the referential aspect of language and the connotations that are consequently an intrinsic part of words and texts, something that was fundamental to Kristeva's theory. She argued that texts 'cannot be separated from the larger cultural or social textuality out of which they are constructed. All texts, therefore, contain within them the ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse'.²⁸ At any point in time that a text is read (or written), it presents a reflection of social ideologies as they exist to that reader (or writer), and this ideological facet of intertextuality is important to the way in which Woolf makes her literary allusions to Stephen and his work. For example, as Chapter 3 will show, there is a contrast between the ideologies associated with a Victorian perspective on how a human mind perceives the world and a twentieth-century

²⁷ *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 36.

²⁸ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 35.

view. When Woolf writes about epistemology and references not only the ideas but the language of Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, she is exploiting this contrast, querying the separation between the ideologies, yet when the dialogue turns to ethics, the contrast is used specifically to separate Woolf's views from Stephen's.

Kristeva's introduction of intertextuality includes the point that it supplants the concept of intersubjectivity, an idea which is significant to this thesis's understanding of Woolf's engagement with Stephen. Kristeva writes:

[Any] text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*.²⁹

In Kristeva's terms, intersubjectivity is a way of interpreting a text that puts the emphasis on the subjects and their interaction, i.e. writer to reader. Her theory of intertextuality opposes this as it repositions the emphasis away from the subject/s, and onto the text/s – her argument being that the true relationship is between one text and another text (or texts):

The writer's interlocutor [...] is the writer himself, but as reader of another text. The one who writes is the same as the one who reads. Since his interlocutor is a text, he himself is no more than a text rereading itself. The dialogical structure, therefore, appears only in the light of the text elaborating itself as ambivalent in relation to another text.³⁰

This move away from the human subject and towards the text is an important distinction between intertextuality and Bakhtin's dialogism, the latter having focused on social communication. Graham Allen notes this difference when he writes that Kristeva's theory 'seems to evade human subjects in favour of more abstract terms, text and textuality,' and adds a concise and apposite conclusion: 'The subject, as poststructuralists like Kristeva and

²⁹ *Desire in Language*, p. 37.

³⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 86-88.

Barthes are fond of declaring, is *lost* in writing.’³¹ And, to some extent, this is something Woolf is working towards in redefining her relationship with Stephen, through her frequent emphasis of intertextuality over intersubjectivity in her allusions to his ideas. Woolf achieves this by the consistency in her referencing of Stephen’s work, going back to the same text or idea in different texts or by alluding to different texts by Stephen in a single text of her own, and by the meticulous and varied way in which her allusions work. The father-daughter relationship does, of course, still remain an ongoing and important aspect of how Woolf writes about Stephen, and due consideration will be given to the intersubjective in this thesis; nevertheless, it is through intertextuality that Woolf attempts to forge this new, more equal relationship.

For in many ways Stephen exists as both the addresser and addressee: Woolf is engaging in a textual conversation, or dialogism to use Bakhtin’s phrase again, with Stephen in her work, through the references to his texts. Woolf agrees and disagrees, questions and adapts both the image of him and his ideas, but it is implicitly done; the emphasis is on the intertextual connection between Woolf’s work and Stephen’s work. Again, this fits the argument being put forward here on what Woolf is attempting to achieve. First and foremost, she engages with Stephen as a literary peer and through their work. This also allows Woolf to redefine their relationship on a level that she has chosen, and in which she is able to direct the dialogue. The title of this thesis quotes from Woolf’s diary entry on 28 November 1928, when she writes how Stephen ‘comes back now more as a contemporary’ (*D3* 208). This one line reveals perfectly how Woolf intended to rewrite her relationship with Stephen.

Anne Fernald’s essay, ‘Woolf and Intertextuality’ (2012), puts forward an interpretation of Woolf’s textual allusions that identifies them as a means of challenging patriarchal convention, as well as marking them as distinguishable from those of her male modernist contemporaries. Both points are relevant to the understanding of Woolf’s

³¹ *Intertextuality*, pp. 35, 39.

intertextuality as adopted by this thesis. Fernald asserts that in order to subvert patriarchal texts, Woolf subtly changes an aspect of the original in her allusion to it, causing the reader to reconsider the referenced text. As will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, Woolf's intertextual references to her father's work often conclude with a transformative aspect to them. By appropriating ideas from the Stephen canon, Woolf is able to draw on his literary legacy and develop those ideas with her own purpose and direction. This adds to the sense that Woolf is redefining her relationship with Stephen and his literary achievements; not only is she moving it onto a textual basis, she is deciding when and how to develop Stephen's ideas.

Fernald's second point of particular interest is her argument that Woolf's intertextual references are less obvious than either Eliot's or Joyce's, the contemporaries with whom she compares Woolf, and appear as 'Woolf's gift to the text itself, a secret fount of pleasure'.³² Fernald's view that Woolf deliberately obscures many of the allusions she makes, preferring them to exist within and for the text, is shared by this thesis' approach to reading Woolf's intertextuality. However, Woolf does occasionally leave clues to discovering those secret founts of pleasure and in doing so provides the grounds for a reading that recognises the intentionality behind them, as will be explained now.

The argument on intertextuality made through this thesis accepts and relies on the existence of a certain degree of authorial intent. This does require some discussion, however, not least because both Kristeva and Bakhtin rejected the idea of intentionality in their theorising. In *A Theory of Parody* (1985), Linda Hutcheon makes a salient point about the requirement of a consciousness in order for parody to 'work':

Of course, parody is clearly a formal phenomenon – a bitextual synthesis or a dialogic relation between the texts – but without the consciousness (and then

³² 'Woolf and Intertextuality', in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, ed. by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 52-64 (p. 60).

interpretation) of that discursive doubling by the perceiver, how could parody actually be said to exist, much less ‘work’?³³

If parody is accepted as being a multi-disciplinary form of intertextuality, then just as the former necessitates a perceiver to recognise and understand its effect, so too does the latter. And, while the intertextual connection between Woolf’s work and Stephen’s exists unconditionally on a formal level, as Hutcheon remarks of parody, on a pragmatic level a perceiver (or reader) is required for the intertextuality to exist. There is an argument that intertextuality does not need the pragmatic existence through recognition and understanding that parody certainly requires, and that it can be considered only in terms of the formal (or structural). Hutcheon herself distinguishes allusion from parody on these pragmatic grounds, arguing that in the case of allusion a reader would simply naturalise an unrecognised instance into the context of the primary text. With parody, on the other hand, she writes: ‘In the more extended form of parody we have been considering, such naturalization would eliminate a significant part of both the form and content of the text.’³⁴ These are justifiable claims on both counts, but where would it leave intertextuality? It is more complex than allusion, but its presence in a text does not dictate genre as parody would do, and ‘naturalization’ of an unrecognised link would not cause the same issue for the text as it would do for a parodic work. Indeed, it is easy to read Fernald’s description of Woolf’s textual allusions, those ‘secret fountains of pleasure’ which may or may not be noticed by the reader, as substantiating the argument that recognition is not a requirement for the text. Yet Hutcheon’s point on pragmatism does say something more on intertextuality, too. If one takes an example of explicit imitation between texts, for example Woolf’s ‘Hours in a Library’, it is a reference that on a formal level exactly reproduces the title from Stephen’s three-volume collection of essays, *Hours in a Library* (1874-92). Disputing intent here is theoretically possible but on grounds of probability and pragmatism it is evident that Woolf intended the title of her essay to be intertextual. Once this very noticeable reference is

³³ *A Theory of Parody* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985; repr. 2000), p. xiii.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 34.

accepted, the related but much less obvious allusion in Woolf's text appears more likely, certainly pragmatically, to be intentional too.

Joseph Farrell, in his paper on intention in intertextuality, has acknowledged this form of 'intertextual marker' and draws attention to the work of G.N. Knauer and his detailed, line-by-line approach to intertextual analysis.³⁵ Farrell writes that Knauer's method can be understood through his comparison of Virgil's *Aeneid* with Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, where Knauer suggests that Virgil includes clear references to Homer, alongside more subtle examples. The argument is that the explicit allusions, termed *Leitzitate* by Knauer, cause the reader to consider Homer's work whilst reading the *Aeneid*, even designating specific passages from the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, so the less obvious intertextual connections become more apparent. The concept of *Leitzitate* proves a valuable method for interpreting Woolf's own intertextual style, for she too makes use of both obvious and less obvious textual allusion close together. As suggested above, the title of her 'Hours in a Library' essay makes unmistakable reference to Stephen's work of the same name, yet it seems unlikely that the description of the ideal reader as an outdoorsman ('a man of intense curiosity [...] to whom reading is more of the nature of brisk exercise in the open air than of sheltered study')³⁶ within her text would recall her father as easily without that titular repetition. Knauer's *Leitzitate* will be used over the course of this thesis as a means for identifying other instances in which Woolf employs this technique.

Kristeva, following her own post-structuralist theorising, refutes authorial intent, finding intention instead belonging to and within the text(s). Yet while Kristeva's discussions of a formal version of intertextuality influences the analysis provided in this thesis, offering a theoretical rationale for emphasising the intertextual reading over an intersubjective one, it does not demand exclusivity. Introducing a pragmatic approach like

³⁵ 'Intention and Intertext', *Phoenix*, Vol. 59, No. 1/2 (Spring - Summer, 2005), 98-111 (p. 101) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067741>> [Accessed on 17 July 2017]. I refer to Knauer's work through Farrell's paper in lieu of a translation of the original German texts.

³⁶ 'Hours in a Library', *Granite and Rainbow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1958), p. 24.

Knauer's alongside Kristeva's language allows enough authorial intent to read some degree of purpose in Woolf's allusions to Stephen's work.

As the previous discussion has shown, these different perspectives on intertextuality offer different methods for interpreting Woolf's use of allusion to Stephen and his work. Bakhtin's concept of dialogic writing will be employed when considering the relationship between Woolf's texts and Stephen's, and how it forms a textual dialogue between the two. Kristeva's contention that text replaces subject and her understanding of the connection between texts will help inform the principles behind the approach adopted in this thesis, as well as the language that provides an understanding of Woolf's references to Stephen's work. Hutcheon's use of the pragmatic approach to parody will also be utilised, applying it to intertextuality in order to side-step theoretical opposition to authorial intention and legitimately debate Woolf's purpose in her engagement with Stephen and his work. Knauer's concept of *Leitzitate* also offers a means of reading intention but also of understanding a different way in which obvious and obscure allusions can work as a system of intertextual writing, and will be used accordingly when reading Woolf.

These varying ways of reading intertextuality are all applicable to interpreting the connections Woolf makes to Stephen's work in her own, and inform a method of realising the depth and variety of the nature of Woolf's intertextuality that this thesis has termed an 'intertextual net'.

James E. Porter provides a concise explanation of Kristevan intertextuality that can be applied to an understanding of the concept of the intertextual net; he writes that 'every discourse is composed of "traces," pieces of other texts that help constitute its meaning.'³⁷ Woolf's net is spread wide, each link connecting her different works to different texts by different writers, but also, as shown in the previous example, revealing links between those different writers' texts. 'Traces' of those texts in Woolf's work add extra meaning to it, but

³⁷ 'Intertextuality and the Discourse Community', *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 34-47 (p. 35).

the modifications she makes to the originals gives Woolf partial control of their purpose and effect (here it is necessary to draw on Hutcheon's argument for the pragmatic view of authorial intention, rather than Bakhtin's or Kristeva's point of view, but still it is only partial control that can ever be granted to the author). Texts that are closely related to Woolf's own work are positioned correspondingly closer to hers on the net, whilst less comparable texts are placed further out; indeed, during the course of this thesis some texts are shown to sit closer to Stephen's position on the net, though still linked back to Woolf's through his work by textual allusion and influence.

When Kristeva writes that any 'text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another', the idea of Woolf's allusions creating a polytextual synthesis (to adapt Hutcheon's bitextual explanation of parodic reference) between her text/s and other text/s is laid out. When, in *To the Lighthouse*, the narrative describes a table existing outside of perception, Woolf is referencing Hume and his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1738). The explicit presence of Hume in the novel, via Mr Ramsay's comical image of him having 'grown enormously fat, [...] stuck in a bog' (*TL*, 50), acts as a *Leitzzitate* to this quieter allusion. However, the table simultaneously refers to Stephen and more specifically to his *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, where he, like Hume, debates the possibility of the external reality of a table. So here Woolf's allusion captures both the text by Hume and the one by her father, drawing significance and meaning from each and bestowing a different meaning back upon a *History of English Thought* in return. For it is impossible knowing of the intertextual link with *To the Lighthouse* to read Stephen's passage without finding a layer of Woolfian meaning wrapped around it; the meaning of Stephen's words is not changed, but now they carry with them something extra, an echo of Woolf's novel.³⁸ What adds a further level of nuance to this allusion, as it carries thought between the links of the net that connects the three texts in question, is that Stephen

³⁸ T.S. Eliot discusses the way in which new art can alter what had gone before it, in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1920), pp. 42-53).

is discussing Hume's concept during the passage Woolf refers to; the image of an intertextual net becomes clearer as a recognition of the fact that the allusion (this and others) does not simply connect Woolf's text to Stephen's and then her text to Hume's – it illuminates the connection between Stephen's work and Hume's, and then replays it back in Woolf's novel. Again, Mr Ramsay's ruminations on Hume act as a *Leitzzitate* to this textual dialogue as it did to the one between Woolf and Hume. This discussion, of the links to Stephen and Hume in Woolf's novel, is covered in greater depth in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

This concept of the intertextual net that Woolf casts will be used throughout this thesis, in order to better explain the use of allusion in her work as well as recognise how far that intertextuality often reaches.

Conclusion

This thesis will also consider how Woolf's relationship with Stephen reflects her attitude towards the Victorian and modern eras, and thus what it entails for the Victorian-modern debate. The argument here will contend that the fluidity of Woolf's manner towards both periods demonstrates that the traditional periodisation between these eras is too rigid. Steve Ellis, in *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (2007), confronts the apparently paradoxical attitude Woolf held towards the Victorian era, and argues persuasively against readings, such as in Quentin Bell's biography, that saw Woolf as 'essentially conservative'³⁹ and belonging entirely to the Victorian world into which she was born. Equally, Ellis disputes readings that claimed Woolf as an 'entirely progressive' being, and cites Jane Marcus as the 'principal spokesperson' for this school of thought.⁴⁰ Ellis notes that despite his belief that the polarised interpretations of Bell and Marcus belong to an 'outmoded polemic, there are plenty of current responses to her still upholding [...] an essentially conservative or radical Woolf.'⁴¹ Ellis's rebuttal of these views is presented in his argument that Woolf selectively rejected and embraced different aspects of both eras; his conclusion being that Woolf's aim

³⁹ *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 4.

⁴⁰ Ellis, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

was to reconcile the Victorian past with the modern present, to prevent a rift growing between the two ages. This thesis intends to explore the idea that Woolf deliberately breaks away from the era with a purpose Ellis does not fully expound upon; this being the notion that however much she admired them, Woolf did not want to be caught in the coat-tails of the Great Victorians and demanded a place in literary history that would account for her as distinct from them. Just as splitting away from the work and ideas of her father would redefine their relationship for Woolf, in the same way she intended to redefine her connection with the Victorian era.

Chapter 1: Leslie Stephen

Sir Leslie Stephen, born 1832, was a distinguished Victorian Man of Letters. He became the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (as well as being one of its most prolific contributors), was a respected writer in the fields of philosophy, biography, and literary criticism, and an esteemed orator: he became the first Clark lecturer in 1883, and the Leslie Stephen lectures continue to this day. Most famously, though, Stephen was the father of Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, and it is necessary to turn to this familial attachment in order to determine why this ostensibly respectable Victorian academic is represented in popular opinion as a real-life version of a fictional tyrant: Mr Ramsay, in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. For it is in the persona of Mr Ramsay that all the worst features of Stephen are laid bare – a compulsive, self-indulgent need for female attention and reassurance, a crippling anxiety over the value and longevity of his life's work, and a concerning inability to understand or empathise with his own children.

The previous introductory chapter discussed several of the critical interpretations of Stephen's character that seem to have become irrevocably associated with the man, including Hermione Lee's assertion that Woolf found the embodiment of the patriarchal Victorian in her father and Shankman's accusation of Stephen having been a 'donnish, penny-pinching husband.'¹ These negative characteristics are often expounded upon in academic studies of Stephen, which tend to focus, perhaps understandably, on the last twenty-two years of his life. These were, of course, also the first twenty-two years of Woolf's life. This period featured the years of Stephen at his lowest; twice widowed by 1895, almost entirely deaf, and a gloomy, misanthropic figure, haunting the house he kept at 22 Hyde Park Gate with his offspring. The Stephen children placed much of the blame on their father for the decline and death of their mother, Julia, and his desire for her attention must have been stifling for a woman already worn thin by family responsibilities and her

¹ *Anne Thackeray Ritchie: Journals and Letters*, p. 156.

many philanthropic commitments. Woolf later wrote: ‘We made him the type of all that we hated in our lives; he was the tyrant of inconceivable selfishness, who had replaced the beauty and merriment of the dead with ugliness and gloom’ (*MoB*, 65). The death of their elder half-sister, Stella Duckworth, two years later, served only to concentrate this ill-feeling towards their father. So the common portrayal of Leslie Stephen is formed: a Victorian patriarch who tyrannised his children up until his death in 1904. Lee writes in her biography of Woolf:

Leslie Stephen’s daughters poured tea and handed cakes and were pleasant to Leslie’s old men and their interfering aunts and cousins [...]. Leslie groaned and fell silent and wished aloud that people would go and had to be shouted down his ear-trumpet.²

Lyndall Gordon echoes this sentiment, writing how Stephen’s grief ‘blinded him to his children’s right to their own feelings and finally cut him off from their sympathies.’³ Woolf herself did not believe it was any coincidence that the death of her father and her first published work were separated by only eleven months, famously remarking that if Stephen had lived longer: ‘His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; – inconceivable’ (*D3* 208).

However, the result of maintaining an almost entirely negative assessment of Stephen is that he too easily becomes the very antithesis of Woolf, polarising their positions as writers and as people. She is the bohemian, Modernist writer, breaking away from the shackles of the oppressive nineteenth century. Stephen is thus cast as the very embodiment of the now obsolete Victorian era: puritanical, patriarchal, and a focus for Woolf’s critiquing of the past. Even more significantly, this polarised view fails to explain why Woolf frequently returns to Stephen and his work, and on altogether more affectionate and respectful terms than those afforded to Mr Ramsay and the iteration of her father characterised within him.

² *Virginia Woolf*, p. 146.

³ *Virginia Woolf: A Writer’s Life*, p. 32.

It is the intention of this chapter to tackle the somewhat shallow and artificial concept of Stephen that has been drawn together from the various critical ideas noted here, to dispel those accusations that have no merit and correct those that are misstated, and to present instead a more balanced account of Stephen as a person. As was discussed in the thesis introduction, some recent Woolfian scholarship, such as by Hill and Daugherty, has sought to debunk the polemic which positions Woolf as being only at odds with Stephen and instead explore the idea that her relationship with him was more complex and more positive than this. This chapter will continue this line of thought by first putting forward the more balanced representation of Stephen, one which is able to offer the rationale for understanding why and how Woolf cultivated a positive literary connection with her father, and then by examining ways in which Woolf's work is able to achieve this through her construction of different concepts of Stephen. As this chapter will show, Stephen's life moved through different phases, from his early political involvement, through different stages of family life, into his overwhelming work on the *DNB*. Yet critical work almost always references the bleakest of periods at the end, after all work had finished and the tragedy of Julia's death had struck. Woolf's writing on the other hand reflects the other stages more readily and is able to do so by her use of different versions of her father existing within it.

Stephen's Life

In order to present an account of Stephen's life that establishes a more precise portrayal of the man than those which have just been discussed, several of the widely-held opinions about events in his life will be disputed and elements of his character that have been overlooked will be brought to attention. One particular characteristic that will be reflected upon in this brief biography is Stephen's radical bent: his agnosticism, his politics, and much of his writing show Stephen as a thinker outside of the status quo of the Victorian period, regularly questioning both established ideas and British establishments. This will be detailed in an examination of Stephen's career that forms the first half of this section on his life.

The second half will look more closely at Stephen's private life, including the regularity in which he is shown as being an active and interested father, and the importance he attached to family in general, sometimes to the detriment of his writing. Stephen's anxiety towards his work will be studied in this chapter, with the concluding argument being that this predisposition only manifested itself with such dominance and oppressive effect after the tribulations of his work on the *DNB* and the sudden death of Julia.

Neither Stephen's progressive outlook nor the concept of him as an attentive father fits comfortably with the detached 'old Victorian' representation of Stephen put forward by Roger Poole, for example, when he writes: 'The man was typical of the best of mid-Victorian thinking [...] and would not have understood at all much of the literature of the twentieth [century]'.⁴ Similarly, his anti-establishment views do not fit with the supposition that Stephen and Woolf were polar opposites. In fact, parallels are can be drawn between several of the polemical texts that the two writers produced, and these important points of comparison will be explored during the chapter.

Early Life and Cambridge

Stephen was born on 28 November 1832, in Kensington Gore in London. His parents, Sir James Stephen and Lady Jane Stephen (née Venn), counted Leslie amongst four other children: two older brothers, Herbert Venn (1822) and James Fitzjames (1829), an elder sister, Frances Wilberforce (1824), and the youngest, Caroline Emelia (1834). Frances died in infancy and Herbert when he was only twenty-four years old.

As Woolf had her Victorian antecedents, Stephen's family history was filled with renowned Georgians and their similarly grand reputations. Where Virginia's upbringing was in a world full of Thackerays, Pre-Raphaelites, and literary figures connected to her father's standing, Stephen's was populated by the Clapham Sect and a distinguished line of lawyers.

⁴ 'The Unknown Virginia Woolf' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 18.

His grandfather, James Stephen, had drafted the Slave Trade Act 1807,⁵ whilst Sir James did the same for the Slavery Abolition Act 1833,⁶ which all but ended slavery across the British Empire.

As these actions suggest, the Stephen family were ‘deeply engaged in the anti-slavery agitation’,⁷ and James Stephen was not only good friends with William Wilberforce but his relation after James’ marriage to his sister, Sarah, in 1800. Stephen’s friendship with the Wilberforce siblings was practically inherited as all were second-generation members of the Clapham Sect, an affiliation of Evangelical Anglicans who actively sought social reform and improvement. It was in fact Sir James who coined the name ‘Clapham sect’ – a retrospectively affixed term that Steven Michael Tompkins finds inaccurate on several grounds:

What Stephen meant by ‘sect’ was simply a group of friends who shared a particular religious outlook, in this case evangelical Anglican activism, but even then not all the people he lists as members of the circle were evangelicals, or even Anglicans. As for the ‘Clapham’ part, half of the people Stephen lists never lived in the village or anywhere near it.⁸

This being said, Tompkins and other critics have reasoned that beyond the inaccuracy of the designated label, ‘there is a real and important entity’, and without venturing too far into the history of the group, their importance in pushing for the abolition of slavery in Britain and its colonies should not be overlooked, nor the role of the Stephens in that movement.⁹ Whilst Wilberforce was to become the spiritual leader of the Clapham Sect, or its ‘centre of gravity’, the Stephens were among its able lieutenants.¹⁰ The influence of the radicalism (if not the evangelicalism) of the Clapham Sect can be seen on Leslie Stephen’s life and career

⁵ ‘An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade’, passed by Parliament in March, 1807

⁶ ‘An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies’, passed by Parliament in July, 1833

⁷ Leslie Stephen, *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Bart., K.C.S.I.: A Judge of the High Court of Justice* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895), p. 46.

⁸ *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce’s circle changed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), p. 11.

⁹ Tompkins, *The Clapham Sect*, pp. 11-12. For other writers on the significance of the Clapham Sect, see Ford K. Brown’s *Fathers of the Victorians* (1961), Margaret Bryant’s *The Clapham Sect* (2004), and Ernest M. Howse’s *Saints in Politics - The 'Clapham Sect' and the Growth of Freedom* (1971).

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 12.

for he too championed the anti-slavery cause, publicly supporting the Unionists during the American Civil War whilst many of his Cambridge contemporaries favoured the Confederates.¹¹ His students would even feign support of the South in order to watch the impassioned response it would draw from their tutor (*LL*, 66).

Stephen's time at the University of Cambridge defined his career in different ways, as well as demonstrating that convention and tradition were not amongst his chief concerns when it came to making important decisions. Stephen was sent to Cambridge for his further education and stayed on after completing his undergraduate degree to take up a position as a junior tutor at the college – one which required him to take holy orders, something he duly did in 1855. Stephen appeared to have settled on a life in academia. Even after he had left Cambridge, Stephen wrote on numerous occasions of the attractions of 'the old place' (*LL*, 412); it was not, though, exempt from his criticism. In an essay of reminiscences, Stephen coupled descriptions of some of the colourful individuals he met during his years at Cambridge with a rather sceptical opinion of the university's insular and conservative attitudes. 'The colleges had been founded in order to promote education', Stephen wrote, before adding wryly that the 'practice which had grown up would rather correspond to the theory that education was useful to promote the welfare of the colleges'.¹² He wrote in the same essay of how the university had needed change,¹³ and this had been true of Stephen's attitude at the time, too, for he had recommended reforms, including changes to the undergraduate mathematics curriculum and to a greater emphasis on intellectual meritocracy in the appointment of dons. According to Harold Orel these were 'proposed twenty years before their time', adding that Stephen 'ran into exactly the kind of stubborn conservatism

¹¹ Maitland notes that 'still the Southerners had a large majority in the combination rooms. Stephen would argue for hours about this matter, and I infer he did not always keep his temper' (*LL*, 107).

¹² *Some Early Impressions* (London, Hogarth Press, 1924), p. 18 (first publ. in *National Review*, 247 (1903), 130-59).

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 19.

that could convince him his career lay not in increasingly eccentric donnishness, but in another field of endeavour entirely'.¹⁴

The reason for the end of his time at the university was, however, more controversial than this. Stephen suffered a crisis of faith and finding himself unable to read, amongst other writings, the story of Noah's flood 'as if it were a sacred truth', communicated to his college in the summer of 1862 that he could no longer take chapel services (*LL*, 139). Maitland intimates that the college fellows were of a mind to retain Stephen as tutor even withstanding these religious uncertainties, but, on hearing that one senior fellow had raised concerns that his theological stance could adversely affect the students' moral well-being, Stephen resigned the tutorship himself. He nevertheless stayed on at Cambridge in the role of a fellow for a further two and a half years, though it was not a particularly fruitful time: Stephen was later to write of the period as a 'mistake', for he had lost his purpose for remaining and thus began to sicken entirely of university life (*LL*, 140-43).

It is worth drawing attention here to the theological concerns of Sir James Stephen. He wrote *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography* (1839), part of which contained his own religious doubt over the existence of an eternal hell, consequently bringing him into some dispute with Cambridge where he held the post of Regius Professor of Modern History. The parallels with his son Leslie's fallout from the same university and subsequent writing of *An Agnostic's Apology* are intriguing, and establish two figures with beliefs that were far more radical than their reputations as established academics would suggest. Not only this, both generations of Stephen are shown to hold the integrity of these beliefs ahead of their position or their reputation. In Leslie's case this was particularly apparent, as his resignation from his tutorship at Cambridge left him with no discernible income or career. Whilst his and his family's standing made it unlikely that Stephen would have struggled, and indeed his move into journalism was not a difficult step, he nevertheless had chosen to forfeit a life as an

¹⁴ *Victorian Literary Critics: George Henry Lewes, Walter Bagehot, Richard Holt Hutton, Leslie Stephen, Andrew Lang, George Saintsbury and Edmund Gosse* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984; repr. 2014), pp. 96-7.

academic – a life which perhaps would have suited him more than the journalism he often found so tiresome ('I write such a quantity of rubbish for pot-boiling purposes' (*LL*, 229)).

This sense of both attraction to and rejection of the university body is extended into Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, where the writer shows her fondness for Cambridge ('if the spirit of peace dwells anywhere, it is in the courts and quadrangles of Oxbridge' (*ROO*, 31)) whilst putting across her argument against the gross gender inequality the institution maintained. To extend the parallel being made, here the daughter follows in her father's and grandfather's footsteps with a dispute against the university, only replacing religious autonomy for sexual equality as her point of contention. As Virginia Hyman argues, Leslie Stephen's fight for 'intellectual freedom against religious bondage' is comparable with Woolf's 'taking up the cause of women's freedom from male tyranny'.¹⁵

America

This aspect of non-conformity in Stephen's character is displayed in his actions during the listless final years at Cambridge. Even if the university no longer held any fulfilment for him, Stephen used his time away from the place to his advantage, resolving in 1863 to travel to the United States with the intention of surveying the condition of the country, then in its third year of civil war. John W. Bicknell writes of Stephen's outlook on America as illustrating many of his liberal opinions, with it being 'a country which had put into practice some of the principles that Leslie increasingly espoused – a country without a king, but with a broad franchise; without an established church, but with a plurality of sects'.¹⁶ Stephen, still a firm champion of the Union, had become exasperated by what he saw as a tendency amongst sections of the English press both to back the Confederates and agitate for British intervention. He wrote in the *Brighton Election Reporter*:

¹⁵ 'Reflections in the Looking-Glass: Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 10, No. 2 (1983), 197-216 (p. 202) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831121>> [Accessed on 12 October 2015].

¹⁶ *Letters: Vol I*, p. 16.

It would be a war in which we should be undeniably fighting by the side of slave-holders and helping to destroy a form of government under which (with all its faults) millions of our kindred have lived in unparalleled prosperity for over eighty years. (LL, 107)

It was with this attitude that Stephen toured across the country, making stops in Boston, New York, Buffalo, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington. His journey saw him sail up the Mississippi, spend time with General Meade's army on the Rappahannock, and meet Lincoln whilst in Washington. Stephen wrote of his meeting with the President: 'I had, as I say, the honour of shaking hands with old Abe [...]. He has a pleasant smile, a very jolly laugh, and altogether looks like a benevolent and hearty old gentleman. I felt quite kindly towards him' (LL, 120).

Stephen's letters show, though, that his sources of information and evidence were actually found at public meetings and dinners with fellow academics, rather than in the company of Lincoln and the White House entourage. During his first stay in Boston, Stephen wrote of the war dominating the conversations of the people he met and their grief over losses of friends and relatives.¹⁷ Stephen's ire was duly raised when *The Times* ran an article suggesting many of the soldiers involved in the war were in fact Irish and German, and the fighting generally avoided by Americans themselves.¹⁸

As his tour continued, Stephen became increasingly infuriated by reports in *The Times* and other English newspapers, such as *The Morning Herald*, which he believed were exacerbating the worsening relationship between the Union and Britain. When in September 1863 the *Herald* published a story that was picked up by an American paper, stating the case for Britain to send warships to support the Confederate effort, Stephen wrote of the journalist that he would like to 'bray that fool in a mortar' (LL, 123). Stephen also notes his own continued failure to convince Unionists that Britain had not decided to turn its back on

¹⁷ 'You can't speak about any one without hearing about his, or his relatives' losses' (LL, 111).

¹⁸ 'The Northerners, on the other hand, have created and replenished their armies from the floating population of their large cities, from Irish and German settlers, and from newly arrived emigrants', *The Times*, 21 May 1863, p. 10 <The Times Digital Archive, Web> [Accessed on 26 July 2016].

the abolition of slavery, simply for the reason that they could not see any other explanation for its sympathy towards the South.

On his return to England, Stephen set to work on putting together a vociferous attack on *The Times*'s reporting of the war, in which he argued the newspaper simply regurgitated the ignorance of the general public on the matter rather than informing them of the truth. In the study, he compared articles and supposed facts published by the newspaper against actual events that had come to pass, pouring scorn on the discrepancies that were made apparent. Stephen noted that in one series of reports, the supposed numbers of Union and Confederate supporters completely contradicted the country's population figures, causing him to write that 'the *Times* has here been cooking its facts in a manner quite beyond my powers of arithmetic.'¹⁹ It was at this ignorance of the facts on the part of *The Times* that Stephen aimed his criticism – he stated that not only had their articles frequently been baseless, but that this obliviousness to the truth had actually damaged relations between many Americans and their English counterparts.²⁰

In her paper, 'Of Scrapbooks, War, and Newspapers: Leslie Stephen's Legacy' (2014), Beth Rigel Daugherty describes Stephen's article as 'a strong and still timely critique of media power' and points out that it is accepted by modern American Civil War historians as an accurate view of the *Times*'s reporting.²¹ Daugherty and Gillian Fenwick both note that J.R. Lowell, author of *The Biglow Papers* (1848), who would become a life-long friend of Stephen (and Woolf's godfather), commended the study's 'dispassionate logic'.²² Furthermore, the episode now serves to demonstrate both an intrepid and a progressive element to Stephen's character so frequently neglected in critical studies, if not by Daugherty's paper. Stephen's commitment to learning more of what was happening in

¹⁹ *The Times on the American War: And Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 10.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 105-6.

²¹ In *Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader: Selected Papers from the Twenty-third Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Helen Wussow and Mary Ann Gillies (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2014), 39-44 (p. 41).

²² Daugherty, p. 41; Fenwick, *Leslie Stephen's Life in Letters: A Bibliographical Study* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), p. 163.

America led him to travel the country with only letters of introduction from his cousin, Edward Dicey, as means of making headway. Maitland describes Stephen as having ‘gone forth trusting his luck’ (*LL*, 108). Nevertheless, Stephen met some of the most influential figures in the country and gathered enough first-hand evidence to put together his withering critique of *The Times*’s own war-reports.

A similarly adventurous streak in Stephen’s nature grew to prominence during those end years at Cambridge through his love of mountaineering. Stephen was to make the first ascent of eight different peaks between 1858 and 1864, including the Schreckhorn in 1861, and was one of the first presidents of the Alpine Club, presiding from 1865 to 1868. He later published the mountaineering classic *The Playground of Europe* in 1871, praised in the *Journal of Education* as follows: ‘It is many a day since any pages have started such suggestive lines of thought and discussion of the varied attitudes of scholars as to the attractiveness of the Alps in two hundred years’.²³ A final first ascent, of Mont Mallet, was achieved in the same year, and his short story, ‘A Bad Few Minutes in the Alps’, followed in 1872. Woolf would later quote her father, acknowledging him simply as ‘an eminent Victorian’, saying: ‘Whenever you see a board up with “Trespassers will be prosecuted,” trespass at once’ (*E6* 277). Stephen’s attitude to pushing back at boundaries in his walking life would be mirrored in his politics.

Stephen’s Magazines and Politics

Between those alpine successes, Stephen embarked on his first attempt at editing a newspaper, albeit a purposefully short-lived venture with its one aim being a purely political one. The *Brighton Election Reporter* was a paper founded and edited by Stephen as a means to support the (unsuccessful) Liberal candidate for the 1864 by-election, his friend Henry Fawcett, and ran only for six issues, between 10 and 25 February 1864. As Fawcett’s wife, Millicent Garrett explained:

²³ ‘THE PLAYGROUND OF EUROPE by Leslie Stephens’ [sic], *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1909), 105 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42813841>> [Accessed on 21 April 2016]

When my husband was first a candidate for Brighton in 1864, none of the existing Brighton papers would put in anything in his support: and his friend Mr. Leslie Stephen started and edited and in the main wrote, a little paper called the *Brighton Election Reporter*.²⁴

The link between Stephen's newspaper work and his liberal inclinations was clear from the start and the following analysis will demonstrate how Stephen's politics frequently guided his decisions. His career post-Cambridge saw him move into his mother and sister's home in Porchester Square, London, and continue on this path into journalism. Stephen wrote:

'Having no other opening, I had resolved to take to literature, and London is plainly the best field for that profession' (*LL*, 144). Stephen's claim about London was proved correct with some promptness; by early February 1865, he was not only writing on a regular basis for the *Saturday Review* and had an article in the second issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but had also been offered the editorship of the *Reader*. Stephen chose to decline this, however, citing his preference for writing rather than editing at this early stage in his career, even describing the role of editor as 'rather a doubtful speculation for which I had no particular qualification' (*LL*, 160).

Journalism continued to prove a successful enterprise for Stephen and just after his wedding to Minny Thackeray in 1867 he was rewarded with a retaining fee of fifty guineas a year by the editor of the *Saturday Review* for his continued writing services. His letters, though, provide occasional hints at the unsatisfactory nature of Stephen's trade:

Ought I to live on bread and water and produce a *magnum opus*, establishing certain everlasting laws of human nature till somebody proves the contrary, or ought I to have an occasional glass of champagne and write nothing but leading articles – proving nothing particular? I puzzle over this often, and can't quite make it out. (*LL*, 214)

This 'puzzle' of Stephen's remained as just that for most of his career, but developed into a far more unhealthy obsession with achievement, or lack of it, by the time he was writing his

²⁴ Quoted by Lawrence Goldman in *The Blind Victorian: Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; repr. 2003), p. 156.

Mausoleum Book in 1895. In that, Stephen describes his career with a sense of disappointment, of having been ‘a jack of all trades’ instead of narrowing his focus and making ‘a real contribution to philosophical or ethical thought’ (*MBk*, 93). This tendency towards ruminations on personal failure and unfulfilled potential is characterised in Mr Ramsay with cutting effect. However, Woolf’s model for that character was much closer to the often melancholic Stephen who wrote the *Mausoleum Book*, and this point is important as it reflects both Woolf’s recognition of how Stephen was different at different times in his life, and, relevant here, that his work anxieties changed significantly over the course of his life. By the time he had barely navigated his health through the final years at the *DNB* (a significant period and crucial for understanding his later life), Stephen was prone to worrying about the legacy of his career, exacerbated to a pitiable degree by Julia’s death not long after. Woolf captured this anxious, troubled and troubling iteration of her father in Mr Ramsay and in ‘A Sketch of the Past’ (1939). Yet at this earlier juncture in Stephen’s life, and for large parts of it, the anxiety is more of a nervous tic, betraying Stephen’s acknowledged thin skin but having little consequence to his relationships. Furthermore, for much of the time it reflects a genuine uncertainty as to the best direction in which Stephen felt he should aim his efforts; towards dependably-paid and secure journalism or less secure (both financially and mentally) book writing. Despite the sentiments expressed in the above quotation, in a letter to Holmes at the end of 1869 Stephen writes of a desire to produce ‘first-class literature’ through his journalistic endeavours, as well as stating that ‘a journalist is doing a very necessary bit of work in the world’ as long as they are men of integrity (*LL*, 215). Here the question of whether to pursue journalism or something more intellectually satisfying had found at least a temporary solution in Stephen’s mind, with a careful reframing of the trade so as to make it closer to the more highbrow pursuits he associated with book writing. This balancing of the various endeavours Stephen entered into and the different feelings they elicited within him continued throughout his life, as will be discussed further during this chapter, but never with the same force or despondency that marked the years towards the end of his life.

Stephen's choice of magazine editorship offers an understanding of the significance he attached to political affiliation. In 1871, Stephen became editor at the *Cornhill Magazine* (a paper previously edited by Thackeray, a connection that pleased Stephen), having rejected the same position at *Fraser's Magazine*. Evidently his opinion on the 'doubtful speculation' of editing a magazine had changed after six years of journalism, but it is worth staying with Stephen's decision to join the *Cornhill* and his reasons for electing that magazine over *Fraser's*. He had written extensively for both, though *Fraser's* offered far greater freedom in terms of article content, allowing Stephen to stretch his political and theological muscles to the full.²⁵ The *Cornhill* was a different matter altogether. Far more established and far more careful of what it printed, the magazine reflected its readers: intellectual and liberal (if not overly political), but not inclined whatsoever to radical politics or uncomfortable agnosticism.²⁶ The Thackeray association and that it was owned by George Smith, later to be Stephen's chief collaborator at the *DNB* and a trusted name in the publishing world, undoubtedly made the *Cornhill* a tempting proposal, but *Fraser's* was a better fit for Stephen's writing. Why, then, the acceptance of the *Cornhill's* offer? Bicknell argues convincingly that Stephen was persuaded, at least in part, by his own belief that under his leadership the *Cornhill* could be raised to the pinnacle of literary criticism.²⁷ The following quotation from a letter to Norton in early 1872 indicates both Stephen's improved financial situation and his new magazine's aim to avoid controversy:

I am rather more prosperous than before, in regard that I am now editing the *Cornhill Magazine* wh. is easy & not very responsible work. As we have no political or religious tendencies, except when Mat Arnold indulges in some of his moonshine, I have nothing to do but provide healthy reading for the British public.²⁸

²⁵ *Fraser's* prided itself on its independent attitude. Walter E. Hough describes it as 'an outstanding organ [...] of progressive thought', and writes that '*Fraser's* as a whole may claim to have approached [Arnold's] ideal of a criticism free from subserving the special interests of any sect' (*The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900: Volume II*, ed. by Walter E. Hough (London: Routledge, 1972), pp. 438-39).

²⁶ Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 84, 215.

²⁷ *Letters: Vol I*, p. 93.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 109.

Stephen is as ever overly self-effacing towards his work; in fact, and just as Bicknell states was a motivation for his taking the job, Stephen's editorship was able to direct the magazine to 'its highest level of literary merit' and, Oscar Maurer argues, ensure that 'he made the *Cornhill* the best magazine of its kind in the nineteenth century'.²⁹ Not only this, Stephen's egalitarian attitude as editor saw him introduce an array of different names into literary circles, including younger writers like Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Hardy, and Henry James.

The critical success of the magazine should not wholly overshadow the fact that Stephen had opted for the *Cornhill* in no small part due to the improved financial security it offered the new family of Stephen, Minny, and their daughter Laura. Stephen had rejected the earlier offer of the *Reader* as it did not allow him to put full efforts into his writing, though the position would have undoubtedly netted him improved terms. By 1871, however, his journalism career was no longer the primary concern for Stephen.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* offers insight into another reason behind Stephen's writing loyalties. He had contributed work to the paper throughout the 1860s, including the essay later published as *Sketches from Cambridge, by A Don*, and then from 1880 until 1884, following a hiatus from the magazine during the 1870s. The fluctuation in Stephen's support lies entirely with his politics: under the editorship of Frederick Greenwood the *Pall Mall Gazette* had swung towards supporting the Tory party during the 1870s, before being relaunched with a more liberal stance in the 1880s (alongside a corresponding change of editor, with John Morley replacing Greenwood).³⁰ In making this change of political affiliation, the magazine highlights Stephen's political leanings, as his letters reveal. In a letter to Norton, sent December 1876, Stephen remarks acerbically on the magazine's desire for Britain to become involved in the Turkish campaign against the Serbians, describing it as

²⁹ 'Leslie Stephen and the Cornhill Magazine, 1871-82', *The University of Texas: Studies in English*, Vol. 32 (1953), 67-95 (p. 67) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20776063>> [Accessed on 27 May 2016].

³⁰ Gillian Fenwick, 'The "Athenaeum" and the "Dictionary of National Biography", 1885-1901', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Winter 1990), 180-188 (p. 181).

having made him a “‘peace-at-any-price” man’, and on the magazine’s ‘spiteful narrowness’ (LL, 294-96). Stephen then notes the new direction of the magazine and Morley’s appointment in another letter to Norton in April 1880:

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been the incarnation of Greenwood, and, as you know, the most thorough-going of Jingo newspapers [...]. A transformation is to take place, probably next Monday, in virtue of which the *P.M.G* will appear as a Liberal organ. I am a good deal amused by the catastrophe, which will shock many virtuous old Tories [...]. Smith has been to me this morning asking me to give him or his son-in-law a little help at the start, and asking me to apply to Morley. (LL, 340)

Several details about Stephen can be recognised from these quotations and the accompanying facts. Firstly, his liberal beliefs are again confirmed, through the disparaging remarks on the Tory version of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and his amusement at the idea of the magazine’s Tory readers ‘shock’ at its transformation into a ‘Liberal organ.’ Secondly, it is clear that Stephen’s politics were well known – Smith immediately requested his help in writing for the new incarnation of the paper.

Stephen’s staunch anti-war position is also highlighted in his remarks on the *Pall Mall Gazette* quoted above, just as it was by his trip to America and the work that he produced from that undertaking. Maitland describes Stephen as finding the thought of war ‘abnormally’ painful:

Few people loathe war as much as he loathed it. Most people hate, or profess to hate, war in general; but when a war – of course, ‘a just and necessary war’ – occurs, they find consolations. It was otherwise with Stephen. He would have condemned as utopian nonsense much that in our intervals of peace is said of war in general. (LL, 436)

Maitland follows this statement with a careful reminder of the bravery Stephen repeatedly called upon during his mountaineering career, as though reassuring the reader that Stephen’s hatred for war came from rational consideration rather than anything less virtuous. This in itself reveals how a pacifistic attitude may have been judged even at the start of the twentieth

century, but Stephen's resolute commitment to this point of view cannot be questioned. In 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps', Stephen even questions whether war is not 'common enough to enable one to part from the world without any bitter regret'.³¹ Woolf acknowledged Stephen's point of view, writing how 'all wars were hateful' (E5 587) to her father, and shared it, exemplified by her writing on war in *Three Guineas*.

Stephen continued as editor and regular contributor to the *Cornhill* up until 1882, at which point his thoughts had turned towards what would become the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He produced an addition to the *English Men of Letters* series in the form of his life of Jonathan Swift (1882), all the while working on a philosophical treatise on ethics. Intended in part as a response to Henry Sidgwick's *Method of Ethics*, and likely a formulation of ideas Stephen had considered at The Metaphysical Club, the work was eventually published in 1882 as *The Science of Ethics*. Stephen's membership of that club, and indeed the other clubs he frequented, shed further light on his intellectual position as a both a modern thinker, a progressive, and something of an outsider. In the introduction to his article, 'The Metaphysical Society: a reminiscence', published in *The Nineteenth Century* magazine, R. H. Hutton writes this of the club:

In the autumn of 1868 Mr Tennyson and the Rev. Charles Pritchard – Savilian Professor of Astronomy – were guests together in my house. A good deal of talk arose on speculative subjects, especially theology. And in the course of it the idea was suggested of founding a Theological Society, to discuss such questions after the manner and with the freedom of an ordinary scientific society.³²

Hutton goes on to list the members, which include Stephen and Sidgwick. The Society aimed to 'provide an arena in which the most important religious problems should be discussed with the same freedom with which other problems are', as Stephen puts it.³³ Consequently, as well as presenting Stephen with the opportunity to develop his ideas for

³¹ *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1873; repr. 1907), p. 206.

³² 18 August 1885, pp. 177–196.

³³ *The Life of Fitzjames Stephen*, p. 361.

The Science of Ethics, membership of this club provided ample and uncensored opportunity to air his arguments for agnosticism through theological debate. He names ‘Professors Huxley, Tyndall, and W. K. Clifford’ as among its members, and of them representing the ‘scientific agnostics’; furthermore, his chapter on the society for his biography of James Fitzjames discusses at length his brother’s arguments with fellow members on that subject.³⁴

Stephen also attended the Century Club, founded by Frederic Harrison and made up of members who shared intellectual concerns and reform aspirations.³⁵ Lubenow writes of it: ‘Most members were fellows of their colleges; many were barristers; some were journalists. It was a kind of caucus to promote reform [...]. Outsiders accused them of being nihilists and atheists, but its members included liberal clergymen’.³⁶ The Club’s political interests are demonstrated by *Essays on Reform* (1867), a pro-reform volume of essays contributed almost entirely by affiliates of the Century Club, and including Stephen’s own ‘On the Choice of Representatives by Popular Constituencies’ (in which he argues against continuing to exclude the working classes from the vote, as it weakened ‘Parliament quite as much as it weakens the Democracy’).³⁷ And it was a political club far more than a social one, as Harrison confirms: ‘It was to have, not a social character, but a political and intellectual character. It was to consist not of celebrities, or of pleasant fellows, but of keen workers in the causes of freedom of thought and popular progress’.³⁸

Minnie Thackeray

So far in this chapter, Stephen has been established as a more forward-thinking and spirited figure than criticism has often assumed him to be. Attention will now turn from his professional life to his personal life, allowing a corresponding re-evaluation of Stephen as a private individual, with a particular focus on how he and Woolf related to each other.

³⁴ Stephen, *The Life of Fitzjames Stephen*, pp. 365-72.

³⁵ Frederic Harrison writes that, ‘I was myself one of the founders of the Century Club’ (*Realities and Ideals* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908), p. 370).

³⁶ Lubenow, p. 268.

³⁷ *Essays on Reform*, ed. by G.C. Brodrick (London: Macmillan, 1867), p. 121.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 371.

Contrary to the popular conception of Stephen as a detached academic who existed only ever on the periphery of domestic life, there is convincing testimony to indicate that, at least for a large part of the time, he in fact played an important and affectionate role within the family.³⁹ Maitland claims that after the birth of his first child Laura, the ‘father began to discover that he was in the highest degree a domestic animal, and that the cult of hearth and home was his true religion’ (*LL*, 262), and, as the following section on Stephen’s personal life will show, this is not the only evidence of his fatherly spirit.

The Stephens shared various literary and familial acquaintances with the Thackeray family. Fitzjames was acquainted with William Thackeray and had written under his editorship at the *Cornhill Magazine*, whilst Lady Stephen and Caroline were on friendly terms with the Thackeray sisters, Anne Isobel and Harriet Marian (or ‘Anny’ and ‘Minnie’ as they generally referred to themselves). It was therefore not an unusual occurrence that led to Stephen meeting Anny and Minny at Porchester Square during a lunch with Lady Stephen. Even though admitting to a shy disposition in matters of courtship, Stephen wrote of that meeting: ‘I had and took my chance of falling in love with my darling Minny’ (*MBk*, 9). By the time Stephen was invited to join the sisters in Switzerland for several days, which he described as being some of his ‘happiest’, the relationship between the two had become close (*MBk*, 11). They were engaged on 4 December 1865, and married some six months later, on 19 June. Stephen’s mother wrote the following of the wedding day in her journal:

This day Leslie married to M. Thackeray – a most original wedding – at 8 o’clock in the morning [with] nobody invited, but a large number of friends and acquaintances assembled [...]. As soon as it was over L. and M. set out for Paris. (*LL*, 196)

Stephen described his marriage to Minny as eight and a half years of ‘exquisite happiness’ (*MBk*, 11). The couple lived with Minny’s sister, Anny, for almost the entirety of their marriage; first at 16 Onslow Gardens, the sisters’ home before the marriage, and then at 8 Southwell Gardens, where the family moved in 1873. Despite their obviously contrasting

³⁹ ‘While Julia was supporting the panoply of family life, or out on exhausting rounds of visiting, Leslie Stephen was in his study at the top of the house.’ Harris, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 16.

temperaments – Stephen described Anny as an optimist and himself as more naturally melancholy – the two always remained friends and lived together up until Anny’s own marriage, to Richmond Richie in 1877.

Several months prior to Stephen commencing as *Cornhill* editor, Minny had given birth to the couple’s first and only child, Laura Makepeace. Born prematurely on 7 December, 1870, Stephen describes a ‘very delicate child’ but one who was nursed through her early health problems by Minny’s ‘intense tenderness and unremitting care’, though she would suffer ongoing disabilities for the rest of her life (*MBk*, 21).

The gestation of what would eventually become his most significant contribution to philosophy, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, provides evidence against that idea of Stephen as a detached academic, as it clearly shows how far his personal life and work could influence one another. As well as this, a glimpse of the way Stephen’s work anxiety changed can be seen through several moments in the lifetime of the text. The book was an enterprise begun with a certain pride and a sense that perhaps this could be his ‘*magnum opus*’ (*LL*, 214), but Stephen’s habitual modesty prevents any accompanying tub-thumping and instead presents a degree of worry over the likelihood of its success. He mentions it fleetingly in a letter to Lowell, dated 6 May 1872, writing that he does not ‘say anything about it, except to a friend or two’ but adding that it was on the same lines as his recent article of which Lowell had approved (*LL*, 230). It is next mentioned as ‘the great book’, as Stephen terms it in a letter to Oliver Wendell Holmes, before his natural reticence requires a sudden adjustment of his enthusiasm (‘not that it is great in any sense’) and the tone turns from reserve to something closer to self-deprecation: ‘However, it is all I can do, and I must put my best work into it’ (*LL*, 232). Yet while Stephen’s anxiety is clearly evident and felt with enough conviction that it infiltrates his correspondence, it is hardly malignant. In comparison, twenty years later Stephen’s reaction towards his book is detached scorn, describing it as ‘the so-called *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*’, with the conclusion that ‘the book was in many ways very superficial’ (*MBk*, 20).

Maitland suggests that Stephen's later criticism was harsher than it should have been and the book had elevated Stephen's literary standing from critic to philosopher; a point that supports the idea that the *Mausoleum Book* contains a certain amount of retrospective pessimism on Stephen's part, reflective of how the anxiety towards his work had become a much darker and consuming aspect of his personality.

On the 28 November 1875, Minny died, having suffered a fit of convulsions during the night and fallen into an unconsciousness from which she could not be revived. The revisions to *History of English Thought* Stephen had originally thought necessary were dismissed as 'distasteful' in the light of this personal tragedy (*LL*, 282). The loss of Minny had a profound effect on Stephen, Maitland writing that 'if few men could be happier, few could be more miserable' (*LL*, 270). Stephen curtailed many of his social activities, including his membership of the Cosmopolitan and the Century Club, finding solace instead in his books and his friendship with Anny.⁴⁰

Anny

Critics have regularly cited Stephen's behaviour during the courtship of Anny and Ritchie as an example of how unreasonable he could be. Stephen and Anny continued to live together at Southwell Gardens after Minny's death, along with Laura and her nanny, before moving to more suitable accommodation at 20 Hyde Park Gate, a property the Thackeray sisters had inherited. This arrangement lasted until Anny's marriage to Richmond Ritchie. Lee writes of the marriage causing 'Leslie to be furiously jealous – pointing ominously ahead to his behaviour with Stella twenty years later'.⁴¹ Quentin Bell writes in a similar tone: 'Although the marriage turned out well, Leslie hated the whole business; he was, as he realised, jealous'.⁴² There is no doubt that Stephen's resentment towards the proposed marriage was clearly motivated in part by his wish that Anny not leave his home and that he not be lowered in her affections by the presence of a husband. Stephen freely admits the former to

⁴⁰ Annan, p. 72.

⁴¹ Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 75-76.

⁴² *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972; repr. 1990), p. 12.

be the case in so many words, and Julia's suggestion of the latter does not appear to have been met with much opposition (*MBk*, 46). This is a glimpse of the worse side of Stephen's character: entirely self-centred and demanding, and one that was to become increasingly prevalent after the death of Julia and his subsequent breakdown.

Stephen did have other, more rational reasons for being wary of the match, though, and ones which were shared by others. Ritchie was still at Cambridge and expected to have a fine career in front of him based on his academic successes at the university and even before then. John Aplin writes: 'There was every reason to expect a brilliant future for him. He had been only eight when he won a King's Scholarship to Eton', and when Richmond went up to Trinity College, 'expectations were great'.⁴³ The marriage would curtail Ritchie's degree to the evident displeasure of sections of the Ritchie family.⁴⁴

Furthermore, while the seventeen-year difference in age between the two would have been acceptable had it been reversed, the match of an older woman with a younger man carried social stigma with it at that time: as Ginger Frost notes, 'Age differences were common among late-Victorian couples. According to Jalland in her study of the upper classes: "The husband was expected to be older than the wife; ideally by three to seven years, since women were supposed to age faster than men."' ⁴⁵ Bicknell writes that Stephen was inconsistent for not considering this point when it came to himself and Julia (Stephen being twelve years older)⁴⁶ but as Jalland's study records, there was a difference when it was an older man in the relationship.

But perhaps the greatest indication that Anny and Ritchie were going against social convention is found in the responses provoked by news of their engagement. Henrietta Garnett argues that Anny felt that the general reaction was better than she had expected but

⁴³ *Memory and Legacy: A Thackeray Family Biography, 1876-1919* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2011), p. 6.

⁴⁴ 'Mrs Ritchie had a different concern, for although she loved Annie dearly she feared for her son's glittering Cambridge prospects' (Aplin, p. 14).

⁴⁵ *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class, and Gender in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995), p. 94.

⁴⁶ *Letters: Vol I*, p. 199.

adds the following on several of the dissenting voices: ‘Henry James was disgusted. Hallam Tennyson didn’t believe it could be considered a real marriage. Millais, whose own marriage to Ruskin’s divorced wife, Effie Grey, had previously caused such a scandal, was outraged.’⁴⁷ However reactionary and narrow-minded these opinions might have been, they were what Anny would have had to face.

Despite, then, the accurate charges of selfishness on the part of Stephen, there is strong evidence to suggest that he was not acting only out of personal concerns when he made clear his disapproval of Anny’s choice of partner. This is an important distinction to make for it establishes that the critics who identify Stephen’s angst in this case as being born out of entirely selfish reasons have again adopted a representation of his character that is unnecessarily, and inaccurately, simplistic. That Stephen acknowledges the fact that he had his own motivations for Anny not marrying Ritchie should not preclude from discussion his very legitimate concerns over the suit; his rationale, like his personality, was more complex than Lee suggests when she writes that he was simply jealous,⁴⁸ or when Panthea Reid remarks that it would ‘leave him without a housekeeper.’⁴⁹

There is a further aspect of the marriage to consider in terms of Stephen’s involvement: that despite his misgivings towards Ritchie and the match as a whole, he did push for its resolution. Having discovered on 30 January that Ritchie and Anny’s relationship had become physical, on the occasion of finding them kissing in the drawing room, Stephen made it clear Anny needed to break off the attachment or make it an official one. Stephen recounts the incident in the *Mausoleum Book*:

To speak plainly, I came into the drawing-room and found Richmond kissing Anny. I told her at once that she ought to make up her mind one way or other: for it was quite plain that as things were going, there could only be one result. She did, I think, make up her mind and inform me of her engagement that afternoon. As Anny was, I

⁴⁷ *Anny: A Life of Anne Thackeray Ritchie* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004), p. 215.

⁴⁸ *Virginia Woolf*, p. 75.

⁴⁹ *Art and Affection: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 8.

think, seventeen years older than Richmond, it was clear that a long engagement would be very undesirable. (*MBk*, 45)

Critics have been disposed to interpret this action on the part of Stephen quite negatively.

Lillian Shankman describes it as the actions of ‘an irate father or spurned lover,’⁵⁰ while

Aplin describes it as being in part due to an ‘underlying prudishness’ existing in Stephen.⁵¹

Garnett goes into much greater detail in her biography of Anny, enough so as to challenge Stephen’s own version of events:

He went into the drawing-room and discovered Richmond kissing Anny. To Leslie’s horror, it appeared that Anny liked it. Had he chosen to ignore the situation he could have closed the door and left them while he deliberated what, if anything, should be done. But this was not in Leslie’s character. He burst in on them and demanded they should stop the affair or get married at once. By being so exigent, Leslie probably hastened the inevitable. But he was confounded when Anny confronted him that very afternoon, and informed him that she was engaged to be married to Richmond.⁵²

Stephen’s account is likely to be somewhat one-sided, but as neither Anny nor Ritchie wrote of the scene described above, the embellishments Garnett has added to it are her own. The ‘horror’ she describes is unlikely, for Ritchie had been paying frequent visits to Anny for several months, and while Stephen may have disliked the thought of the two entering into a relationship, it is improbable that he did not suspect this was happening even before being confronted with the incontrovertible proof.⁵³

The charge, also implied in Shankman’s remark, that Stephen acted improperly in prompting a decision as to how the affair should or should not progress is also debatable. Anny had more to lose than Ritchie should their romance have continued but not ended in marriage, and Stephen was now involved having found them together in his house. Stephen believed that at that point, ‘speaking was forced upon me’ (*MBk*, 45), and it is highly

⁵⁰ *Anne Thackeray Ritchie*, p. 171.

⁵¹ *Memory and Legacy*, p. 13.

⁵² *Anny: A Life of Anne Thackeray Ritchie* (2004), pp. 204-5.

⁵³ A point Garnett actually makes herself earlier in the same chapter: ‘he could no longer fail to notice what was going on and viewed all symptoms of their love as ominous’ (p. 202).

questionable whether he could have simply ‘chosen to ignore the situation’, as Garnett proposes. Indeed, Shankman, Garnett, and Aplin are all guilty of viewing this situation from a twentieth-century perspective; however archaic the notion of Victorian propriety may seem from the distance of a hundred years or more, it would have been a real and prevalent concern for those involved. Anny’s reputation would have been jeopardized had the relationship continued only for Ritchie to end it at a future date, and the possibility of a pregnancy out of wedlock would have held similar or worse consequences (and this particular worry is perhaps what Stephen is referring to when he writes, ‘as things were going, there could only be one result’.)

In a letter from Stephen to Anny regarding the opposition of the Ritchie family, his feelings of duty towards his sister-in-law are made clear, including his intentions to put her wishes ahead of any misgivings he had:

What you & R. decide upon will be accepted by me as fine. I will then do all the fighting for you & the sentimentalizing & the discussion of ways & means & all the rest of it. Dearest Anny, I ask this as a right. I feel that I have inherited Minny’s position & your father’s. I wish that I had the power of making you happy; but at least you must let me do what they would have done had they been with us still. (11 May 1877)⁵⁴

There is also sadness in the final sentence, and it is possible to read this forlorn desire to make Anny happy as a reference to Stephen’s own despondency in her choosing to leave him: even when Stephen is at his pragmatic best, he cannot help but hint at his own well-being. Nonetheless, Stephen believed that he had assumed a responsibility towards Anny, and while that might have been presumptuous, it was certainly not based on self-serving reasons (nor, again, unusual for the era).

Garnett’s description of events involves Stephen making an ill-thought and demanding intervention which actually hastened the outcome he least wanted or suspected, namely Anny’s engagement. The expectation that follows from Garnett’s reading would be

⁵⁴ Aplin, p. 18.

of Stephen doing his utmost to prevent developments, but this was not the case. In fact, to Stephen's consternation, he found himself championing the match in the face of opposition from the Ritchie family:

Now for all this I was blamed by the whole Ritchie family – and most unjustly! They fancied that I had brought about or at least precipitated the match by asking Richmond 'his intentions'; whereas I had only spoken to Anny when speaking was forced upon me [...]. I had to fight the Ritchies in a cause which I felt to be far more distasteful to me than to them. (*MBk*, 45-46)

Stephen noted that several public office positions were being made available, and suggested Ritchie pursue an interest in obtaining one of these, in order that he have 'something to marry upon' (*MBk*, 45). Ritchie did so and, having been successful, informed his mother and family that he intended to take a position in the India Office. Stephen again remarks with some bitterness that the Ritchies blamed him for Richmond pursuing this occupation rather than continuing with his Cambridge degree, but his support for Anny was not in doubt: 'They complained of me ruining his degree by suggesting the public office: though if he had neglected the chance the marriage might have been indefinitely postponed greatly to Anny's injury' (*MBk*, 45).

Stephen sought to convince the Ritchies that the marriage, now it had been fixed upon by Anny and Ritchie, should go ahead and without delay. Anny's correspondence establishes that not only was Stephen successful at this, but that she considered him as an ally in the matter. Aplin notes on 11 May 1877 Stephen 'eventually triumphed' and was able to write to Anny, happily informing her that Mrs Ritchie would 'consent to anything you & Richmond may determine.'⁵⁵ Anny wrote the following in a letter to her friend, the diplomat and author William Webb Follett Synge, confirming what Stephen had said and her feelings towards him:

Dear WF. I am going to marry Richmond Ritchie who is years & years younger than I am but has cared [*sic*] me so long & with such wonderful fidelity &

⁵⁵ Aplin, p. 18.

unchangeableness that I have no courage to say no to the happiness it will be to us both to belong to each other. [...] Leslie has been so, so, kind & Mrs. Ritchie has agreed most anxiously & affectionately.⁵⁶

Anny's description of Stephen having been 'so, so kind' stands in contrast to many of the negative critical accounts of his behaviour towards his sister-in-law during these events. Any retort that would suggest that Anny is merely being diplomatic does not take into account her readiness to criticise Stephen in her correspondence when she saw fit. An earlier letter to Syngé, in 1867, contains the following passage: 'I had a most delightful trip & am generally [sic] flourishing except in one way it begins with an L & ends with a e'.⁵⁷ The assumption must be that Anny is being sincere in her praise of Stephen – a sincerity that would indicate that from her point of view, Stephen had acted in a manner of which she approved and appreciated.

The episode shows the different sides to Stephen's personality. On the one hand, hugely self-interested and judgemental: Stephen disliked Ritchie immensely, and while he may have had strong grounds for considering the man ill-suited for Anny, there does not appear to have been anything other than bitterness behind his low opinion of Ritchie as a person. On the other hand, he is resolute in his support of Anny's wish to marry Ritchie once that intention was made clear, even while maintaining a personal resentment towards the match. That he put in as much determined effort to ensure it did happen, and without prolonged inconvenience to his sister-in-law, indicates that Stephen's love and concern for her took precedence over his much less commendable feelings; a supposition supported by Anny's own testimony to his kindness, delivered at the resolution of the difficult affair.

Julia Duckworth

From his marriage to Julia in 1878 onwards, Stephen's life is better known, having featured regularly in introductions to works on Woolf and in her own autobiographical essays.

⁵⁶ Shankman, p. 185.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 183.

Because of this, there has been greater opportunity for Stephen's character to be discussed and debated from this point on in his life, with some critics being less circumspect than others. The popular image of Stephen as simply an over-demanding and selfish patriarch is presented by Jane Dunn: 'Julia Stephen's energies were exercised also by her exacting and egotistical husband, who required her constant sympathy and consolation'.⁵⁸ This begs the question as to whether Stephen behaved differently towards Minny than he did towards Julia, or if Dunn, like others, has allowed Stephen's worst qualities to characterise his entire persona and his relationship with Julia at the same time.

Both of these explanations are in some part true, though to different degrees. Stephen's relationship with Minny was different from the one he had with Julia, as Annan describes: 'His love for Minny had been protective, jocular, cossetting. In Julia he recognised a deeper and more sensitive character than his own and one who had borne sorrow' (p. 82). This difference was not so radical that it could account for Dunn's reductive summary of Stephen's and Julia's marriage, however. Stephen's letters show him affectionate towards Julia as he was Minny, yet common critical opinion tends to find more cause for complaint with this in Julia's case.⁵⁹ Gordon argues that Stephen's 'veneration for his second wife was less discerning. He made of her a goddess and was pampered in return.'⁶⁰ This influential reading of their relationship requires examination. Henry James once pronounced of the couple, 'Good God, how that man adores her,'⁶¹ and the manner in which Stephen writes about Julia in the *Mausoleum Book* in semi-religious language only strengthens Gordon's case. The question then becomes whether this constitutes grounds for criticism. Julia and Stephen appear to have enjoyed a strong relationship whichever way its peculiarities are framed from an external perspective. Even when Stephen admits to exaggerating his modesty 'in order to extort from her some of her delicious compliments', causing the Ramsays to come flooding into mind, there is no evidence that Julia considered

⁵⁸ *A Very Close Conspiracy*, p. 11.

⁵⁹ *Letters: Vol I*, p. 298.

⁶⁰ Gordon, p. 23.

⁶¹ Annan, p. 82.

this as anything other than their way of interacting, even if Woolf found it intolerable from her point of view (*MBk*, 93). Dunn's more serious accusation of Stephen requiring Julia's 'constant sympathy and consolation' only holds weight when levelled at a much later point in their lives, after Stephen's health broke down in 1891. Up until then, the marriage existed on much more equitable grounds, even if Julia's busy life caused her attentions to be fought over.

Woolf writes of Stephen that he was 'difficult, exacting, dependent on her [Julia]' (*MoB*, 97), but also knew that he was not the only one drawing upon her energies:

She was the whole thing; Talland House was full of her; Hyde Park Gate was full of her. [The] understanding that I now have of her position must have its say; and it shows a woman of forty with seven children, some of them needing grown-up attention, and four still in the nursery; and an eighth, Laura, an idiot, yet living with us. (*MoB*, 96-7)

Woolf discusses a woman who not only had a large family dependent upon her, but one whose philanthropic activities were embedded within the routine of her life. She visited the sick and the impoverished on an almost daily basis, and even when the family holidayed at Talland House, Julia kept up her charitable work amongst the families of St Ives. Woolf recounts the tale of Julia exclaiming out of fatigue her relief that there was no full postal service on Saturdays, meaning that the dozens of letters asking for help or advice that she received every week would stop for twenty four hours.⁶² Woolf also writes of sitting up nervously awaiting her mother's return after dark from a mission of mercy, finding herself gently admonished for worrying too much by Stephen, but recognising the same anxiety in his voice as he did so (*MoB*, 98).

Woolf describes how Julia refused to give up many of her family 'duties', as 'she could scarcely believe that there was not something quicker and more effective in her action than in another's' (*MoB*, 45). Even for Woolf and her siblings, Julia's attention was hard to

⁶² In 'Reminiscences', Woolf writes: "'Ah, thank heaven, there is no post tonight!" she would exclaim, half smiling and half sighing, on Saturday' (*MoB*, 44).

earn – only illness could guarantee this, ‘unless it was Adrian’ (*MoB*, 96). The remark towards the youngest Stephen hints at a degree of jealousy, and the sense that different parties, Woolf and Stephen most certainly included, were in competition for Julia’s attention is prominent. This explains further why the Stephen children felt that their father was an unfair drain upon their mother; whilst the competition may have been strong, Stephen frequently came out as the winner and this, coupled with his tactics, was a cause of resentment after Julia had died.

In spite of this, what Woolf’s recollections frequently do, and what many critics *fail* to do, is to acknowledge Julia’s own agency in her life with Stephen. Woolf recognised that Julia committed to dividing her energies as she saw best fit, even if this proved harder to accept when it was Stephen who was that best fit. Reid is somewhat guilty of this critical oversight when she considers the courtship between Julia and Stephen: ‘Leslie had long admired Julia’s poignant beauty, and by 1877, he (predictably) had fallen in love with her.’⁶³ The suggestion of predictability is hard to substantiate, particularly in light of Stephen having been in deep mourning for much of his early friendship with Julia. Similarly, Reid’s observation implies that it was Julia’s beauty that had caused Stephen to fall so in love with her, and while Stephen was a more impassioned man than the ‘donnish’ image of him may allow, he was not quite the slave of his emotions that is proposed here. Furthermore, this criticism of Stephen, like the last point, has the extended effect of diminishing Julia’s own role and personality. In fact, Julia told Stephen she preferred his written work to his actual person when they first met, indicating her literary and philosophical interests (she would later publish an instructive pamphlet on nursing, *Notes from Sick Rooms* (1883)).

One thing that the courtship of Anny and Ritchie demonstrated was Stephen’s and Julia’s attachment to one another, certainly from when Stephen had sought help from her in reconciling to the inevitable marriage. According to his records, it was a very close

⁶³ *Art and Affection*, p. 8.

friendship, with the two rarely separated for more than a few weeks over the course of the next year and numerous letters exchanged in that time.

Julia turned down a marriage proposal from Stephen in the spring of 1877, but as the following extract from a letter she wrote in July demonstrates, her feelings towards marrying again were changing:

I can only say that as I am now it would be wrong for me to marry... All this sounds cold and horrid – but you know I love you with my whole heart – only it seems such a poor dead heart. I cannot tell you that it can never revive, for I could not have thought it possible that I should have felt for anyone what I feel for you. (*MBk*, 53)

The letter also makes evident Julia's attitude towards her own ability to love after losing her first husband, as well as signs that this attitude was turning. It resembles similar melancholic statements Stephen made on his own condition ('I can feel life tolerable; but the old charm is gone' (*LL*, 256)), and it is not difficult to see why Stephen observed that it was shared feelings of grief that had brought the couple together. 'Our likeness in sorrow was a reason for keeping together,' Stephen writes, 'but hardly for undertaking a new life' (*MBk*, 53). The second comment clearly marks Stephen's belief that shared sorrow was not a sufficient basis for moving forwards as a couple, and this is important.

Annan puts forward the idea that the two 'luxuriated in their grief', and he suggests that some have found it to be self-indulgent and even disingenuous (p. 78). Considering his analysis, Annan would appear to be of this mind himself, and Bicknell is in agreement:

[T]here are times in his grief when he wraps himself in the shroud of the bereft widower. 'Here I and sorrow sit' could be the caption for more than one of his verbal portraits, drawn in his letters to elicit pity and sympathy in the reader.⁶⁴

Annan and Bicknell both charge Stephen and Julia with being melodramatic and insincere, but this makes less sense and has less evidence for it than that both Julia and Stephen were suffering terribly from their losses. Julia lost her faith during this period, and Woolf believed

⁶⁴ *Letters: Vol I*, pp. 8-9.

the time after her first husband's death had been made even more difficult due to this reason: 'The effect of his death then was doubly tremendous, because it was a disillusionment as well as a tragic loss' (*MoB*, 37). Stephen became quite reclusive after the loss of Minny, eventually spending Christmas entirely alone.⁶⁵ His very apparent desire for isolation does not fit with the notion that Stephen wanted continuous sympathy for his sadness, nor does Julia's relinquishing her faith strike as mere melodrama. Grief may have brought the two together, but the contention that it was an over-affected emotion on either part is a misinterpretation.

Perhaps Stephen's sadness here is too readily equated with the behaviour he would exhibit after the death of Julia. While, again, there is nothing to suggest the later grief was not entirely genuine, Stephen manifestly used his close family (and others) to supply him with sympathy via his emotional outbursts and cries for assuagement. Nevertheless it is reasonable and fair to consider these examples as separate, particularly as Stephen was much changed after Julia's death. A second explanation is the readiness of some critics to conflate the characters from *To the Lighthouse* with their real-life inspirations: thoughts of Mr Ramsay's feigning for attention appear to colour some interpretations of Stephen here.⁶⁶

On 5 January of the next year, 1878, Julia's deliberations were settled and she accepted Stephen to be her husband. Stephen wrote to Norton three days later, saying:

It has come about very naturally, and if I can make her life a little happier, I shall be happy once more myself [...] We shall have a quiet life, for we both love quiet; but I have now a fresh feeling of rest and hope. (*LL*, 312)

They were married on 26 March 1878. After the honeymoon, the family – Julia's three children from her previous marriage, George, Stella, and Gerald, and Laura Stephen – moved into Julia's home at number 22.

⁶⁵ Annan, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Quentin Bell wrote that he found the character of Mrs Ramsay a 'more real and more convincing' version of Julia than the one found in Stephen's writing (*Virginia Woolf*, p. 18).

Stephen's attention was focused on his family when he discovered a potential holiday home in St Ives during a walking tour of Cornwall, and a lease to that property, Talland House, was acquired in August of 1881. Vanessa, born in 1879, and Thoby, in 1880, had already been added to the burgeoning Stephen household, and Virginia would arrive in 1882 and Adrian the following year. Stephen described finding the house in Cornwall in a letter to Norton, including in that his chief motivation for the purchase: 'Did I tell you that I have bought a little house at St Ives, down at the very toe-nail of England? [...] The children will be able to run straight out of the house to a lovely bit of sand and have good air and quiet' (*LL*, 345). Stephen desired a place away from London where his children could enjoy during the summer months, and Talland House would play a vital and happy role in the childhood of Woolf and her siblings, with the writer later using it as a figurative setting for *To the Lighthouse*. Woolf wrote of the holidays spent there: 'Probably nothing we had as children was quite so important to us as our summers in Cornwall ... to hear the waves breaking ... to dig in the sands; to scramble over the rocks and see the anemones flourishing their antennae in the pools' (*MoB*, 128).

The purchase of Talland House conveys an important point when reconsidering Stephen's character as it continues to establish him as an interested and involved father, one whose foremost motive for buying the holiday home was the pleasure it would bring to his family. It definitely achieved this, as Woolf's description of listening to the Cornish waves breaking as being 'the purest feeling of ecstasy I can conceive' attests (*MoB*, 75). Not that this should be the only evidence for Stephen's parenting being thoughtful, nor is it. Quentin Bell writes the following on the matter:

When he was not teaching, Leslie could be an enchanting father; he had a talent for drawing creatures out of paper with magical precision. He could tell stories of dizzy alpine adventures, sometimes he would recite poetry and in the evenings he might read aloud, often from the novels of Sir Walter Scott.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Virginia Woolf*, p. 27.

Stephen's correspondence also portrays a father with a keen interest in what his offspring were doing. For example, a letter to Julia (who was temporarily away from Hyde Park Gate) says this of the infant Vanessa: 'V is quite well, though she seems to take rather less interest in Grunting than she did.'⁶⁸ Similar sentiment is expressed in another letter to Julia a few years later: 'The babies flourish. Ginia tells me a story every night — it does not change much but she seems to enjoy it. She wrote to Miss Vincent today in a most lovely hand.'⁶⁹ Stephen's comments are not only affectionate, but also indicate he was spending time with his young children (including a twelve-month old baby in the first case), something that would not have been true of all fathers of Stephen's generation.⁷⁰ A letter to Lowell a few months after Woolf was born describes the family at St Ives and displays the same interest and involvement in family life: 'Julia & the little ones spend most of the mornings on the beach & in the sea; and they are all putting on fat & getting sunburnt.'⁷¹ Woolf captures this image of a light-hearted father in 'A Sketch of the Past', when she writes of her toy boat submerging in a pond and after its rescue how they had repaired the sails: 'Absurd – what fun it is doing this!' Woolf quotes her father as saying, 'with his little snort, half laughing' (*MoB*, 90).

Stephen still managed to remain prolific as a writer throughout the domestic tumult, publishing *Samuel Johnson* (1878) in March, though achieving a more satisfactory balance between home life and work than he would do in the future. 'I have been much occupied of

⁶⁸ Bicknell, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 242.

⁶⁹ Bicknell, *Letters: Vol II*, p. 350.

⁷⁰ Whilst Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair argue convincingly that Victorian 'fatherhood encompassed greater diversity than has often been supposed' ('Domestic Fathers and the Victorian Parental Role', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 15, Issue 4 (2006), 551-59), it is clear that gender roles still played a dominant part in parenthood during the Victorian era. Claudia Nelson writes that the 'problem that the Victorians faced here was that fathers' roles were considerably vaguer than mothers'. The ideology of the separate sphere held that the public world was dominated by masculine values of competition and achievement, the private world by feminine ones of nurturance' (*Family Ties in Victorian England: Victorian Life and Times* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), p. 58).

⁷¹ Bicknell, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 251.

late with a domestic crisis wh. is happily going on well', as Stephen describes the births and upheavals.⁷²

The *DNB*

The *DNB* acted as a major turning point for Stephen. First beginning work upon it in the winter of 1882, what he initially believed would be a project lasting only 'a year or two' slowly turned into an all-encompassing feature of Stephen's life (*LL*, 350). His ability to balance work with his family commitments slowly deteriorated, as did his anxiety over his work and achievements. Stephen experienced a fretfulness about his own work throughout his career, often culminating in either losing heart with or interest in a project as it neared completion. This nervousness was acknowledged both by Stephen and his colleagues. George Smith, the proprietor of the *DNB*, noted of his friend and long-time collaborator that this manifested itself during the early stages of the *Dictionary* as a desire to produce faultless work:

He used to worry himself over defects, real or imagined. I consoled him by saying, 'If you suppose a book of this kind can be beyond criticism you are utterly mistaken. Perfection is a quite impossible idea'.⁷³

Even here, though, at the peak of Stephen's literary career there is no suggestion from Smith that this anxiety was an issue, merely that it needed some sage advice to help counter it. However, when Stephen gave up co-editorship of the *DNB* in 1891 and went into what could be termed semi-retirement, these predispositions towards humility and anxiousness slowly developed in a negative way: humility became self-pity, while his anxiety became increasingly acute. Both feelings required another to assuage them and Julia was that other; fortunately, she seems to have been willing to be that source of support for her husband. Stella and Vanessa would be less happy replacements.

⁷² Bicknell, *Letters: Vol I*, p. 239.

⁷³ Leonard Huxley, *The House of Smith Elder* (London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd., 1923), p. 185.

During his tenure as *DNB* editor, Stephen spent an increasing amount of time inside his study, poring over the hundreds of entries he oversaw, and consequently less time with his children. He was aware of its consuming nature, writing: ‘That damned Dictionary is about my bed and about my path and spies out all of my ways, as the psalmist puts it’ (*LL*, 385). According to Maitland, by 1886 Stephen was showing worrying signs of exhaustion and was forced to take a two-month break. His letters frequently disparage the *DNB* in terms of the workload that it placed upon him, comparing it to a ‘diabolical piece of machinery’ that he feared would eventually crush him, but yet he continued (*LL*, 394). In early 1888 he had a fit brought on from overwork and was forced again to relinquish his *Dictionary* duties. Maitland writes that Julia ‘hardly dared to let him go out of her sight’ (*LL*, 397). Stephen passed on the majority of editing responsibilities to Sidney Lee shortly after, though remained as official co-editor and still a regular contributor. Finally, even this reduced role took a toll on Stephen and he went down with influenza in 1891, a serious enough case for his doctor to instruct him that he could no longer act as editor in any capacity.

Julia’s opinion of the *DNB* was informed by the results it had on Stephen’s well-being, and thus she disliked it.⁷⁴ Woolf’s feelings towards the *DNB* tend towards the negative in her autobiographical work. She writes of its effect on both herself and younger brother Adrian in her diary entry for 3 December 1923:

Poor old Adrian; undoubtedly the *DNB* crushed his life out before he was born. It gave me a twist of the head too. I shouldn’t have been so clever, but I should have been more stable, without that contribution to the history of England. (*D2* 277)

This statement is intriguing, for Adrian was born in 1883, whilst the first volume of the *DNB* was not published until 1 January 1885. Although Stephen had been working on the *Dictionary* for two years prior to its first publication, Woolf’s complaint is exaggerated; in 1882 work had barely begun at all, while in 1883 it was still managed by Stephen without the obsessive compulsion that would come in later years. His chronicled involvement in

⁷⁴ Maitland writes after the fit that struck Stephen of Julia’s anxiety being clear on her face: ‘Stephen’s feelings about the Dictionary were mixed. Mrs Stephen’s were not’ (*LL*, 396).

family life discussed above partly substantiates this claim, while his attitude to non-*DNB* work at this time supports it further still. For example, in 1884 Stephen accepted an English literature lectureship at Cambridge, delivering twenty lectures in the spring term. Although he did not speak overly favourably of the content once completed, Stephen had chosen to take them on, signifying a man able to look beyond his *Dictionary* exertions (*LL*, 382). Maitland comments on Stephen's answering the call to write Fawcett's biography in relation to his *DNB* commitments: 'He did not, it is true, put his whole soul into the Dictionary' (*LL*, 369). Stephen also wrote of the priority of his life of Fawcett in a letter to Norton: 'Said Dictionary is reaching the critical stage of first appearance [...]. I cannot tell what will happen. I have another occupation now of more interest to me personally. I don't know if you know what an intimate friendship I had with Fawcett' (*LL*, 386).

Woolf's comment cannot be dismissed, however; the overwork she implies of Stephen simply happened four to five years later. But by this retrospective dating of the obsession her father would have towards the *DNB*, Woolf adds greater significance to the consequences of his behaviour, indicating her strong feelings towards that time when Stephen was overworking and the ill-health he suffered thereafter. Not only did Woolf lose an attentive father to the *DNB*, her mother's attentions were focused upon Stephen's 'nervous depression' that lasted for 'two or three years' following his health breakdown in 1891 (*MBk*, 89). Stephen admits that the years from 1891 to 1893 saw him become 'troublesome in a social point of view', and it is easy to imagine why Woolf would later write: 'His health was her fetish' (*MoB*, 133).

The reason why Stephen committed so much of himself to the *DNB* lies in the finality of the project. Stephen was sixty-seven years old when he ended his association with the *DNB* but he would have realised before that date that he was unlikely to write anything else as significant in his lifetime. The 'damned Dictionary' represented Stephen's last real attempt to enter the realm of literary greatness and he set about it as such. The following quotation exemplifies these mixed feelings:

I felt melancholy at saying good-bye to the Dictionary. It cost a slice of my life, but has been a good bit of work, though my share in it has diminished. I don't know whether to be glad or sorry that I took it up; but I part from it with a sense that I am being laid on the shelf... (*LL*, 456)

Stephen acknowledges that his career is coming to an end as well as confirming what he sacrificed towards *DNB*. Its significance on his life was vast, yet even here, at the end, he is unsure whether he was right to have chosen to be involved with at all. His anxieties pressed more and more firmly upon him, causing Stephen's reliance on Julia's support also to increase. He was aware of this, writing on the subject after her death:

It gives me a bitter pang to think of all the anxiety that I must have caused her, an anxiety only partly known to me at the time – partly because she thought it wise to conceal some of the facts from me and partly because she could not bear to insist upon my giving up on which she saw that I had set my heart [the *DNB*]. (*MBk*, 88)

This passage not only details the concerns Julia held over Stephen's ill-health caused by his commitment to the *Dictionary*, but also her own understanding of what Stephen had invested emotionally in that work.

Life after Julia

Woolf and Stephen would be distanced further still after the death of Julia, though in time there was reconciliation between them. Julia died on 5 May 1895 and the resulting effect on the family was immediately catastrophic. As Woolf writes, Julia had been 'the whole thing': through her different means and methods, she had managed the household, Stephen, and the children (*MoB*, 96). The gaping void she left behind was substantial, and both Stephen and Woolf, from the evidence of various accounts, suffered forms of nervous breakdown.⁷⁵

Woolf would later write that 'her death was the greatest disaster that could happen' (*MoB*, 46).

⁷⁵ On Woolf, Bell writes that 'the first "breakdown", or whatever we are to call it, must have come very soon after her mother's death' (Bell, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 44). On Stephen, Hyman suggests a breakdown occurred (pp. 202-04), while Annan hypothesises that this seems likely (p. 136).

Stephen's attempt to fill the emptiness left by Julia with his step-daughter, Stella, only worsened matters. Whilst, again, from a general nineteenth-century perspective this may not have seemed remarkable behaviour (as the voices of various relatives confirmed at the time, 'Stella was, clearly, a model daughter'),⁷⁶ in the context of this specific family it created a distancing between the Stephen children, or at least Vanessa, Virginia and Adrian, and their father.⁷⁷ Stella not only took up the mantle of acting mother to the younger siblings, she more unfortunately found herself replacing Julia as Stephen's main source of female attention, something made all the worse by the fact that Stephen now included a further anxiety over his behaviour towards Julia. It is clear that after Julia's death Stephen became much harder to cope with; from the initial period of mourning, 'the darkened rooms, the groans, the passionate lamentations that passed the normal limits of sorrow', to the exertions placed upon Stella, to the far more neurotic attitude towards the family finances (*MoB*, 46-47). On this last point, even allowing for the fact that Stephen was undoubtedly prudent with his money throughout his life, it is clear from Woolf's accounts that this prudence turned into something closer to a mania after Julia's death. After all, at an earlier time in his life Stephen had felt no qualms about spending money on a holiday cottage for his family. The timing is, though, crucial. Woolf hints at the difference between the Stephen to whom 'money was an obscene nightmare' after Julia's death with the one who purchased the house, and the 'ease and amplitude' of those earlier days of their lives (*MoB*, 128).

Without attempting a retrospective (and inevitably inconclusive) diagnosis, Stephen's regular and verbalised desire for death – he would groan during dinner times with his children, wishing he were dead – must raise question marks over his mental health during the period after Julia's death. Hyman argues that Woolf's writings on her father's 'barbarous violence' during this period carry within them an indication that she recognised those same feelings: '[T]he rage that she felt at the time and the intensity of her reaction to

⁷⁶ Bell, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 42.

⁷⁷ Woolf describes the four Stephen children still holding together in their 'republic' after Julia's death, but adding that it was 'losing shape' (*MoB*, 122). Toby was now at school at Clifton and thus seeing less of day to day life at Hyde Park Gate.

the memory even now would suggest its reflexive quality.⁷⁸ Hyman goes on to suggest that one of the reasons Woolf wrote about Stephen in the way she did was in order to distance herself and her own psychological health away from his ‘rages’.

Stephen’s actions immediately after Julia’s death were not only out of character but difficult to equate with any completely healthy person. When Woolf writes that Stephen ‘gave himself up to the passion which seemed to burn within him, and groaned aloud or protested again and again his wish to die’ (*MoB*, 47), there are no comparisons that can be drawn with the period following Minny’s death, nor at any other point in Stephen’s life. That his behaviour stabilised after a time, evidenced by his rekindled relationship with Woolf – detailed shortly – and suggested by Hyman in her argument that Stephen suffered a breakdown after Julia’s death but managed to maintain ‘financial and emotional stability to the end of his life’, strengthens this idea of it being a temporary period of mental illness.⁷⁹

Annan, however, makes the case that Stephen’s prolonged and voluble grief was not out of the ordinary for the era, and that his devotion to Julia after her death could be explained in his own words: ‘I have felt’ (p. 115). But it is clear that Stephen was a changed man. If his devotion to the *DNB* had weakened ties to his children, his behaviour after the death of their mother practically severed them; as Bell writes, their own personal grief was impinged upon by ‘a false, melodramatic, an impossibly histrionic emotion which they could not encompass’.⁸⁰ Nor could they comprehend, or countenance, Stephen’s attitude that Vanessa would assume Stella’s position in the family after her marriage to Jack Hills on 10 April, 1897. This was only made worse by Stephen’s demeanour towards the match, and to Jack, even while calling on the family to be happy. Woolf writes that he said ‘it should only make us happy [...] that Stella should be happy’ (*MoB*, 58), before she laments that he was unable to achieve this feat himself, his resentment to losing Stella overriding the initial call for goodwill. If a comparison can be drawn with his behaviour during Anny’s courtship to

⁷⁸ ‘Reflections in the Looking-Glass’, p. 213.

⁷⁹ Hyman, p. 202.

⁸⁰ *Virginia Woolf*, p. 41.

Ritchie, the older Stephen does not fare well. His selfishness was not just a factor on this occasion but the main if not only consideration. When before he had managed to put aside personal misgivings here he was to wallow in them, grumbling throughout the wedding preparations, even snidely remarking that Jack's name was an annoyance to him, 'like the smack of a whip' (*MoB*, 124). Woolf's account of all this places Stephen as an irritation to be suffered even while the preparations continued and the marriage took place.

After Stella's death on 19 July of the same year the family faced dealing with another traumatic loss, and with it the optimism Woolf recalls the marriage had stirred; instead sides were drawn. Memories of Stephen's antagonism towards the wedding were still fresh, and Woolf and Vanessa formed their 'close conspiracy' while Stephen was cast further adrift from his children (*MoB*, 146). Vanessa, now managing the household as Julia and Stella had done before, would never forgive his tyranny towards her, though her fortitude prevented her from being consumed by his anxieties and rages – she was willing to match his fits of melodrama with stony silence.

Despite of all this, and various critical opinions to the contrary, Stephen's life after Julia cannot be judged entirely negatively, nor can he be held solely responsible for the way in which the household was run. According to Woolf's records of these years, her half-brother, George, assumed the patriarchal role in the household, proceeding to prepare first Vanessa then Virginia for their 'coming out' into society.⁸¹ Stephen appears to have spent an ever increasing amount of time in his study, other than when they received guests for afternoon tea (and an appropriate visitor could be found to converse with the almost deaf and easily bored Stephen). It was George who raised an accusation of impropriety when Vanessa and Jack Hills became close friends. On this point Stephen refused to join the condemnations, believing Vanessa had the right to decide for herself on the matter, much to Woolf's approval (*MoB*, 142). Stephen's support towards his daughters having a greater

⁸¹ Woolf writes: 'For George Duckworth had become after my mother's death, for all practical purposes, the head of the family' (*MoB*, 170).

autonomy over their lives than was common for the time is a fixture in his and their life stories. Stephen not only expected that Woolf would become a writer, he supported her with access to his library and with lessons, just as he provided Vanessa with the means to attend art school, aiding her in fulfilling her childhood ambition of becoming an artist. Vanessa writes in an essay for the Memoir Club that her fondest memories were the afternoons of her painting and Virginia reading aloud, ‘spent in a small room handed over to us’; the idea that this artistic and literary sanctuary may have partially informed Woolf’s belief in the necessity of a room of one’s own is an interesting one.⁸² Woolf wrote the following of Stephen’s belief in their freedom:

If at one moment he rebuked a daughter sharply for smoking a cigarette [...] she had only to ask him if she might become a painter, and he assured her that so long as she took her work seriously he would give her all the help he could. He had no special love for painting; but he kept his word. Freedom of that sort was worth thousands of cigarettes. (*E5* 588)

Whilst Stephen may have followed convention in not believing his daughters should attend university, his attitude to their education *was* forward-thinking. This was something of which Woolf was aware, writing later of the freedom she had to explore ‘a large and quite unexpurgated library’ (*E5* 588), and doubting that many children had that same advantage even in the time she was then writing, some thirty years later.

The image of the Stephen daughters bellowing into their father’s ear-trumpet seems amusing, conjuring up as it does something like the idea of a male Mrs Wardle.⁸³ Further investigation might take into account a letter Stephen wrote in April 1898, in which he admitted his deafness had grown so bad that he could no longer take part in real conversation. ‘All this,’ he wrote, ‘Tends to make me very sad and lonely’ (*LL*, 450). Or it could consider the following remarks made by Leonard Woolf on his meeting Stephen at Cambridge:

⁸² Vanessa Bell, ‘Notes on Virginia’s Childhood’, in *A Bloomsbury Group Reader*, ed. by S.P. Rosenbaum (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), p. 335.

⁸³ Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, p. 146.

To a nervous young man he was, when one first met him, a terrifying old man, for he was stone deaf and you had to talk to him down an ear trumpet and his bearded face looked as if it had been engraved for three score years and ten with all the sorrows of the world; and when not talking he occasionally groaned. In fact he was gentle and kind and went out of his way to put us at our ease and interest us.⁸⁴

Woolf too paints a picture of rather a lonely old man in his final years, 'living with all the sorrows of the world'; he had after all been widowed twice, lost a step-daughter and outlived most of his friends and acquaintances by the time he was diagnosed with cancer in 1902. She writes of him sighing at the absence of letters from friends at breakfast, then shutting himself up in his study at the top of the house for much of the rest of the day (*MoB*, 148).

Common perception holds that the relationship between Woolf and Stephen never recovered after the loss of Julia, remaining uncomfortably strained until Stephen's own death. Gordon writes of how Virginia's sympathy towards her father ended after her mother's death, and of how an 'emotional impasse was to persist in their relations until Leslie Stephen's death in 1904.'⁸⁵ Mitchell Leaska, in his introduction to Woolf's early diaries, provides a further example of the critical neglect of those later years Woolf and Stephen spent reconciled. His account instead stretches the years of embitterment from Julia's death up to Stephen's, not only simplifying the dynamics of the Woolf-Stephen relationship but also misrepresenting it.⁸⁶ Lee does the same, stating that: 'The tragedy of Leslie's relationship with his daughters in the last years of his life was that it obscured their affection for him'.⁸⁷ In fact, Woolf had reconciled with Stephen after the years of acrimony following Julia's death. On 25 January 1904, on her 22nd birthday and only a matter of weeks before Stephen's cancer claimed his life, Woolf's diary entry reads: 'It amazes me how much I get out of my father still, and he says I am a very good daughter! He is the most delightful of people – and Lord knows how we shall ever get along alone' (*LI* 123).

Furthermore, Woolf's diary entries over the course of the several years before Stephen's

⁸⁴ 'Coming to London', in *A Bloomsbury Group Reader*, p. 377.

⁸⁵ Gordon, p. 33.

⁸⁶ *A Passionate Apprentice*, p. xxviii.

⁸⁷ Lee, p. 146.

death reveal a kindly friendship, and generally a happy family life. In her description of a night time ‘expedition’ to catch moths in the summer of 1899, Stephen accompanies her: ‘L.S. a supernumerary amateur of no calling who takes little interest in the proceedings & is proficient in the art of obscuring the lamp at critical moments’ (APA, 145). It is gently mocking but tinged with affection, a world away from the times when Woolf felt walking with Stephen was a terrible legacy left to them by her mother. The instances of books being passed from Stephen to Woolf and back again are numerous and continue throughout their relationship, even during the stricken years after Julia’s death. Biographies count high amongst them, and include James Boswell’s *Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides with Johnson* (1785) and James Anthony Froude’s *Life of Carlyle* (1882-84) (APA, 206, 8-10). Both Boswell and Froude would provide a connection between Woolf’s and Stephen’s essays on biography, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate in detail, and here contribute to the suggestion that the concept of Stephen as a fellow reader endured with Woolf more consistently than any other interpretation of him.

The view that Woolf was estranged from Stephen from her adolescence up until his death is a popular misconception, but one which is strange considering the number of studies which focus only upon that last decade of Stephen’s life. However less eventful those final few years may have been, by failing to acknowledge them accurately the idea that Woolf hated Stephen until his death is perpetuated; this in turn causes the important and influential relationship they shared in those years to be overlooked.

Woolf on Stephen

This chapter has established that Stephen was a progressive thinker, liberal in his politics and newspapers, and not at all reluctant to challenge the social status quo on issues in which he believed. It has demonstrated that he was an involved and enthusiastic father for much of his family life, and an affectionate husband to two wives. Equally, it has shown Stephen to have suffered from an anxiety about his work and achievements that became acute in the

mid-1890s, causing him to become a burden to his wife Julia and later his daughters too. For some years after Julia's death, Stephen was more than this; a tragic black spot on his children's youth, acting selfishly and, from Vanessa's point of view, unforgivably. Most importantly, this chapter has established that Stephen and Woolf shared more than is commonly assumed; free-thinking and often nonconformist in their points of view, their friendship over books endured till the end of Stephen's life.

In this final section, Woolf's ability to write of Stephen in different ways will be examined. Her auto/biographical work will be considered, allowing the ways in which she depicts Stephen on an intersubjective level to be contrasted and making it clear that Woolf was comfortable for these potentially contradictory interpretations of her father to exist in her texts. The discussion will also cover Woolf's way of writing of and to Stephen on an intertextual basis, in her fiction and essays, and how this achieves the same aims as her intersubjective writing, of enabling her to capture Stephen differently at different moments. Where her intertextual approach does differ is that through her complex use of references and allusions, Woolf is able to create a dialogue with Stephen's work and in doing so opens up a textual relationship with him. For much of the time this conversation creates a contemporaneous connection between Woolf and Stephen: two peers talking to one another through their writing. What is more, it is frequently a friendly and respectful exchange, ideas shared and support lent either way in the dialogue. At times, however, Woolf alters the relationship in a way that allows her to criticise Stephen's work, ideas, or principles; this is an equally important side to her intertextual writing.

In the following discussion, examples from Woolf's fiction and essays will be considered in order to highlight the ways in which she uses intertextuality and allusion, and more specifically how through those techniques she appeals to Stephen and his texts. As the analysis will show, this move from the intersubjective to the intertextual invariably links Woolf's construction of Stephen with books, libraries, and reading.

Biographical Works

Woolf captured moments from Stephen's life in four key texts: in a short piece written for Maitland's *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (1906); 'Reminiscences' (1907), which was a short compilation of the lives of Julia, Stella, and Vanessa, addressed to Julian Bell, Vanessa's son; the essay 'Leslie Stephen' (1932),⁸⁸ a brief depiction of Stephen's life, concentrating more upon his personality than his work; and 'A Sketch of the Past', an autobiographical essay covering the years of Woolf's childhood and adolescence. Alongside these works stands Woolf's fictionalised representation of Stephen as Mr Ramsay, in *To the Lighthouse*. The different texts provide different versions of Stephen, with the section in *Life and Letters* being the most sympathetic, perhaps in part due to Woolf's age and almost certainly in part due to the fact she was still mourning her father. It is somewhat emotionally detached, clearly written for public consumption and with no reference to his moods or demands. 'Reminiscences' delves deeper into Stephen's character and is less hesitant to broach his negative qualities and behaviour. 'Leslie Stephen' returns to the more detached viewpoint and is generally quite generous in its praise of the man – though unwilling to let sentimentality judge his success as a writer. 'A Sketch of the Past' is the most intimate of the portraits and also the most cutting. Events which she attempted to impart in 'Reminiscences' with an explanation from both sides' point of view appear here with Stephen cast more conclusively as being in the wrong. The inconsistency of these interpretations may seem like simple contradictions, but this is a deliberate aspect of Woolf's method of writing of her father, allowing her to represent Stephen quite differently at different times and for different purposes. In this way, Woolf can criticise Stephen as the tyrannical, aged parent, or as emblematic of a Victorian society he may not have accurately represented, and yet allude to him in her writing as a like-minded contemporary. This is a crucial point for this thesis and this argument will continue to be developed throughout this chapter as well as the subsequent ones.

⁸⁸ First published as 'Leslie Stephen. The Philosopher at Home: A Daughter's Memories' in *The Times*, on 28 November 1932.

It is, therefore, a vain task attempting to capture a definitive interpretation of Woolf's own feelings towards her father, for she writes deliberately to avoid this outcome. Woolf's feelings could not be defined in one instance and her writing reflects this multiplicity ('passionate affection for my father alternating with passionate hatred of him' (*MoB*, 186)). So while Woolf paints extremely detailed and intense impressions of single moments from her childhood and adolescence, capturing single days, events, or characters that intruded upon her experiences, she describes her relationship with Stephen in different ways at different times in her life: 'Reminiscences', written only three years after Stephen's death, is a kinder portrait of him as a man and a father when compared to 'A Sketch of the Past'. Woolf herself wrote that she felt guilt over the last few years of Stephen's life and her behaviour towards him during that period, suggesting that 'Reminiscences' may have toned down how she really felt about some of her father's worse excesses due to this sense of remorse.⁸⁹

Yet while 'A Sketch of the Past' was written from both a chronological and emotional distance away from those feelings of bereavement and guilt, it still contains within it conflicting statements about her relationship with Stephen. Hyman recognises these discrepancies in the following quotation, as well as how they have caused a certain imbalance in the critical responses Woolf's account caused:

Woolf's vivid account of her father's emotional outbursts at this time has fostered the image of Stephen as a domestic tyrant and has obscured the fact that both before and after this turbulent period Woolf saw her father as kindly and supportive, offering moments of intimacy and intellectual freedom for which she was continually grateful.⁹⁰

Woolf presents Stephen's cruel and pitiable chastisement of Vanessa on her delivery of the household's weekly finances with such descriptive vehemence, it is not difficult to

⁸⁹ 'We were bitter, harsh, and to a great extent, unjust,' Woolf wrote of the Stephen children's treatment of Stephen during the years after Stella's death (*MoB*, 65-66).

⁹⁰ Hyman, p. 203.

understand why he is seen as ‘a domestic tyrant’. Indeed, he acted in this manner with such sad frequency after Julia’s death it is hard not to see him as anything else but this:

Down came his fist on the account book. Then he shouted ‘ am ruined.’ Then he beat his breast. He went through an extraordinary dramatization of self-pity, anger and despair. He was ruined – dying...tortured by the extravagance of Vanessa and Sophie [Farrell, the Stephens’ cook]. (*MoB*, 145)

However, Hyman is correct in her assertions here. The monstrous Stephen described above is juxtaposed with a different creature altogether only pages later in Woolf’s text (and within the same time-frame):

Father’s deafness had cut off any ties he would have had, naturally, with the younger generation of writers. Yet he kept his own attitude perfectly distinct. No one cared less for convention. No one respected intellect more. Thus I would go from the drawing room and George’s gossip [...] to father’s study [...]. Rising, he would go the shelves, put the book back and very kindly ask what I had made of it? Perhaps I was reading Johnson. For some time we would talk and then, feeling soothed, stimulated, full of love for this unworldly, very distinguished, lonely man, I would go down to the drawing room again and hear George’s patter. (*MoB*, 158)

Here he is a like-minded father and literary companion, an intellectual safe-haven from the hated society engagements George had planned for Woolf. This description also draws out yet another version of Stephen to one Woolf recalls of him earlier: as being ‘a typical Victorian’ (*MoB*, 147). In the above passage, she links him instead with writers, intellect, and a complete indifference towards contemporary social convention – closer to herself than to the Victorian world George epitomised (Woolf wrote of her half-brother, ‘No more perfect fossil of Victorian society could exist’ (*MoB*, 152)). And this version of Stephen – as a literary guide and faithful supplier of books – is evident not only in Maitland’s biography, but also in Woolf’s early diaries and, significantly as the following discussion will show, in her fiction.⁹¹

⁹¹ Woolf remarks on Stephen providing reading to her throughout her early diaries (*APA*, 22, 51, 69, 124).

Age also figures in the different ways in which Woolf writes about Stephen in biography, and, again, changes in the way it seems to affect her perception of him after Julia's death. In her piece written for Maitland's book, she writes:

My impression as a child always was that my father was not much older than we were. He used to take us to sail our boats in the Round Pond, and with his own hands fitted one out with masts and sails after the pattern of a Cornish lugger; and we knew that his interest was no 'grown-up' pretence; it was as genuine as our own; so there was a perfectly equal companionship between us. (*LL*, 474)

As well as documenting Stephen's involvement in family life during the period of Woolf's childhood, the story describes the closeness between them, both in terms of age and equality of 'companionship'. In contrast, Woolf, in both 'Reminiscences' and 'A Sketch of the Past', writes of the age difference that was now so apparent between Stephen and his children after Julia was gone, and how this disparity in their ages prevented them from reaching the closeness they once had between them. She writes in 'Reminiscences' of brief moments of 'the old life' inspired by Stephen's sudden brushing off of 'conventional relationships', but that these 'doubtless depended for their endurance upon a closer relationship than age made possible. We were too young' (*MoB*, 53). In 'A Sketch of the Past', Woolf describes Stephen as being closer to a grandfather than a father (*MoB*, 147); he was evidently changed so much after Julia that, to Woolf, he had aged both in body and mind, entrenched 'in a world which it is almost impossible to describe, for I know no one now who could inhabit such a world' (*MoB*, 124). This depiction also stands in bleak contrast to the one in the above quotation: Stephen has moved from being an accepted and genuine part of their 'child's world', to existing in a place so remote from them that it defies Woolf's powers of description. But while her assertion that Julia's death marked the end of that childhood, Woolf also writes of how she believes Stephen's motivation in his final years was to live long enough to enjoy an adult friendship with them, suggesting again that the final few years had seen a placation in feelings between them (*MoB*, 92).

Textual Dialogue

Woolf adopts the same fluid approach to writing about, or to, Stephen when it is on an intertextual level, constructing him differently depending on the context. The following examples demonstrate this as well as how the versions of Stephen invoked by Woolf through literary allusion and reference, be they positive or not, are invariably connected to reading and literature.

The Voyage Out (1915) was Woolf's debut novel and features a re-enactment of the forays to her father's study in the pursuit of new literature. Woolf's part is played by the Rachel Vinrace character, Stephen's by Rachel's uncle, Ridley Ambrose:

Rachel came into her uncle's room and hailed him twice, "Uncle Ridley," before he paid her any attention.

At length he looked over his spectacles.

"Well?" he asked.

"I want a book," she replied. "*Gibbon's History of the Roman Empire*. May I have it?"

She watched the lines on her uncle's face gradually rearrange themselves at her question. It had been smooth as a mask before she spoke. (*VO*, 283)

The scene features an assemblage of real-life moments for Woolf. She had herself borrowed Gibbon's *History* from Stephen as a youth, something she notes in a letter to Vita Sackville-West (*LA* 27), and the description of Ambrose's study, with him ensconced in its centre surrounded by a sea of books and papers, puts in mind the study from Hyde Park Gate featuring Stephen sitting at his rocking chair in the middle of the book-lined room (*MoB*, 158).

Woolf also wrote of how Stephen would slowly 'unwrinkle his forehead' as he realised his daughter was there, and 'a very sweet smile' would form at this recognition (*MoB*, 158), and Ambrose's reaction to Rachel's entrance is described in similar language. Their interaction is similarly affectionate; Ambrose is somewhat curmudgeonly in his

manner, including some eyebrow-raising at Rachel's choice of books, but nevertheless enthused by the chance to discuss literature with his niece. The exchange is also significant when considered in the wider context of the full novel. Rachel is bombarded by men – mainly St. John Hirst and Terence Hewet, but also Mr Dalloway – wishing to control her personal development, and, more specifically, determine what she is to read. But although Ambrose is as equally ill-equipped as Hirst and Hewet for understanding Rachel's 'voyage', he is not intent on trying to manipulate it; his collection of books are put to her disposal without condition. This literary version of Stephen, as a companionable librarian, compares with how Woolf wrote of Stephen in 'A Sketch of the Past'; in both texts, the study is a literary sanctuary away from controlling men, and Stephen/ Ambrose a temporary but welcome intellectual relief.

Woolf's essay, 'Hours in a Library' (1916), also references Stephen and not simply by virtue of the borrowed title. As Eleanor McNeese and Jane de Gay have both observed, Woolf's description of the man who reads for the love of reading rather than of learning recalls Stephen's alpine pursuits:⁹²

He is a man of intense curiosity [...] to whom reading is more of the nature of brisk exercise in the open air than of sheltered study; he trudges the high road, he climbs higher and higher upon the hills until the atmosphere is almost too fine to breathe in; to him it is not a sedentary pursuit at all.⁹³

This distinction Woolf draws between the methodical learned man and the reader, full of 'human passion for pure and disinterested reading', brings to mind a passage from Stephen himself, when he writes: 'No critic can instil into a reader that spontaneous sympathy with the thoughts and emotions incarcerated in the great masterpieces without which all reading is cold and valueless' (*English*, 6). Why, then, does Woolf invoke Stephen in her essay on reading and forms of library, and in the role of the 'true reader'?⁹⁴ The feelings of sorrow and guilt that had perhaps caused Woolf to tread delicately on the matter of her father in her

⁹² McNeese, 'The Stephen Inheritance', p. 136; de Gay, p. 13.

⁹³ 'Hours in a Library', p. 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

piece for Maitland's biography had passed sufficiently for her to write a rather more candid treatment of him in 'Reminiscences', as has been stated. Rather than it being a touch of sentimentality on Woolf's part, she is showing a glimpse of the subtle transition that sees her reposition Stephen as a peer. Instead of remaining only as the patriarchal authority from her childhood and owner of that original library, Woolf presents him here as a fellow reader and someone who, like her, would want an inclusive library, where books were actually used and read as they were in his study (books were frequently annotated by Stephen and he described his collection as a 'mangy' lot, indicating their heavy use (*LL*, 489)). Whilst Stephen would yet still be characterised as Mr Ramsay – quite the juxtaposition with the ideal reader described here – and the rejection of his study and his role as its custodian, Woolf is covertly re-writing Stephen as a like-minded contemporary, and one who had shared his knowledge with his daughter.

'A Society' (1917), the satirical short story first published as part of the *Monday or Tuesday* collection (1921), provides a further example of Woolf associating Stephen with her education, and thus also with libraries, through allusion in her writing. There is a degree of ambivalence towards Stephen in the story; he has provided the means to that education, but the knowledge born out of that education has uncovered the flaws in the patriarchal system, including the library and education itself. The story is built around the premise of one of its characters, Poll, having been left an inheritance by her father that she receives only on condition of her having read all the books in the London Library. Notwithstanding the practical impossibility of the legacy, a further, more unexpected concern faces Poll: the literature she finds there is bad, the history untrue (and badly written), and the poetry 'sentimental foolery'.⁹⁵ And the story makes a wider point quite clear: these are books written exclusively by men.

"Why," she asked, "if men write such rubbish as this, should our mothers have wasted their youth in bringing them into the world?"

⁹⁵ 'A Society', *Monday or Tuesday* (London: Hogarth Press, 1921), p. 15.

We were all silent; and, in the silence, poor Poll could be heard sobbing out, “Why, why did my father teach me to read?”⁹⁶

There is significance in Woolf’s use of the London Library in the story as it carries with it an undeniable connection to her father. Woolf’s early diaries contain a description of the two hurrying across London to pick up a consignment of books from there (*APA*, 62), while an edition of the *Hyde Park News* delights in reporting Stephen’s appointment as president of the library, with some mirth over Gladstone being made only his vice.⁹⁷ The following is from a letter by Woolf to her sister, Vanessa, reporting Mr Cox, ‘the elderly gentleman at the London Library’, in overheard conversation about *The Voyage Out*:

‘That’s by Virginia Woolf isn’t it?’ he said. ‘She’s a sister of Mrs Clive Bell. Strange whats come to those two girls. Such a nice home they had. Sir Leslie our president. But of course they weren’t baptised!’ So you see how even in the London Library they follow us up. (*L2* 303)

The anecdote may be brief but it helpfully illustrates how, even fourteen years after his death, Stephen managed to maintain a presence at the library.

With the significance of the London Library established, it is interesting to consider how far Poll, who had ‘always been queer’, represents Woolf in this story, and her father, ‘a strange man’, Stephen.⁹⁸ For Woolf *had* inherited a passion for reading from Stephen, as well as access to his library when he was alive and a literal inheritance of many of his books after his death.⁹⁹ What is played out at the beginning of the story as a terrible penance on Poll turns out to be the start of a quest for knowledge that informs her of the gender inequality found first in literature, but then in all of society. So here, in the story, Poll’s

⁹⁶ ‘A Society’, p. 15.

⁹⁷ Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and Thoby Stephen, *Hyde Park Gate News*, ed. by Gill Lowe (London: Hesperus Press, 2005), p. 144.

⁹⁸ ‘A Society’, p. 13.

⁹⁹ Diane F. Gillespie, ‘Virginia Woolf and Libraries’, *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalog* (ed. by Julia King and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, Washington: Washington State UP, 2004) <<http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/onlinebooks/woolflibrary/woolflibraryonline.htm>> [Accessed on 17 July 2018] (para. 6 of 27).

(figurative) inheritance of a library from her father is the beginning of a journey that through her relentless reading and research leads to a damning conclusion – men have not been holding up their end of a bargain which saw women provide children in return for men maintaining a high standard of intellectual society and culture. Poll's journey parallels Woolf's own increasingly sceptical attitude towards patriarchal society, and the narrator in *A Room of One's Own* reaches an equivalent decision on the dubious achievements of men while women have been producing families. So although Woolf and her fictional avatar in 'A Society' required the patriarchal legacy of a library not of their own to begin their journeys, the end destination for both lay in the realisation that those libraries were not the only solution. This idea, of Stephen's legacy providing an invaluable basis for Woolf's knowledge but one which she could successfully progress away from, was one Woolf adopted several times when writing of her father's work in hers. The following chapter, on literary theory and history, sees Woolf create exactly this relationship between their ideas and texts.

Woolf assumed a different tone in *A Room of One's Own*. She was tackling the establishment, and whether it was an entirely accurate depiction or not, Stephen became the embodiment of the academic side of the patriarchy she was railing against. It is impossible to separate Stephen from the world of academia Woolf found both enigmatically enticing and offensively hostile; Mr Ramsay, his literary representation in *To the Lighthouse*, is a philosophy lecturer, and Woolf would also write of Stephen as having been in his true element as a Cambridge academic (*MoB*, 117). That Stephen had become an outsider to university life in a different but not entirely un-relatable way to Woolf was of course known to her, but overlooked in this particular construction of Stephen. Here, in *A Room of One's Own*, his presence pervades the university setting of the text.

From the 'stories of old deans and old dons', to the university's library and its chapel, Stephen is inextricably linked to this world. Focusing specifically on the library, Woolf's narrator's curtailed visit had been in order to examine two particular manuscripts;

one was Milton's *Lycidas* (1638), after she thinks of Charles Lamb's essay on that poem, the other Thackeray's novel, *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852). Thackeray had been Stephen's father-in-law in his first marriage, and Stephen, as Julia Briggs has recorded, bestowed Trinity College with a copy of that exact manuscript.¹⁰⁰ *Lycidas* was a favourite poem of both father and daughter (and is referred to in Woolf's 'Hours in a Library', as it is in Stephen's essays on Pope, Johnson, and Tennyson), and as Woolf recalled that Stephen used to read his preferred poems to her and her siblings, Milton's poem would have inevitably resonated with memories of her father.

Even the reference to Lamb reveals a textual dialogue between Woolf and Stephen; Lamb's writing style had received an infamously savage treatment from Stephen in his essay, 'The Essayists', described by one critic as foregrounding twentieth-century criticism of Lamb.¹⁰¹ Woolf, on the other hand, is full of praise for Lamb, admiring his essays 'because of that wild flash of imagination, that lightning crack of genius in the middle of them which leaves them flawed and imperfect, but starred with poetry'; conversely, Stephen accuses him of affectation and self-consciousness in his writing.¹⁰² Joseph Riel, in his study of Lamb, suggests that Stephen's criticism contained a polite jab at his father-in-law, for Thackeray had been an ardent Lamb enthusiast (as Woolf remarks upon in *Room*).¹⁰³ The temptation is to conclude that Woolf's fulsome praise is in part a jab back at Stephen. Perhaps more importantly, though, something else is revealed by this figurative exchange: Woolf's in-depth knowledge of Lamb, and of Milton and Thackeray. This knowledge had at its root hours of a childhood education spent sharing books with a fellow reader, at the study at Hyde Park Gate; the image of Stephen as the 'ideal reader' climbs back into mind. In *A Room of One's Own*, though, what is explicitly evident is that this library is in secure possession of literature heavily associated with Stephen by Woolf. That her narrator is

¹⁰⁰ *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life*, p. 224.

¹⁰¹ Joseph E. Riehl, *That Dangerous Figure: Charles Lamb and the Critics* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1996), p. 61.

¹⁰² *Men, Books, and Mountains: Essays by Leslie Stephen* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 67.

¹⁰³ *That Dangerous Figure*, p. 60.

unable even to access those manuscripts, whilst Stephen had authority over them (and even literal ownership of one) in his library, necessitates a change in the dynamic between Woolf and her father as librarian. Now he and the study constitute a paradigm of the institutional libraries: books held under the jurisdiction of the patriarchal figure, the female visitor only ever just a visitor.

The narrator's time spent in the British Museum's reading rooms provides further reason for Woolf's rejection of Stephen and the institutional library. Not only are her efforts quashed by the endless number of volumes about women but written by men, as Gillespie has pointed out, the library itself appears designed for the male students with their university-taught research skills, one of whom is systematically working through his research whilst the narrator is left to doodle cartwheels in frustration.¹⁰⁴ The idea of the common reader versus the academic, a frequent distinction made in Woolf's work, is played out in this scene; and, as in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf chooses here that the divide should split her and her father. She wrote of Stephen as being the archetypal university intellectual, 'spartan, ascetic, puritanical' – in other words, the opposite of Woolf and her narrator (*MoB*, 117, 79).

A Room of One's Own sees Woolf identify Stephen with both the institutional library and the academic minds who would perpetuate their existence, complicit in the patriarchal desire to reject outsiders and to see 'all its treasures safe – locked within its breast' (*ROO*, 32). Woolf had maintained affection for her father's study as her first library, but this regard was not reconcilable with the critical position she assumed in *Room*. And the sacrifice of that memory, of that study and of Stephen sharing his books with her, was made without hesitation.

As Woolf does not subscribe to a single authoritative idea of Stephen, in fact she deliberately avoids this outcome, she is able to criticise Stephen as patriarchal library

¹⁰⁴ 'Virginia Woolf and Libraries' (para. 2 of 27).

custodian and still maintain a textual dialogue with him as a fellow reader. As ‘Hours in a Library’ demonstrated, Woolf only sacrifices one specific version of Stephen in *A Room of One’s Own*. Stephen’s continued existence as a fellow reader and writer in Woolf’s oeuvre is achieved by the intertextual references to his body of work; when Woolf wrote ‘he comes back now more as a contemporary’ it is to some large extent by design. She frequently rejects aspects or interpretations of Stephen, such as the patriarchal librarian in the discussion here, but preserves him in other ways; primarily as a writer, and a peer, whose work she would allude to in her own.

Conclusion

It has been necessary to continue to redefine Stephen as a person, along the same critical understanding as critics like McNees and Hill. Their arguments for considering Stephen as a more complex and a more positive influence on Woolf are invaluable for any considered analysis of their relationship, particularly when focused upon the textual relationship between their work. This chapter has continued the reappraisal of Stephen’s work, career, and personal life, as without a clearer understanding of those things, the more negative stereotypes of Stephen cloud the issue; why would Woolf go to lengths to build these literary connections with her father if he had been nothing but the bitter and self-obsessed man who existed for several significant years in Woolf’s early adolescence? In fact, as this chapter has demonstrated, Stephen was a progressive thinker, liberal in his political views, and with no desire to amend his beliefs simply to align with convention and tradition; all characteristics that corresponded with Woolf’s views. Moreover, in their family life, Stephen and Woolf shared an affinity with one another, even if interrupted by tragedy, and one which was heavily focused on a love of books.

Having established this concept of Stephen, the chapter has shown how Woolf wrote about him biographically and in her fiction and essays, and how she imagined different versions of Stephen in those texts. The following chapters will demonstrate that Woolf

referenced her father far more regularly through their texts than she did on an intersubjective level, warranting a comprehensive examination of the textual relationship between them – one that has been often ignored in favour of seeing Stephen and Woolf only as father and daughter.

Chapter 2: Literary Theories, Histories, and a Re-writing of the Novel

And this morning I opened a letter, and it was from the Master of Trinity [College, Cambridge]: and it was to say that the Council have decided to ask me to deliver the Clark Lectures next year. Six of them ... And I am pleased; and still more pleased that I won't do it; and like to think that father would have blushed with pleasure could I have told him thirty years ago, that his daughter – my poor little Ginny – was to be asked to succeed him: the sort of compliment he would have liked. (Virginia Woolf's diary entry from 29 February, 1932) (*D4* 79)

The above quotation from Woolf's diary reveals several aspects of a complicated relationship with her father: how she clearly felt pride in the idea that he would have been correspondingly proud of her and of her achievements; that she wanted to continue his legacy, in this case by taking up Stephen's mantle as a distinguished lecturer at Cambridge; and also how she wanted to separate away from that legacy. For Woolf's intention *not* to deliver the proposed lectures, instead planning to concentrate on her next novel, is a rejection of Stephen's oratory tradition.¹ Stephen was himself appointed as the first Clark lecturer in 1883, the Leslie Stephen Lectures carried on his name after his death at the same university, and the inaugural speech of the Ford Lectures at Oxford University, delivered on his behalf, was one of the very last things Stephen wrote (*LL*, 373).² Not only this, but by prioritising her novels over presenting the lectures, Woolf was eclipsing his tradition; it was her decision to decide on which was of greater importance and Woolf chose her novels over her father's lectures, knowing that hers would always be the final word on the matter. Throughout her writing, both the fiction and her essays, Woolf is in a way conversing with Stephen and in a fashion that was unimaginable before his death. Here, though, existing in the literary world as a fellow writer, she is able to consider her father's arguments on literary history and theory, agree or disagree with them, but importantly is always able to construct the narrative of the conversation on her terms and with her intentions at the fore.

¹ This was *A Tap at the Door*, work later to become incorporated into *The Years* (1937).

² 'English literature and society in the 18th century' (1904) was read by his nephew, Herbert Fisher, due to Stephen's failing health.

Ironically, that final speech of Stephen's discussed several of the ideas on literary theory that Woolf did choose to progress through her own work – purposefully and deliberately, as will be put forward here. The central argument of this chapter will contend that Woolf frequently invokes Stephen's ideas on literary theory in order that she may draw on his heritage. Then, it will be argued, Woolf deliberately moves away from the legacy of her father and the past by developing these concepts in a manner of her own, as she does in *A Room of One's Own* by rewriting Stephen's literary history from a gendered perspective. Woolf also provides insight on how literature will change in her time as well as in the future – 'there is no limit to the horizon, and that nothing [...] is forbidden, but only falsity and pretence' (*E4* 157) – while Stephen's work deals only with the history of literature. Perhaps most significantly, Woolf's ability to form a new style of fiction out her ideas on literary change and development saw her putting theory into practice within her novels and short stories. Stephen never ventured into the world of fiction, thus never having provided opportunity to prove or disprove his daughter's later statement that he had 'no sense of the sound of words' (*MoB*, 79) (an example of Woolf redefining their relationship – here Woolf is the born artist, Stephen the puritan, unable to fully grasp the beauty of words). Woolf can be seen as laying down theoretical groundwork for her experimental fiction, whilst writing that very fiction; it is a continuous melding of ideas, manifesting in the development of her new and progressive style of prose writing. That the theoretical grounding lies in Stephen's work on the subject is not only due to the fact that as her primary source of education his ideas were a genuine and real influence, but also evidence of Woolf's desire to form and maintain a textual connection with Stephen in her work.

An additional reading of the diary entry suggests that Woolf being 'still more pleased' that she did not intend to deliver the lectures actually caused her to follow further in Stephen's footsteps. By refusing the offer of the lectures, Woolf was rejecting the university just had Stephen had done when he resigned his post of tutor. Critical opinion is divided over how to interpret Woolf's decision, with Katherine Hill maintaining that Woolf saw the

opportunity of the Clark Lectures as only a positive thing, and does not mention that Woolf declined the invitation.³ On the other hand, Maggie Humm argues from a Freudian perspective that Woolf was pleased but unable to accept due to a ‘fear of surpassing the father’.⁴ The argument here is that Hill’s verdict is incomplete, whilst Humm’s does not allow for Woolf’s intention to write extensively on subjects that Stephen was considered an expert, such as biography and philosophy, and in a manner she clearly intended to be superior to his. One other such subject was literary theory and this chapter will make the new contention that on this topic too, Woolf’s use of allusion and appropriation towards her father’s texts and theories allows her to connect with *and* move beyond his work.

In making this analysis, there will be extensive reference to a range of Stephen’s texts, including a detailed consideration of *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* which is a culmination of his ideas on literary history and theory. From Woolf’s oeuvre, ‘Modern Fiction’ and *A Room of One’s Own* will receive the greatest attention as they are her most significant texts on literary history and theory, but there will be reference to other supporting works, including ‘The Leaning Tower’, ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, and ‘Anon’, and ‘An Unwritten Novel’ from Woolf’s fiction.

Critics have remarked on this association between Woolf’s and Stephen’s literary theory. Brenda Silver argues that through Stephen’s influence, Woolf ‘learned to place literature in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts, and to recognize the crucial role that social as well as literary conventions play in determining what gets written and how it is received’.⁵ Hill makes a similar point:

Stephen tutored Woolf extensively in biography as well as history, and this education, stemming as it did from Stephen’s beliefs about the interrelation of

³ Hill, p. 351.

⁴ *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: The Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), p. 32.

⁵ *Virginia Woolf’s Reading Notebooks* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
<<https://doi.org/10.1349/ddlp.3522>>

biography, history, and literature, was crucial in shaping her own approach to literary criticism and her theorising about the development of literary genres.⁶

Hill's study provides an excellent insight into the correlation between the theories of father and daughter. She summarises Stephen's ideal literary critic as one who must 'endeavour to be open to literary experimentation that seeks to express an age's vision more accurately,' and draws a comparison between this and the fundamentals of Woolf's own criticism, arguing that it 'urges these same values'.⁷ This idea will be expanded in this chapter, with the argument being that there are clear similarities between Stephen's and Woolf's work on the requirements for progression in literature.

Hill is also correct to remark on the socio-historical nature of these ideas, and how both Woolf and Stephen saw the changing of literary styles and genres to be a representative of a change in society:

both father and daughter say that shifting class structures produce a dominant historical consciousness and that this unique historical consciousness in turn expresses itself in an appropriate technical form.⁸

What will be argued in this chapter is that Woolf not only believed in this concept in theory but also in practice, and that her own modernist fiction acted as the 'appropriate technical form' of literature through which the consciousness of the twentieth century could be expressed. Furthermore, in a progression from Hill's essay, there will be a focus on what this shared theorising says about Woolf's relationship with Stephen, as well as what the shift from theory to practice adds to that discussion.

⁶ Hill, p. 353.

⁷ Ibid, p. 357.

⁸ Ibid, p. 355.

Victorian and Modernist Literary Theory: Stephen and Woolf in Context

This section will provide a contextual background to the theoretical positions Stephen and Woolf held by considering a brief history of literary theory relevant to their times and detailing the critics who influenced and competed with the two writers.

Much literary criticism in the mid-to-late nineteenth century took literature out of its historical context and treated it as standalone text, removed from the social conditions and sensibilities of the time in which it was written. This view was espoused by F. D. Maurice, Professor of English history and literature at King's College London, in 1840. Peter Barry describes Maurice as laying down the principles of liberal humanism, the school of literary criticism that finds human nature to be constant and literature to hold its own meaning, irrespective of social, political, or historical contexts. Barry quotes from Maurice's inaugural lecture in his post as Professor at King's, demonstrating Maurice's point of view on the study of literature: 'the study of English literature would serve "to emancipate us ... from the notions and habits which are peculiar to our own age", connecting us instead with "what is fixed and enduring"'.⁹ Stephen argued against this critical position, stating instead that literary criticism should take into consideration the period in which it was written and consider all literature as a product of its time:

Literature in this aspect is simply one function of the social organism [...] and any serious treatment of it must recognise the fact. The greatest men, it is true, say what is of interest for all times; but even the very greatest, the Homers and Dantes and Shakespeares, say it in the dialect and under all the conditions of their own time.¹⁰

This belief made Stephen something of an outsider in terms of literary theory scholarship, and it is therefore away from F. D. Maurice and King's College and to the French literary critic, Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, that his critical influences can be most accurately

⁹ *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) p. 13. I quote Maurice from Barry's book due to the original source being unidentified.

¹⁰ 'The Study of English Literature', in *The Study of English Literature: Three Essays*, ed. by Albert F. Blaisdell (Boston: Willard Small, Publisher, 1902), pp. 71-118 (p. 85).

traced.¹¹ Coming into some moderate fame via his association with the Parisian literary circle, the Cénacle, during the 1820s, Sainte-Beuve's major achievement was his huge historical tome, *Port-Royal* (1837-1859), though it was his more theoretical standpoint that influenced Stephen. Writing of the necessity to consider literature in terms of the historical circumstances of the author, including details pertaining specifically to that person, such as details about their personality, their beliefs, and their families, Sainte-Beuve's work bestowed upon Stephen a belief that literature should be studied alongside its historical and biographical context. Stephen writes the following in 'The Study of English Literature':

The true object of the study of a man's writings is, according to my definition, to make a personal friend of the author. You have not studied him thoroughly till you know the very trick of his speech, the turn of his thoughts, the characteristic peculiarities of his sentiments, of his imagery, of his mode of contemplating the world or human life.¹²

Stephen's argument is that to achieve the required knowledge of an author that allows one to properly appreciate their work, 'auxiliary studies' into the related history of the subject and their era are hugely recommended. Silver argues that Woolf took this advice literally, noting that Woolf's reading notebook for her essay on Joseph Addison, for example, lists a selection of supplementary texts matching Stephen's recommendations almost exactly. Silver adds that Woolf's 'habitual recourse to letters, memoirs, diaries, biographies, and histories in her own pursuit of a writer or a work, indicates the tremendous influence her father's teaching had on Woolf'.¹³

In his Cambridge lecture of 1937, Desmond MacCarthy said of Stephen that it 'was because Sainte-Beuve had taken such pains to place every author in his social setting and his times that he respected Sainte-Beuve's work so much.'¹⁴ Stephen certainly rated the French

¹¹ Stephen's other notable French influence was of course Auguste Comte, who will be discussed in Chapter 3.

¹² Stephen, pp. 72-3.

¹³ *Woolf's Reading Notebooks*.

¹⁴ *Leslie Stephen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937; repr. 2013), pp. 44-5 (from MacCarthy's 'Leslie Stephen Lecture', given at Cambridge University, May 27, 1937).

writer's work very highly. When responding to Thomas Hardy's request for a reading list of 'critical books', Stephen wrote in response that 'Sainte Beuve and Mat. Arnold (in a smaller way) are the only modern critics who seem to me worth reading' (*LL*, 290). Arnold held Sainte-Beuve in similar regard, writing to Cardinal Newman: 'There are four people, in especial, from whom I am conscious of having [...] learnt habits, methods, ruling ideas, which are constantly with me; and the four are – Goethe, Wordsworth, Sainte-Beuve, and yourself'.¹⁵

Stephen's socio-historical approach to literary theory tended to locate him outside of any other dominant school of thought, despite his position as an influential critic of his time and the significance his work would achieve in the twentieth century (Eleanor McNees notes that several prominent critics have ranked 'Stephen high in the ranks of sociological and biographical critics').¹⁶ Stephen's views certainly distinguished him from Arnold even while they shared the same regard for Sainte-Beuve. In his study on literary history, David Perkins explains that, in fact, Arnold's marking of 'the difference between the "real" and the merely "historical" estimate of texts'¹⁷ precipitated a general consolidation behind the study of 'what is fixed and enduring', and away from Sainte-Beuve's historical contextualism.¹⁸ McNees argues convincingly that the critical debate between Stephen and Arnold was continued through Woolf's own literary essays, indicating how the two positions were distinct from each other as well as from the entirely didactic perspective that dominated early Victorian literary theory.¹⁹

Stephen maintained his contextualism even as Arnold came into the fore at the mid-point of the century. Arnold argued that all great literature had at its core some essential

¹⁵ *Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold* (ed. by Arnold Whitridge, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), pp. 65-66.

¹⁶ 'The Stephen Inheritance', p. 127.

¹⁷ *Theoretical Issues in Literary History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 2.

¹⁸ Arnold Whitridge (Arnold's grandson) notes 'that in spite of all these similarities of temperament there was a profound difference between the *Essays in Criticism* and the *Causeries du Lundi*' ('Matthew Arnold and Sainte-Beuve', *PMLA*, 53, 1 (1938), 303-313 (p. 310) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/458416>> [Accessed on 14 July 2015].

¹⁹ 'The Stephen Inheritance', pp. 133-34.

truth about human nature and that the correct study of literature and art, or culture of any kind, would provide the spirituality and moral guidance that may no longer have been afforded by religion.²⁰ Arnold also had a very certain view on the role of the critic, stating that they held a responsibility to advance these concepts of culture, with ‘a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas’.²¹ He believed in removing all previously-held ideas on a subject of criticism, and taking an objective, or ‘disinterested’, view of it. Significantly, in view of Stephen’s position, Arnold also argued that notions of context should similarly be removed, allowing a text to be viewed in a fresh and untainted way.

Towards the 1880s, another influential school of thought formed around the concept of aestheticism and Stephen’s position differed again from this new popular group. Following the writings of Walter Pater and championed by Oscar Wilde, the aesthetic movement held that the value of art and literature lay in its beauty, rather than in any moral or ethical truths, summed up in the oft-quoted motto, ‘art for art’s sake’. As a literary theory, the focus of the criticism was upon the aesthetic qualities of literature, not underlying didacticism or spirituality, and that there was no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Perkins adds to this that aesthetic critics ‘pointed out that historical contextualism can explain everything except what, perhaps, one most wants to explain – genius; in other words, the qualitative difference between works of art produced in exactly the same time and place’.²² This style of criticism was anathema to Stephen, who wrote the following in response, in his essay, ‘Art and Morality’ (1875):

If a man really has the impudence to say that immorality is right because it is artistic, he is either talking nonsense or proposing a new law of morals which is too absurd to require confutation.²³

²⁰ Arnold was made Professor of Poetry at Oxford University in 1857, *Essays in Criticism: First Series* was published in 1865, and *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869.

²¹ Arnold, *Essays by Matthew Arnold*, p. 34.

²² Perkins, *Theoretical Issues in Literary History*, p. 2.

²³ ‘Art and Morality’, *The Cornhill Magazine*, 32, no. 187 (1875), p. 94.

As the above quotation demonstrates, Stephen did not hold with the conception of art as being without moral value, but this was not the only thing that he found objectionable about aesthetic criticism. Stephen strongly believed in taking a scientific approach to the analysis of literature, writing that criticism should ‘aim at something like a scientific basis, or at least to proceed in a scientific spirit. The critic [...] should endeavour to classify the phenomena with which he is dealing as calmly as if he were ticketing a fossil in a museum.’²⁴

It was not just the aesthetes who felt the sharpness and wit of Stephen’s pen. He found Arnold’s proposition that a school of critics acting as cultural and moral guides for society to be absurd,²⁵ writing instead ‘that one is tempted to doubt whether the critic be not an altogether superfluous phenomenon’ (*English*, 10), and wrote the following of meeting with Ruskin in a letter to Norton: ‘I was afraid of contradicting him, lest it should annoy him, and of agreeing, lest I should be lying, and indeed inclined to treat him as a dangerous compound which might explode in any direction without notice’ (*LL*, 292).²⁶

Woolf did not waste any time in taking up her father’s position as a literary critic, even if she had not felt able to do so until after his death. Stephen passed away in February of 1904, with his final piece of work, a biographical essay on Thomas Hobbes, completed only a few months before his death and published posthumously. In December of the same year, Woolf had her first review published in the *Guardian*’s women’s supplement, on William Dean Howells’s *The Son of Royal Langbrith* (1904). Woolf would contribute hundreds of reviews and essays to a wide variety of newspapers, magazines, and periodicals during the course of her lifetime, including to the *Cornhill*, her father’s magazine for over eleven years as editor and longer still as a writer. Like Stephen, Woolf was a journalist; moreover, she was, like Stephen, writing as a literary critic for much of the time. Their careers paralleled for some time, as did their interest in writing of literary history. Where the two differ is in Woolf’s much greater tendency to look forwards and write of how literature

²⁴ *Hours in a Library: Vol. III*, p. 1.

²⁵ Annan, p. 18.

²⁶ Letter to Norton, August 8th, 1876.

needed to adapt to reflect modern times and modern concerns. This distinction will be discussed further in the following section of this chapter, as it is a key aspect of the way in which Woolf separated her work from her father's.

Woolf's critical work can be seen from within its own time as being both popular and overlooked. Her *Common Reader* series sold very well, with print runs of over 50,000 for both volumes, yet the reaction to Woolf's non-fiction from her critical peers was decidedly mixed.²⁷ The criticism her essays received can be explained by three overriding factors, with the first of these being that she was a woman whilst her contemporaries in the critical world were almost exclusively men. This provided ammunition of the sort that saw H.P. Collins reproach her work for avoiding 'the most penetrating kind of analysis and the *philosophical synthesis*', instead being inclined 'to a semi-creative interest in men and women'.²⁸ This manner of disparagement was often expected by Woolf, as she notes in the following diary entry from October 1929, before the publication of *A Room of One's Own*:

I forecast then that I shall get no criticism, except of the evasive jocular kind, from Lytton [Strachey], Roger [Fry] and Morgan [E.M. Forster]; that the press will be kind and talk of its charm and sprightliness; also I shall be attacked for a feminist and hinted at for a sapphist; [...] I am afraid it will not be taken seriously. (D3 262)

Woolf's prediction illustrates the problems her criticism faced: even the 'kind' press would only remark on the quality of Woolf's prose, not on the content it was expressing. In fact, it was her deliberately engaging writing style that was a second factor against Woolf's essays being treated as seriously as some of her contemporaries. She was determined to write her essays for all types of readers, as the title of her *The Common Reader* series suggests, and her prose style was in part due to this deliberate attempt to keep her criticism separate from the more academic form of critical essaying. However, this caused Woolf's work to be described as full of 'wit and charm' but insufficient to suggest 'ambition to evoke

²⁷ Hermione Lee, *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, p. 93.

²⁸ H.P. Collins, review of the *Common Reader (First Series)* in the *Criterion*, July 1925 (reprinted in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) p. 156).

principles'.²⁹ Not only this, the idea that literary criticism should be written to be accessible flew in the face of F.R. Leavis, the hugely influential critic who strongly maintained the belief that it was a discipline only appropriate for an academic, intellectual writer and reader. More will be said of Leavis shortly.

Thirdly, Woolf's association with the Bloomsbury Group, while providing her with the intellectual milieu in which to develop as a writer and a thinker (though not necessarily positive reviews, as the quotation above reveals), caused her work to be considered by some critics as removed from the practical world, and with concepts and ideologies that were not applicable outside of a very specific class and intellectual circle. Her sometime-nemesis Arnold Bennett described her as 'queen of the high-brows'³⁰ in his review of *A Room of One's Own*, and Philip Henderson, in *The Novel of To-day* (1936), wrote of 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' that Woolf 'does not want to be reminded that the world does not consist entirely of Mrs Dalloways shopping in Bond Street and giving parties in Westminster'.³¹ Similar accusations of snobbery and elitism were levelled at Woolf's critical work for years after her death and the end of Bloomsbury. Diana Trilling, a prominent New York literary critic between 1940 and 1960, argued in her review of the republication of the *Common Reader* series in 1948 that Woolf's essays made the 'fantastic assumption that all her readers had had the space and time, the physical and emotional conditions for savoring life at her pace'.³² Donald Hall makes a similar if more crudely stated objection to Woolf's criticism, complaining in no uncertain terms in his review of her collected essays that she was a snob whose work 'explicitly celebrates the social hierarchy'.³³ More recently, in 2007 Cora

²⁹ Anonymous, review of the *Common Reader (First Series)* in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 313, 7 May 1925 (*Critical Heritage*, p. 148).

³⁰ Bennett, *Evening Standard*, 28 November 1929, 9 (*Critical Heritage*, p.258).

³¹ Henderson, *The Novel of To-day, 1936* (*Critical Heritage*, p.353).

³² 'Virginia Woolf's Special Realm', *The New York Times Book Review*, 21 March 1948, p. 28 <<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/17/specials/woolf-moment.html>> [Accessed 20 May 2018].

³³ Donald Hall, 'Who Else Is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?', *The New York Times Book Review*, 24 December 24 1967 <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/17/specials/woolf-essays67.html?_r=1> [Accessed 20 May 2018]

Kaplan described Woolf's critical voice as 'the disdainful voice of a metropolitan intellectual'.³⁴

Given her position as a leading modernist writer it would be natural to expect Woolf's literary criticism to be similarly modernist in its approach. Precisely defining a single style of modern literary criticism is, however, rather more difficult than this. Arthur Walton Litz writes of the problems involved in the following passage:

When modernism is multiplied, the literary criticism associated with modernist writings is multiplied as well. There is, so to speak, a 'mainstream modernism' associated with the academic incarnation of the New Criticism [...]. But there is also a modernist literature of identity, whose critics include Alain Locke, Virginia Woolf, and Gertrude Stein. There is a modernism of counter-modernity – in the work of Eliot, Pound, and Lewis.³⁵

Litz explains how Woolf's critical perspective was not mainstream but instead located outside of that, comparable to Stephen's position on the edge of Victorian critical theory. Woolf's brand of modernist criticism sought to break down genres as she had in her novels, employed fictional devices and techniques, and attempted to create a relationship between writer and reader. Hermione Lee writes the following of Woolf's essays:

Everywhere you look there is cross-fertilisation, overlap and the dissolving of divisions. Essays turn into fictions, fictions turn into essays; criticisms of others or readings of modern fictions may be commentaries on her own processes; recommendations of how to read may be demonstrations of how to write.³⁶

The quotation helps explain the complexity of what Woolf was attempting in her essays, but it also serves to make another important point – Woolf's essays on fiction were inextricably linked with her own fiction. Essays such as 'Modern Fiction' and 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' not only offer a manifesto on how Woolf thought modern literature should develop, they also provide an insight into the writer's thought processes on how she was developing

³⁴ Kaplan, *Victoriana – Histories, Fictions, Criticism*, p. 19.

³⁵ *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, p. 13.

³⁶ *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, p. 97.

her own literature, hand-in-hand with this theoretical discourse. As will be shown, by putting her theory into practice Woolf would separate from Stephen, ensuring that where literary theory connected their ideas it also distanced Woolf from her father.

The literary criticism of the early to mid-twentieth century was dominated by a Cambridge couple, F.R. and Q.D. Leavis, whose close-reading style of criticism, an inheritance from the doctrines of Arnold's criticism, deliberately avoided abstract theory or politicisation and was labelled liberal humanism. From the mid-1930s it was practically unchallenged as the established approach to literary theory until the rise of theoretical movements in the 1960s. F.R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* (1948) did not find much to champion in Woolf's work as a writer. His dogmatic belief that literature must have at its core a moral interest and characters within it who act in some way as moral agents hardly aligned with Woolf's own opinions on what literature should have as its focus. Nor did the critic have any fondness for the Bloomsbury group as a whole. R.P. Bilan writes of 'Leavis's intense dislike of the 'civilization' represented by Bloomsbury' and of its ethos being 'inimical to life'.³⁷ Q.D. Leavis displayed a similar dislike towards Woolf's work, writing that *A Room of One's Own* 'was annoying enough', and of *Three Guineas*: 'The least damning thing you might say about Mrs Woolf's proposals is that they are irresponsible'.³⁸

On the other hand, the Leavises praised Stephen's literary criticism, citing his trenchant dislike of aestheticism and his belief that literature could be evaluated as grounds for considering him as a respected predecessor to their own theories. Annan argues that the Leavises intended to capture Stephen's legacy for their own use, this primarily being their literary feud with Bloomsbury, Woolf included: 'The battle for Stephen's body was merely one episode in the long war which the Leavises fought against Bloomsbury, and like most wars, while it was being fought the combatants were enveloped in propaganda' (p. 324). The influence of the Leavises may have contributed a good deal to the view of Stephen and

³⁷ *The Literary Criticism of F. R. Leavis*, p. 267.

³⁸ Q.D. Leavis, review in *Scutiny*, 1938, 203-14 (*Critical Heritage*, pp. 410-14).

Woolf as occupying opposing critical positions, and of Stephen's ideas being rigidly traditional. That Stephen's most important and long-lasting theoretical principle on literature, the insistence on considering writers and their work within a historical and biographical context, fundamentally contradicted the Leavises' liberal humanism suggests Annan is correct in asserting that a degree of exaggeration and point-scoring was involved here on the part of the Leavises.

Like Stephen, then, Woolf remained on the fringes of the critical scene, despite both holding positions of respect in their literary worlds. Stephen's adherence to a critical view that maintained the importance of contextualising literature kept him outside of the current popular modes of literary criticism in his time. Woolf's non-fiction work maintained her commitment to her own modernist style of essaying, one which defied genre and established critical styles, but meant she was too frequently underestimated by her peers for managing to be either 'an inactive dreamer'³⁹ or of possessing 'a mind which, at bottom, is purely critical.'⁴⁰ As with the parallel of their shared rejection of Cambridge, Stephen's decision to remain on the outside of popular critical opinion was one he made for himself; for Woolf, it was a question of turning an injustice to an advantage.

The Literary Theories of Stephen and Woolf

Literature and Society

In her various essays, letters, and diaries, Woolf draws together an idea of what she believed to be the correct way for novel or prose writing to develop so that it could better reflect real life and the modern era, rather than remain based in the formulaic, genre-based style she identified in the books of the likes of Bennett, Wells, and Galsworthy. Woolf challenges the conventional views of the proper focus of novels, necessitating a move away from realism and carefully-structured stories of external adventures, towards something more

³⁹ Frank Swinnerton, review in the *Bookman* (New York), October 1924, 193-95 (*Critical Heritage*, p. 131).

⁴⁰ J.C. Squire, *Observer*, 21 October 1928, 6 (*Critical Heritage*, p. 229).

impressionistic and focused on internal experience. Her desire to see the literature of the era evolve, with her own writing at the forefront of the shifting literary landscape, was corroborated by a theory of development that suggested a change was due and one which was heavily connected with Stephen's studies on the subject.

As the following discussion will show, Stephen and Woolf argued that literature and society were intrinsically connected. The style and form of literature at any point in history were directly related to the environment it was written in, and thus provided a unique insight into the attitudes of that environment. Stephen contended that, historically, particular developments in society would herald a corresponding change in the prevailing literature of the time, an appealing aspect of his theory from Woolf's point of view; her argument for changing twentieth-century literature could reference her father's own, established reasoning for the causes of literary development. Not only this, it allowed Woolf to engage with her father's texts, continuing the dialogue her work had with his.

Stephen argued that literary genre and form reflected and represented the socio-political situation of the era in which it was produced. Therefore a change in literature was explicable by a parallel change to the audience of its time. Annan describes Stephen as 'one of the first Englishmen' to argue that popular literature and genre represented the condition of society (p. 317). In a letter to Norton, Stephen writes:

I always have a profound impression that human beings have been much more like each other than we fancy since they got rid of their tails, and that great outbursts of speculation or art imply some special excitement more than a radical difference in the people themselves. (*LL*, 244)

This short quotation reflects Stephen's wider theory that it was not the sudden and random occurrences of genius writers that best explained periods of great literature, but a change to or a 'special excitement' in the society in which they lived. In *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Stephen argues from this same perspective, remarking on how philosophy and art and literature are *not* produced by individual minds turning out work

independent of all other external considerations, but a manifestation of a general body of thought reflective of the environment in which it was produced:

The deepest thinker is not really – though we often use the phrase – in advance of his day so much as in the line along which advance takes place. The greatest poet does not write for a future generation in the sense of not writing for his own; it is only that in giving the fullest utterance to its thoughts and showing the deepest insight into their significance, he is therefore the most perfect type of its general mental attitude, and his work is an embodiment of the thoughts which are common to men of all generations. (*English*, 17)

An immediate and clear comparison can be drawn with Woolf's thoughts on the subject, from *A Room of One's Own*, evidencing both writers' attachment to the central ethos that literature was intrinsically linked to society, not the individual:

For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice. (*ROO*, 74)

Woolf's statement makes the same implication as Stephen's theory, that 'masterpieces' are born out of a collective advancement of ideas, just as 'great outbursts of speculation or art' are the result of a society making intellectual progression as a whole. Stephen discussed this again, in his lecture on 'Forgotten Benefactors' (1896) near the end of his career, when he wrote: 'A great discovery is made when the fertile thought is already going through the process of incubation in a whole circle of intelligent minds.'⁴¹ In Woolf's last work, the unfinished and unpublished essay 'Anon' (written 1940-41), she makes a comparable point in her discussion of the Elizabethan play:

And the play itself was still anonymous. The lack of Marlowes name, or of Kyds, shows how largely the play was a common product, written by one hand, but so

⁴¹ *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 230.

moulded in transition that the author had no sense of property in it. It was in part the work of the audience.⁴²

There is a similarity in the way in which Stephen and Woolf write about the concept of important ideas forming in bodies of people rather than in individuals, with both placing a much greater significance on writing the lives of forgotten names than they do on more celebrated subjects (something which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4), and also how both consider the writer as responding to social stimuli and creating work that reflects the pressures and attitudes of the society in which they live.

Stephen stated that literary form changed as the reading public changed, the argument being that people did not prefer one genre of literature because writers simply began producing it; rather, writers took up that particular style as a reaction to their reading public. He challenged the idea that an understanding of the form and technique of a writer was adequate, claiming that what was needed alongside this was an understanding of *why* the writer was using the style in question. In his view, this knowledge required a wider, more historical and sociological awareness of the period to which the writer in question belonged. The following quotation explains this through an analysis of Pope and his work, a writer Stephen had written at length on, having contributed a biography of him to the English Men of Letters series, an essay on him in to the *Hours in a Library* collection, as well as Pope's entry in the *DNB*:

Some peculiarities of Pope's poetry are set out in every manual upon English literature [...] and it is, of course, necessary to know what were the peculiarities thus indicated and what was the history of their growth and decay. But if it be necessary to know this, it is necessary also to pass beyond this knowledge. Why did he adopt these canons of taste, and why did they so impress his contemporaries? No answer

⁴² "Anon" and "The Reader": Virginia Woolf's Last Essays', ed. by Brenda R. Silver, *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 25, No. 3/4, Virginia Woolf Issue (1979), 356-441 (p. 395) <DOI: 10.2307/441326>

can be suggested from the bare facts themselves; you must feel the relation between the facts and the whole spirit of the time.⁴³

As the quotation makes clear, Stephen did not feel that a knowledge of the technicalities of literature, even with an accompanying knowledge of the history of the changing styles of literature, was sufficient to fully understand and appreciate the texts in question. What was required was an understanding of why these changes had occurred and this could be partly informed by studying the ‘spirit of the time’, an adage adapted from William Hazlitt’s *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), a volume of short character sketches from the early nineteenth century intended to convey a sense of the era.

Thus a further aspect of Stephen’s literary theory is revealed here, for just as he argued that historical knowledge could help inform the study of literature so too did he believe that writers offered a unique insight into the zeitgeist of an era. Woolf referred to this idea in her work too. In her essay, ‘Modes and Manners of the Nineteenth Century’, Woolf asks how the influence of ‘the spirit of the time’ can be measured, concluding that only ‘great artists, giving their minds to nothing else, represent their age’ and thus the ‘poets and novelists are the only people from whom we cannot hide’.⁴⁴ It was therefore in novels, Woolf argued in a later essay, that ‘the thoughts, hopes and lives of women during the century and in the country of her most remarkable development are displayed more intimately and fully than elsewhere.’⁴⁵ Stephen identified this ability of the writer to capture the implicit nature of the people of an era, writing that a ‘true poet is the apostle of a new creed. He reveals hitherto unnoticed aspects of truth or beauty [...]. It is his special prerogative to give form and colour to the latent thoughts and emotions of his time’.⁴⁶

Woolf would include several references to the ‘spirit of the age’ in *Orlando*, and Jane de Gay has argued that this is in order to satirise the concept of periodisation in historical study

⁴³ ‘The Study of English Literature’, p. 88.

⁴⁴ In *Books and Portraits: Some Further Selections from the Literary and Biographical Writings of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), pp. 23-27 (pp. 26-27) (first publ. in *Times Literary Supplement* (February 1910).

⁴⁵ ‘Men and Women’, in *Books and Portraits*, pp. 28-30 (p. 28) (first publ. in *Times Literary Supplement* (March 1920).

⁴⁶ ‘Thoughts on Criticism, by a Critic’, *Men, Books, and Mountains: Essays*, p. 215.

and thus parody Stephen's writing at the same time.⁴⁷ Certainly Woolf was querying the idea of literary history in that novel and this debate over Woolf's use of parody towards her father in *Orlando* will be expounded in full in Chapter 4. The point here, though, is that Woolf treats the concept without any sense of irony in her non-fiction theorising, using it to convey the sense of a writer's ability to capture contemporary thought and feeling.

This connection between the writers of an era and the nature of the society in which they lived formed an important part of Stephen's methodology for explaining the reasons why literary forms and genres changed over time. He was concerned not only with establishing the importance of knowing about the circumstances in which new literary techniques were adopted, but also the problems for literature when its periods of creativity and innovation ebbed away and the need for writers to act upon the prevailing conditions of society as soon as they arose and produce new forms of literature:

If Pope preferred a smooth and monotonous system of verse to the rougher but more varied versification of his predecessors, the fact is to be noted, but not to be assigned as an explanation. The system of Pope was not due to an invention of ten-syllabled couplets, as the change in weaving was due to Arkwright's invention of the spinning-machine. It came when it was wanted.⁴⁸

Stephen's contrast between changing modes of literature and changes in technology is pointed, for he speculates in his theorising as to why literature does not progress in the same way as science does. In science, he argues, a discovered truth remains true and is then built upon; in art, this is not so, for while it 'flourishes' then 'decays' it is without any sense of discernible progress having been made (*English*, 20). Stephen adds that it could be contested that morality has 'decayed' too during times when art does less well, but admits there are no facts to back this up or to explain why this may have happened. Instead, he suggests the reason for this undulating level of quality literature is due to the social conditions of the time:

⁴⁷ De Gay, p. 139.

⁴⁸ 'The Study of English Literature', p. 83.

That is the difference between artistic and scientific progress. A truth once discovered remains true and may form the nucleus of an independently interesting body of truths. But a special form of art flourishes only during a limited period, and when it decays and is succeeded by others, we cannot say that there is necessarily progress, only that for some reason or other the environment has become uncongenial. (*English*, 13)

What is striking about the line of enquiry that Stephen takes here is that it would be also be pursued by his daughter, some fifteen years later in 'Modern Fiction'. The essay was based on 'Modern Novels' (1919), before Woolf revised it under the new title for inclusion in the first volume of the *Common Reader* (1925), and is a significant contribution to Woolf's thesis on modernist literature and, pertinent to this discussion, where she decried the efforts of her literary predecessors in keeping literature relevant and true to life. It is, then, rather an unexpected place to find allusion to Stephen and his Victorian theory, yet it exists here.

Woolf opens her essay by discussing how, whilst it is possible to say that 'Fielding did well and Jane Austen even better', it is much more difficult to claim that literature constantly improves upon itself. Compared to science (Woolf uses the advancement of motor cars in her analogy) where progress has been consistent and verifiable, we cannot say we understand literature any more than we did, and that 'we do not come to write better' (*E4* 157). Woolf's argument is that what may be at the time seen as advancements in literature are, when viewed 'from a sufficiently lofty pinnacle', in actuality changes that take the art in a 'circular tendency' (*E4* 157).

There is an obvious comparison here to Stephen's analysis that literature goes through cyclical periods of superior and inferior quality without any kind of development that can be objectively explained and understood. Stephen remarked on the ebb and flow of literature again:

On [Shakespeare's] death in 1625, Massinger and Ford and other minor luminaries were still at work; but the great period had passed. [...] If in some minor respects there may afterwards have been an advance, the spontaneous vigour had declined

and deliberate attempts to be striking had taken the place of the old audacity.

(*English*, 15)

Stephen draws attention to how writers had endeavoured to arrest the declining standards through ‘deliberate attempts to be striking’, albeit unsuccessfully, and this idea of remaking form and style was integral to Stephen’s and Woolf’s explanation of the means for literary development following fallow periods of writing. Both argued that literature required evolution through new writers and new forms of writing to prevent it from becoming redundant and unrepresentative of the society in which it existed. Woolf’s conclusion to ‘Modern Fiction’ explicitly states that for literature to thrive it should be constantly changed and revitalised, through different forms or methods, or whatever is considered necessary:

And if we can imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us break her and bully her, as well as honour and love her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty assured. (*E4* 164)

Woolf argues that a lack of innovation has caused stagnation in novel writing, and that modern society has progressed to a stage where the traditional novel form is no longer able to represent it accurately. To survive, fiction must be made to progress too, through the efforts of its writers. Stephen stated as much when he wrote how it ‘is only by degrees that the inadequacy of the traditional form makes itself felt, and its successor has to be worked out by a series of tentative experiments’ (*English*, 24). Hill writes that Stephen ‘mandates formal experimentation’ here and observes a parallel between this and ‘Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown’ (1924), in which Woolf states the case for ‘a new genre struggling to assert itself by denouncing and disowning its immediate predecessors’.⁴⁹ Even at the very end of her career, Woolf was drawing attention to this necessary collision between new and old, referring in ‘Anon’ to the same decaying effect of obsolete literature that Stephen had described:

But where the modern writer attacks the actual work of some one of the generation that has just gone, making that book the starting point in another direction, Spensers

⁴⁹ Hill, p. 360.

[sic] revolt was against no particular writer – who was there writing English except Chaucer? – but against language itself, its decay, since Chaucer, its corruption.⁵⁰

The essay is focused in part on the development of literature through the Elizabethan period, and, as will be shown later in this chapter, this was an influential era for Woolf, particularly in the way in which literary change occurred and how its writers were able to write without distraction.

Woolf aired her thoughts on the stagnation of novel writing in a letter to Janet Case in 1925:

The truth is of course that no one for 100 years has given a thought to novels, as they have done to poetry: and now we wake up, suffocated, to find ourselves completely in the dark. But its an interesting age, you'll admit. (*L3* 211)

Woolf's acknowledgment of a lack of quantifiable progress in the knowledge of 'making literature' explains her motivation for developing a wider theory on the need for fiction to evolve in order for it to reflect society (*E4* 157); again, the comparisons with Stephen's theories on literary history and development are evident. His explanation for why literature would go through periods of evolution not only matched Woolf's view on the connection between literature and society, it provided an established theoretical rationale for Woolf's intention to break literary convention in her own era through her experimental writing; using Stephen's terms, Woolf could argue that her work was the flourish that came after the decay.

Perhaps less obvious, though equally important, are the ways in which Woolf differs from Stephen here. Whilst he was ostensibly content to establish and explain these theories, Woolf's views moved her out of the realm of the theoretical and historical and into the world of the practical and the present – she not only expounded that the novel needed to be re-thought for the new world, she was in the process of becoming one of the new thinkers.

⁵⁰ ““Anon” and “The Reader”, p. 390.

There is a clear and identifiable correlation between the theory Woolf wrote about and the way she was developing her own writing style. ‘An Unwritten Novel’, a short story first published in 1920, is a pivotal text in the development of Woolf’s writing style, chronologically and contextually, and so appropriate for an examination of this point. Woolf wrote to Ethel Smyth in 1930, looking back at the significance of the story:

‘The Unwritten Novel’ [sic] was the great discovery ... That – again in one second – showed me how I could embody all my deposit of experience in a shape that fitted it – [...] I saw branching out of the tunnel I made, when I discovered that method of approach, Jacobs Room, Mrs Dalloway, etc. (*L4* 231)

Critics have shared Woolf’s opinion of the text’s importance. Charlotte de Mille argues that this story more than any other allowed Woolf to ‘dip beneath conventional associations that she believed characterized Edwardian fiction’,⁵¹ while Rosalind Brackenbury describes it as ‘a turning point, away from realism’.⁵²

The story uses an extremely simple scenario of a short train journey for Woolf to explore the idea that the external (or material) world was not necessarily a more valid or interesting subject for literature than the abstract and ephemeral world of thoughts and impressions. The dreary realism of Minnie Marsh’s appearance and short conversation is juxtaposed with the narrator’s elaborate ruminations on what her life could be like, and the story ends with the narrator celebrating the opportunities open to the imagination.

‘An Unwritten Novel’ can be considered as Woolf unwriting the traditional novel, a pulling apart of literary conventions from the inside out. The modernist narrator first reports on the traditionally constructed, material character in front of her, written mostly in a prose style that is objective and matter-of-fact: ‘The unhappy woman, leaning a little forward, palely and colourlessly addressed me – talked of stations and holidays, of brothers at

⁵¹ ‘Sudden gleams of (f)light’, in *Creative Writing and Art History*, ed. by Catherine Grant and Patricia Rubin (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). p. 156.

⁵² *Miss Stephen's Apprenticeship: How Virginia Stephen Became Virginia Woolf* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2018), p. 67.

Eastbourne'.⁵³ She then begins to rewrite Minnie, moving the story out of the dull realism of reported facts on the price of eggs, or 'the trivial and the transitory' that characterised the books of Bennett *et. al.*, and into the vivid depths of the internal world (*E4* 158). Woolf's writing changes to match the subject, becoming a stream of consciousness: 'She runs, she rushes, home she reaches, but too late. Neighbours – the doctor – baby brother – the kettle – scalded – hospital – dead – or only the shock of it, blame? Ah, but the detail matters nothing!'⁵⁴ It is hectic and exciting, and the opposite of 'real' Minnie and the far more prosaic manner in which Woolf begins the story. It becomes clear that what is interesting about the train carriage scene is not the external people sitting there but the interior thoughts of the narrator, who is much more the subject of the story than Minnie. This technique of distinguishing between the external and internal, or realism and idealism, through a change in writing style is used in the same way in 'The Mark on the Wall' and shows how Woolf was able to approach philosophical ideas in her writing without disrupting the narrative. A full explanation of this idea and an examination of 'The Mark on the Wall' will be included in the following chapter on philosophy.

Woolf's ideas on form and genre deliberately spill into her fiction here, as she explores those theories discussed in her essays while inside the story itself. There is even a direct crossover between the two, with the narrator of 'An Unwritten Novel' commenting on how 'by degrees the atoms reassemble, the deposit sifts itself, and again through the eyes one sees clear and still'.⁵⁵ The similarities with the following passage from 'Modern Fiction' are striking: 'From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old' (*E4* 160). Arguably, both quotations suggest their texts' shared motive – a rewriting of convention so that at the end, everything has subtly changed. Even the title of Woolf's

⁵³ 'An Unwritten Novel', p. 13.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 21.

short story hints at possible intentions, indicating perhaps that the written novel is not as important as the ability to capture life, even whilst existing as it does as a written story.

‘An Unwritten Novel’ can also be read as Woolf rescuing the female voice whilst challenging patriarchal literary structures, rewriting Minnie's story for her and decrying the failure of literature to provide greater room for female characters in its canon (‘the unborn children of the mind’),⁵⁶ a theme Woolf tackles at length in *A Room of One's Own* and one which creates distance between her critical position and Stephen's. Hermione Lee described the short story as ‘the crucial turning-point between *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*,’ and it is not difficult to see why.⁵⁷ Woolf's story, hand in hand with ‘Modern Fiction’, delivers resonant blows against established literary conventions and represents a culmination of a thought process Woolf had been studiously developing and refining; one with a lineage that can be traced back to Stephen's influence, even if that lineage was required to be broken in order for Woolf to move forwards.

As this analysis illustrates, there is a connection between Woolf's theory and fiction, and therefore, arguably, between Stephen's theory and Woolf's fiction. Woolf's diaries and letters support this point by evidencing a continuous line of thought existing through Woolf's work/thinking. In her diary entry on 26 January, 1920, Woolf wrote the following:

The day after my birthday [...] and happier today than I was yesterday having this afternoon arrived at some idea of a new form for a new novel. Suppose one thing should open out of another – and yet keep form and speed, and enclose everything, everything? For I figure that the approach will be entirely different this time: no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist. The theme is a blank to me. (D2 13-14)

The idea Woolf writes about would eventually develop into *Jacob's Room* (she began work on the book two months after the above diary entry), but there is more that can be gleaned

⁵⁶ ‘An Unwritten Novel’, p. 19.

⁵⁷ *Virginia Woolf*, p. 406.

from the extract. Woolf describes having ‘arrived’ at the idea for a new concept of literary form, indicating a figurative and theoretical journey before that moment. Even the subject of the book is entirely undecided here: Woolf’s satisfaction is based on her having finally progressed her thinking into something tangible that could be used ‘to convey this varying, this unknown spirit’ which she sought to capture in her work and which she observed in ‘Modern Fiction’ (*E4* 160).

In a letter to fellow writer Hope Mirrlees a year after *Jacob’s Room* had been published, Woolf wrote, ‘I don’t feel satisfied that I brought it off. Writing without the old bannisters, one makes jumps and jerks that are not necessary’ (*L3* 03). Woolf is using the same language to define her developing technique, describing a narrative that has no ‘scaffolding’ or ‘bannisters’ to support it; the removal of the patriarchal structures. These thoughts clearly link with the new, freer literature Woolf imagines in ‘Modern Fiction’, where she writes of doing away with structure, avoiding ‘apparatus’, ‘signposts’, and ‘construction’, and instead producing work with ‘no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe’ (*E4* 159-161). They describe the same concepts and show a correlation between the literary theories Woolf discusses in her essays, the ideas she captures in her diaries and letters, and the techniques she employed in her writing. It is also evidence that Woolf’s theorising on literature was of a more sustained line of thinking than perhaps Hill acknowledges in her essay when she writes that Stephen’s theories were ‘ideas that Woolf could call on and use when they suited her theoretical purposes’.⁵⁸ Rather, as the above examples confirm, Woolf drew on her ideas and knowledge of literary theory while experimenting with finding a new style and form for her writing, and is in fact charting her ideas down as a plan in these essays. Through the allusions to her father’s work, Woolf is providing her reasoning with a theoretical legacy, and allows her to maintain a textual dialogue with Stephen in an area both considered of significant importance. Then, as this

⁵⁸ Hill, p. 355.

discussion has shown, Woolf's move into fiction saw her step away from Stephen's influence completely and create her own legacy as a novelist.

Stephen's and Woolf's criteria for change

This chapter has established how Woolf shared Stephen's view of the inextricable link between literature and society, and utilised his theoretical work to support her intention to remake contemporary literature in a way which would reflect modern life more closely. That they shared this conceptual understanding is important, for it not only points to Stephen's influence on something as significant as Woolf's literary style, it suggests a textual dialogue on literary theory between Woolf and Stephen that is positive and equal.

Equally important as acknowledging this conceptual similarity, though, is determining the finer details of the ways in which Stephen's and Woolf's theorising corresponds, for there is a level of complexity, and even contradiction, that exists here. It is in this complexity that Woolf is able to appropriate and redirect Stephen's theory, revealing how Woolf wished to distinguish her work from his, even while maintaining a connection to it. The contradiction lies in the fact that Woolf was alluding to and lauding the writers and literature of past eras whilst championing her own contemporary literary age and seeming to all but dismiss what had gone before. These points will be explained further.

This section discusses how Stephen and Woolf put forward the idea that the literature of an era changes when a development in society coincides with the advent of a writer or writers able to produce a certain kind of literature. Both these criteria will be examined in full detail in the following discussion, but it is useful to define them briefly here. The social development was of the kind that created an environment conducive to writing, so a time of intellectual improvement or general enlightenment, and the writers required the ability to mirror this freedom in their work and write literature that was unencumbered by personal concerns. Woolf described this as writing with a particular 'freedom' of mind; the ability to write prose that was true to itself, removed of extraneous

political or philosophical conjecture and focused on its own narrative and purpose.⁵⁹ Writing in this way and with the appropriate social dynamic as a background, Woolf argued that the literature would reflect the true feeling and sensibilities of the time. Stephen's theory made the same point, describing the writers who could cause a progression in literature as being 'sincere and spontaneous', but equally able to express the 'vital and powerful currents of thought which are moulding society' (*English*, 218).

This distinction between writing without allowing consciousness of social constructions to intrude into the work and yet producing literature that captured what Stephen called the spirit of the age is a fine one, but key to this idea of freedom of mind. If the writer's mind was bent towards airing their opinions on political issues of the time, the writing produced could not truly reflect the zeitgeist, only an individual's specific perspective of a part of it. Furthermore, the writing itself would be damaged by being appropriated as a vehicle for its author's commentary.

What this also provided Woolf with was an opportunity to cast judgement on the merits of an era, for at the same time as she raised doubts over an individual writer's capability she could argue that their failings were in part due to the society's shortcomings. Conversely, as she praised a writer or writers for being able to utilise a freedom of mind in their work, the implication was that the time was ideal for good, innovative literature to be written. This was ideal for Woolf's argument that her own modern era was appropriate for a time for literary evolution: it implied that the writers, and therefore herself, were legitimate pioneers and artists, but also that the twentieth century, her time, was a century for dynamic change.

This section of the chapter will examine how Stephen and Woolf use the same example of literature in the Elizabethan period to illustrate the importance of these criteria, looking particularly at Woolf's concept of writing with a freedom of mind. From here, the

⁵⁹ 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', *Granite and Rainbow*, p. 20.

argument will demonstrate how Woolf broke with Stephen's historical studies and his emphasis on literature produced by men, and applied her own theorising towards the present and the future, and with a new focus on women writers.

As has been established, Stephen believed that literature should be read and understood in context with the time in which it was written, and this idea went hand-in-hand with the premise that literature was representative of the society in which it was composed. Based on the logical assumption that as it was society which chose to popularise a style and type of literature, once that literature stopped reflecting the thoughts, opinions, and predilections of those people, it would naturally fade into obscurity. This central concept of Stephen's theory was built upon the notion that a development or progression in society as a whole would cause a corresponding, and necessary, change to its literature, *if* there were contemporaneous writers with the talent to reflect the changes and society's resulting new ideas and feelings.

At one period in the eighteenth century, these conditions were represented by a general improvement in the rational thought of all strata of social class, prompted, according to Stephen's analysis, by the decreasing intellectual influence of the Church and corresponding rise of a what was the 'socially and politically dominant' class of the period: the learned middle-class (*English*, 54). Well-read, progressive and 'an example of ordered liberty to the whole civilised world', this wave of enlightened thinkers and writers had 'in the intellectual sphere, crushed the old authority which embodied superstition [and] antiquated prejudice' (*English*, 54). At least for the first half of the period in question Dryden had led the literary core of the movement, before Pope took over as 'the chosen representative of the literary spirit', backed by Addison and Swift (*English*, 88). Stephen's criteria are thus met by a general improvement in intellectual standards across society, a group of talented writers capable of channelling this spirit of change into their literature, and a shift in influence from the church to a newly-affluent section of the middle class.

Woolf presents the same fundamental idea of the socially representative nature of literature in her work, as the first part of this chapter has also shown. It exists, for example, as an aspect of the argument made in *A Room of One's Own*, where Woolf indicates how women's writing has been stifled throughout history by a lack of freedom, manifested in the form of the writing produced as well as the quantity. And, where Stephen had looked back at Pope, Addison, and Swift as representative of the innovative writers of the eighteenth century, Woolf argues that a new generation of women writers would develop literature in the twentieth century, as society developed alongside towards a more equal platform for women: 'No doubt we shall find her knocking [the novel] into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her' (*ROO*, 83). What will be argued here is that Stephen and Woolf both identified the same combination of social development and capable and insightful writers needed for literary change in the following example of the literature of the Elizabethan period.

The Elizabethan Dramatists

Stephen and Woolf use the Elizabethan dramatists to illustrate how literature reflected the social conditions in which it is written. It seems inevitable that Woolf read her father's account, not least as she kept *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (in which it appears as an illustration of Stephen's theory) in hers and Leonard's library, with a dedication to her from Stephen in that copy.⁶⁰ In a way, Woolf's use of the same example causes it to act as a *Leitzitate*, as Knauer terms it, an immediately apparent allusion designed to draw attention to a more implicit one; that being in this case Stephen's wider theory on literary development.⁶¹

Stephen states that the 'school of Elizabethan dramatists' acts as an example of how a particular literary style or genre comes into predominance: a timely combination of good

⁶⁰ According to King and Miletic-Vejzovic's *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalog*.

⁶¹ 'Intention and Intertext', p. 103.

writers and a significant development in society. He claimed that during this period there were writers like Shakespeare and Marlowe, ‘a breaking up of the old intellectual stagnation’ and a strong feeling of ‘national spirit’ borne out of the hostilities with Spain, fulfilling all the criteria he considered necessary for this kind of change in the literary world. This idea of a defining change or development to society being the catalyst for literary change is crucial in Stephen’s argument; it could not only spell the beginning of a great period of writing but also the end of one. In the example he uses here, the decline occurred due to the fading influence of the court and its nobility. As the theatre was dependent upon this social group for its patronage, it tended to reflect the beliefs and attitudes that prevailed amongst them. Therefore during the Elizabethan period it was following the sentiment of the popular and most ‘vigorous’ class of society, as Stephen argues it. However, as the popular and vigorous side of society shifted away from the court, the stage (still on the side of its patrons) no longer represented them; this caused the school of Elizabethan dramatists to decline in both standard and relevance, the fate of any literary movement no longer representative of the dominant classes (*English*, 26-30). In ‘Massinger’ (1877), an essay from the *Cornhill* later reprinted in the *Hours in a Library* series, Stephen remarked on how this period of history was notable for the speed in which the predominant literary style rose and then fell, in line with the social upheavals that contributed to that wave of popularity:

Within these narrow limits of time the drama had undergone a change corresponding to the change in the national mood. The difference, for example, between Marlowe and Massinger at the opening and the close of the period though their births were separated by only twenty years corresponds to the difference between the temper of the generation which repelled the Armada and the temper of the generation which fretted under the rule of the first Stuarts.⁶²

As in *English Literature and Society*, Stephen argues for seeing the tone of an era’s literature as reflective of its mood and dependent on the nature of its writers: each was an interlinked factor. This is demonstrated again in his concluding point on the literature of the

⁶² *Hours in a Library: Vol. II*, p. 339.

Elizabethan period, as Stephen argues against what he considers to be a commonly-held belief that the Puritan movement, influential amongst the Parliamentary party of the time, caused the decline of theatre. Instead he argues that it was already long in a state of ‘decay’ due to no longer representing ‘the great bulk of the nation’, something that had happened before the Puritans had even a chance to suppress it (*English*, 57). It thus encapsulates Stephen’s argument: literary genre does not vary in its popularity due to some deliberate external influence attempting to force change, but simply because it no longer reflects the social conditions of its time and the demands of its audience.

Woolf wrote about the Elizabethan era frequently in her work, including in *Orlando* and *A Room of One’s Own*. In ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, Woolf theorises on how the art and literature of that period reflected the conditions of the time, arguing that sociological factors determined the form of its popular literature. As towns were small and the distance between them long, and with education being generally poor, it was ‘natural for the Elizabethan imagination to fill itself with lions and unicorns, dukes and duchesses, violence and mystery’.⁶³ As it was able to represent these themes, extravagant and ingenious drama was the most popular genre of literature. Furthermore, they had a group of talented writers who recognised this and were able to write accordingly:

Shakespeare’s plays are not the work of a baffled and frustrated mind; they are the perfectly elastic envelope of his thought. Without a hitch he turns from philosophy to a drunken brawl; from love songs to an argument; from simple merriment to profound speculation.⁶⁴

Woolf’s deliberation on this period of history and literature is reminiscent of Stephen’s in the way in which she draws together sociological requirements which she considers necessary for a period of great literature. Indeed, when looking at this essay alongside other texts where Woolf considers the question of literary change, the requirements she recognises arguably match those that Stephen set down: a generation of writers able to produce the new

⁶³ In *Granite and Rainbow*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

forms or genres of literature, and in a way that reflected the mood of the time, and a development in society that encouraged its writers to write freely and without restriction.

Freedom of Mind

In 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', Woolf carefully draws out a characteristic of the Elizabethan dramatists writing that she believed elevated their work, and which, crucially, caused it to reflect the life of society around them: the ability to 'express themselves freely and fully', removed of self-consciousness and so nothing is 'hindering, hampering, inhibiting the full current of their minds'.⁶⁵ Succinctly described by Woolf as writing with a freedom of mind, it can be considered as the aptitude of a writer in being able to ignore intrusions due to personal beliefs or grievances, something that would disrupt the 'integrity' of a narrative, and instead convey life as they saw it in life and in society.⁶⁶ In his description of writers able to revive and remake literature, Stephen defines an approach entirely comparable to the one Woolf presents:

The artist is a realist so far as he deals with the actual life and the genuine beliefs of his time; but he is an idealist so far as he sees the most essential facts and utters the deepest and most permanent truths in his own dialect. His work should be true to life and give the essence of actual human nature, and also express emotions and thoughts common to the men of all times. (*English*, 167-68)

Stephen remarks on the capacity of such writers to write of the timelessness of human nature but also, in doing so, offer literature that resonates with the period in which it was written. This was a crucial aspect of the concept for Woolf, and it related back to Stephen's argument that it was just this particular kind of writer who was able to capture the spirit of the age in their work during a time of social progression and cause literature to evolve. For example, it corresponds to his observation, referred to earlier, of how Pope et al wrote in a way that reflected their enlightened way of thinking and position as the vanguard of a larger

⁶⁵ *Granite and Rainbow*, p. 14.

⁶⁶ Woolf uses this term frequently, but the following short quotation shows it in use: 'What one means by integrity, in the case of the novelist, is the conviction that he gives one that this is the truth' (*ROO*, 79).

movement in eighteenth-century society of improved reasoned thought. Of Pope, Stephen wrote: ‘He transmutes as well as creates. He utters his own thoughts, but he is also the organ through which the spirit of the age utters its thoughts’.⁶⁷ Stephen points out that Pope benefited from living in a time when conditions had changed in a way as to make them ideal for producing literature, and had the talent to realise this potential through the innovation of his writing form and the integrity of its content.

This concept of the freedom of mind had an added significance to Woolf as it identified an approach to writing that she believed ‘to be present in most of the great ages of literature’,⁶⁸ and which, in ‘Modern Fiction’, she attributed to herself and her modernist contemporaries, specifically Joyce but ‘the work of several young writers’ alongside him (*E4* 161). This distinguished them from more traditional writers of the time, like Bennett, and drew attention to their innovation and determination to remake literature, as well as connecting them with the Elizabethan writers her and Stephen had studied. This contradiction, of creating a deliberate association with the literary past whilst at the same time championing new, modern literature, is typical of Woolf’s attempts to reconcile these two opposing positions. Typical also of Woolf is that the contradiction is not a reason to forgo either, and she maintains this flexible approach when writing of Stephen as both contemporary and obsolete.

Here, on her contemplations on the freedom of the mind, Woolf argued that this way of writing set writers like Shakespeare and Marlowe apart from generations of writers that came before and after, and, as Stephen had argued in his theorising, had provided the vital criteria for ensuring that the era’s literature evolved to something new and reflective of its milieu. What Woolf would do next, in *A Room of One’s Own*, was to appropriate Stephen’s model of literary development and re-direct it, explaining not literature’s history but its present and its future.

⁶⁷ ‘The Study of English Literature’, p. 84.

⁶⁸ ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, p. 14.

First, though, Woolf wanted to establish how this ability to ignore personal circumstances and write freely and with integrity was not something all writers possessed, even ones as great as Charlotte Brontë, and at the same time comment on the suitability of an era towards free-thinking literature, in this case the Victorian period. Woolf is therefore utilising her theory on literary development *and* holding up Victorian society as an example of a less-than-ideal environment for literary creativity, and in doing so advancing the claims of her own era as far more suitable in contrast.

Brontë is used by Woolf as the perfect example of a writer unable to access the freedom of mind she describes, and, in *A Room of One's Own*, argues that Brontë's natural talent as a novelist is waylaid by her personal anger towards the patriarchal limitations that surrounded her. Giving the monologue on freedom and equality from *Jane Eyre* (1847) as an example, Woolf states that, accomplished a piece of prose as it is, it takes the reader out of the narrative.⁶⁹ Instead of hearing Jane's thoughts, they are temporarily reading the author's, for 'anger was tampering with the integrity of Charlotte Brontë the novelist'. Woolf continues:

She left her story, to which her entire devotion was due, to attend to some personal grievance. She remembered that she had been starved of her proper due of experience – she had been made to stagnate in a parsonage mending stockings when she wanted to wander free over the world. Her imagination swerved from indignation and we feel it swerve. (*ROO*, 80)

Woolf is arguing that this was a case of a writer's freedom of thought being interrupted by a specific consciousness of the world around them. In this instance, it was a consciousness of gender inequality that prevented Brontë from writing a novel with complete honesty, for she was not able to prevent the distractions she felt due to that injustice from becoming involved in the narrative. Stephen identified this same aspect of Charlotte Brontë's writing, stating that her personality and opinions were expressed through the characters in her work:

⁶⁹ *Jane Eyre* (1847; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 1999), pp.94-95.

We may infer her personality more or less accurately from the mode in which she contemplates her neighbours, but it is directly manifested in various avatars of her own spirit. Among the characters who are more or less mouthpieces of her peculiar sentiment we may reckon not only Lucy Snowe and Jane Eyre, but, to some extent, Shirley, and, even more decidedly, Rochester. When they speak we are really listening to her own voice.⁷⁰

Stephen is making the same point as Woolf here: that Brontë's work imitates her own experiences and reflects her personal feelings, and both state in their respective essays that this is a consequence of Brontë having lived a limited and often solitary life. Woolf writes that because of this, despite Brontë's genius, her 'books will be deformed and twisted. She will write in a rage where she should write calmly. She will write foolishly where she should write wisely. She will write of herself where she should write of her characters' (*ROO*, 77). Stephen writes of this restriction on Brontë in a comparable way:

There is a certain feverish disquiet which is marked by the peculiar mannerism of the style. At its best, we have admirable flashes of vivid expression, where the material of language is the incarnation of keen intuitive thought. At its worst, it is strangely contorted, crowded by rather awkward personifications.⁷¹

Both Stephen and Woolf note Brontë's anger and remark on how the restrictions on her life manifested as a restricting element in her writing, illustrating how a writer's social environment impacted upon the literature they composed and how that literature offered an insight into that world. This demonstrates their different perspectives on the gendered political implications of Brontë's lack of freedom, where Woolf argues this infiltration of real life hinders her writing, Stephen is in praise of it:

The amazing vividness of her portrait-painting is the quality which more than any other makes her work unique amongst modern fiction. Her realism is something peculiar to herself; only the crudest of critics could depreciate its merits on the ground of fidelity to facts.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Hours in a Library: Vol. III*, p. 23.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 26.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 8.

Though Stephen and Woolf both comment on this aspect of Brontë's writing and trace it back to the same sociological reason, only Woolf is able to follow the line of causality further and identify the gendered social and political pressures that caused Brontë's limited circumstances and experience. Stephen either ignores or does not see the link, an oversight he repeated in his ethical treatise, *Social Rights and Duties*. In both cases, Woolf withholds explicit criticism of Stephen; instead, she creates distance from his critical perspective by engaging with gender inequality in a way he had not. This point will be discussed further in reference to *Social Rights and Duties* and Woolf's and Stephen's ethical positions in Chapter 3.

Woolf also explored her argument on freedom of mind from the point of view of social class in her 'The Leaning Tower' essay, in which she argues that the Auden generation of poets in the 1930s became aware of the 'hedges' separating themselves from the other, mainly lower classes.⁷³ This class-consciousness invaded their writing in the same way as Woolf argued gender-consciousness had done to Charlotte Brontë's, causing the integrity of their writing to be checked. Natania Rosenfeld writes that: 'Woolf insists that they write too self-consciously. [...] The writer is making a point of himself, making a point of his point'.⁷⁴ In fact, Woolf goes further still in her criticism, describing their books as full of 'discord and bitterness' due to this inability to write freely, and the writers themselves as being unable to produce literature of the standard that had preceded them (*E6* 269). The Thirties poets work exemplified Woolf's careful distinction between writing in a way which resonated with the feeling of the period and permitting personal speculation on that period to interfere with the integrity of the text. From her point of view, consciousness of politics had infiltrated their poetry, causing it to reflect the egos of the poets rather than their society.

⁷³ The Auden generation was a group of British and Irish poets, including W.H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Cecil Day-Lewis, Stephen Spender, and Christopher Isherwood.

⁷⁴ 'Monstrous Conjugations: Images of the Dictatorship in the Anti-Fascist Writings of Virginia and Leonard Woolf', in *Virginia Woolf and Fascism: Resisting the Dictators' Seduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 122-136 (pp. 127-28).

In making these criticisms of the Thirties poets, Woolf is moving her concept of freedom of mind and the corresponding literary theory out of historical study and into an analysis of modern-day literature. By doing this, Woolf was able to add to the argument discussed in the previous section of this chapter, that she was part of a changing literary movement, and begin to separate her theorising from her father's. Stephen remained only a historian on the subject of literature, whilst Woolf was looking forwards.

Theorising forwards

Woolf had alluded to the nature of freedom of mind earlier, in 'Modern Fiction', when she wrote of the modernist writers, 'among whom Mr James Joyce is the most notable', and of their ability to write with the 'utmost sincerity' (*E4* 161). She describes the process further in *A Room of One's Own*: 'The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace' (*ROO*, 101). It is this freedom of thought, most noticeable in writers and artists but also true of the majority of the society that produced them, that is comparable to the intellectual progression that Stephen describes when he writes of how:

new intellectual horizons seemed to be suddenly opening upon the human intelligence; as when Bacon was taking his Pisgah sight of the promised land of science, and Shakespeare and Spenser were making new conquests in the world of the poetic imagination. (*English*, 13-14)

Woolf and Stephen are making the same argument about literature and how its form, style, and genre are determined by the characteristics and demands of the public for whom it is written. As Hill notes, Woolf is considering the 'same set of forces' to be at work as Stephen did when a change was occurring in the literary landscape.⁷⁵ They both write generally about the requirement for literature to change as society changes, and more specifically on how this had occurred in the past, as has been shown. Woolf, though, is now applying those ideas on literary progression to a contemporary era, separating her theorising from Stephen's and

⁷⁵ Hill, p. 355.

ensuring her work is concerned with the twentieth century and writers missing from her father's histories.

In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf does this exactly, adopting Stephen's rationale for understanding literary change but employing it to an account of the history of women's writing, something that his *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* had failed to do. Woolf writes at length on the role of women in literature and how greater gender equality in society would effect a change in literature. Describing the period when women started to be able to earn money through writing, Woolf writes of the impact she felt this change had:

Thus, towards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. (*ROO*, 82)

For once this watershed moment had passed, it would allow women to write with a freedom of mind that was guaranteed by the security of health, finance, and independence, and therefore able to create literature that was unconscious of external factors:

There is no reason to think that the form of the epic or of the poetic play suit a woman any more than the sentence suits her. [...] Yet who shall say that even now 'the novel' (I give it inverted commas to mark my sense of the words' inadequacy), who shall say that even this most pliable of all forms is rightly shaped for her use? No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her. (*ROO*, 82-83)

Woolf is talking about the way she sees literature changing to a form and style created by women and with the potential to adapt to how society is changing, thereby providing a more accurate method of writing about life as it is. As gender inequalities in present-day society continue to be addressed, and both writers and the reading public become similarly equal, modern literature will change to meet the demands of its evolving audience. Woolf concludes her essay by encouraging her female audience to 'write all kinds of books,

hesitating at no subject however trivial or however vast', for doing so will 'certainly profit the art of fiction', recalling Stephen's belief that literary change required writers willing to challenge convention and experiment with literature (*ROO*, 104). Woolf's argument was that modern writing needed to develop if it was to keep pace with the demands of the modern world, and there is a sense from her rallying cries that it was within a new generation of women that the writers able to express this world through their novels and literature could be found.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf describes developments in literature as transpiring for the same reasons and in the same way as Stephen reasoned they had done in the past. Woolf is adopting Stephen's model but adapting it to suit her own purposes, a technique of appropriation and allusion she frequently employs when engaging in the textual dialogue with her father. In this case, Woolf uses Stephen's literary theory as a valuable method for explaining a period of literary history that she demanded be explained, whilst simultaneously pointing out the void in Stephen's own studies by using his approach to fill it, and in a way that looks forward much more than Stephen's theorising had done.

Woolf's introductory paragraph to 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' could quite arguably be criticism aimed exactly at Stephen and his type of historical work:

Far the greater number of critics turn their backs upon the present and gaze steadily into the past. [...] But one has sometimes asked oneself, must the duty of the critic always be to the past, must his gaze always be fixed backwards? Could he not sometimes turn round and, shading his eyes in the manner of Robinson Crusoe on the desert island, look into the future and trace on the mist the faint lines of the land which some day perhaps we may reach?⁷⁶

The above passage contains a connection to Stephen, via the reference to Robinson Crusoe and with it Daniel Defoe. In *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Stephen writes of the 'the inimitable *Robinson Crusoe*' and of the notable change in the wants of the reading public that Defoe and his book demonstrated when it was first

⁷⁶ 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', p.11.

published, away from Pope's highbrow style of literature and towards Defoe's 'straightforward narrative' (*English*, 134, 136).⁷⁷ Indeed, Defoe and his novel are central to Stephen's analysis of this crucial period of literary change, and easy to consider as representative of Stephen and his theory. Is it therefore entirely possible Woolf is directly referencing her father here, but not only with her allusion to *Robinson Crusoe*. Woolf wanted more from critics, asking whether it was not in fact their duty to help guide the future of literature, not merely to provide accounts such as the aforementioned *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, with its historical explanations of the impact of writers such as Defoe. Just as Woolf moves away from Stephen's theoretical work by turning her hand to the practical matter of writing novels, she also progresses on from his theories by applying them to the present and to the future, just as she says critics ought to do.

Both Stephen and Woolf wrote about Defoe and he is placed in a significant position on the intertextual net, but not just because they write about his ideas and texts in the same way.⁷⁸ Woolf alludes to Stephen's deliberations on Defoe when she writes of him and their texts form a dialogue; when they both write of how Defoe's fiction is, in a way, true, there is a tacit agreement between them. Here, though, Woolf uses the dialogue to signal a disagreement and a separation of her ideas from Stephen's.

Conclusion

Woolf's implicit argument that Stephen's literary theory is used to explain history rather than predict what would and should happen to literature in the present and the future has the effect of helping to characterise Stephen as not only concerned with the past but part of it too. As the previous chapter has shown, this version of Stephen as the old-fashioned Victorian academic is perhaps predominant in Woolfian criticism, not least due to Woolf's own efforts that often portray him in this way. The mere existence of Woolf's novels

⁷⁷ Stephen had made a similar contrast between Pope and Defoe, in his essay 'De Foe's Novels' (*Hours in a Library*, Vol. I, p. 29).

⁷⁸ Both Stephen and Woolf wrote about Defoe in terms of his tendency to disregard distinctions of fact and fiction in his novels, something which will be covered in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

separate her from Stephen; as the discussion through this chapter has confirmed, the fact that she moved on from theorising on literature to producing it creates a distance between her and Stephen, who remained only in the theoretical world. What is more, in this section of their dialogue Woolf was not just Stephen's peer – she was his superior.

Yet Stephen also exists here as a hugely positive influence, too. It is evident that Woolf forwarded the same argument on the socially representative nature of literature as he had made, an argument that distinguished Stephen amongst contemporary Victorian critics. Stephen's influence is there and deliberately pointed out to the reader by Woolf by her use of the same approach and even the same examples. This is Woolf consciously holding onto Stephen's legacy even whilst stipulating for a modern approach to the novel, bringing her father's presence into a twentieth-century debate and into contemporary consciousness. If Woolf appears contradictory in her approach to Stephen here, preserving his ideas in her text at the same time as she rejects his influence, this is because she often was. What will be explored as an ongoing point in this thesis is that Woolf did not intend to resolve this contradiction or be troubled by it; rather, she encouraged it as a way of recording the different ways in which she related to her father and his work.

A final point to be taken from Stephen's literary theory is in his description in *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* of how an artist needed to write for his contemporary audience but also write of essential human nature:

The artist is a realist so far as he deals with the actual life and the genuine beliefs of his time; but he is an idealist so far as he sees the most essential facts and utters the deepest and most permanent truths in his own dialect. His work should be true to life and give the essence of actual human nature, and also express emotions and thoughts common to the men of all times. (*English*, 167-68)

Stephen is drawing the distinction discussed in this chapter of writing with a freedom of mind and thus reflecting the era in which it was produced. What is notable besides this is that Stephen distinguishes between realism and idealism in this explanation, separating the

concepts of external and internal experience. These ideas were integral to Stephen's empiricism and the way in which Woolf wrote about philosophy, as the following chapter will reveal.

Chapter 3: Philosophy: English Utilitarians and Kitchen Tables

By that time, too, he had written the *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, which is said by some to be his masterpiece; and the *Science of Ethics* – the book which interested him most; and *The Playground of Europe*, in which is to be found ‘The Sunset on Mont Blanc’ – in his opinion the best thing he ever wrote. (E5 585)

In the above quotation from Woolf’s essay on Stephen, she writes of her father’s most significant contributions to the field of philosophy: *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) and *The Science of Ethics* (1882). What is intriguing is the way in which Woolf writes of the texts; in both cases, Woolf includes a judgement on their relative success while carefully avoiding making such a statement herself. That *History of English Thought* was Stephen’s masterpiece is ‘said by some,’ but not by Woolf and nor is her opinion upon it discussed here. Similarly, *The Science of Ethics* is declared to be Stephen’s most interesting book in the view of Stephen himself – the level of interest it provoked in Woolf is, again, not a matter for record. This deliberate detachment creates a space not only between Woolf and Stephen, but also between Woolf the modernist writer and these nineteenth-century philosophical tomes. This separation from Stephen and his work is shown again when Woolf writes in her diary on 28 November 1928 of her intention to, at some future point, read her father’s work (‘I must read him some day’ (D3 208)); the pointed implication being that she has not yet done so. As the previous two chapters have shown, the intertextual links that exist between Woolf’s work and Stephen’s demonstrate that she had read at least parts of his oeuvre before this chronicled remark was made. This chapter will argue that this intertextuality continued into the realm of the philosophical, despite Woolf’s apparent disinterest in Stephen’s work evident in the quotation above.

It is worth noting here that, according to King and Miletic-Vejzovic’s *The Library of Virginia and Leonard Woolf*, the Woolfs kept two copies of the first-edition volumes of *History of English Thought*: one copy complete with notes and annotations made by

Stephen, and a copy of the third edition print of the book. They also had all three volumes of *The English Utilitarians*, two copies of *The Science of Ethics*, and both volumes of *Social Rights and Duties*. Woolf's ownership of these books by Stephen indicate that at the very least she felt an affection or respect towards them; it will be argued here that even more than this, Woolf had an ongoing interest in the content.

Philosophical Theories

The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf

Woolf only once explicitly refers to subscribing to a philosophy, in 'A Sketch of the Past', as she describes an aspect of the 'moments of being' that formed an essential part of her writing:

From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of that work of art. (*MoB*, 84)

As Erwin R. Steinberg correctly points out, this is actually closer to a concept or an idea than what may be labelled philosophy.¹ Yet this absence of an unequivocal adherence to a particular philosophy or philosopher does not mean Woolf avoided the subject entirely, rather that her contemplations were embedded within her writing rather than captured in a dedicated philosophical text. An acknowledgement of Woolf's method is key to understanding the way in which she wrote about philosophical ideas, and so this technique will be explained further during this chapter.

Steinberg makes two more assertions regarding Woolf and philosophy which, although slightly less accurate than the previous comment, do lead on to points of significant interest for this chapter. First, Steinberg claims that Woolf had 'an inability to grapple with

¹ 'G. E. Moore's Table and Chair in "To the Lighthouse"', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1988), 161-168 (p. 162) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831540>> [Accessed on 10 October 2016].

many of the basic concepts of philosophy,' a conclusion formed from his interpretation of Woolf's diary entries relating to 'the difficulty she was having reading [G.E.] Moore's *Principia Ethica*':

Woolf notes she is not as impressed with 'the moral eminence of Moore' as her husband and others are; and two years after that she notes, again in her diary, that she is 'too fuddled' to follow Moore's attempt to explain Berkeley to her.²

Steinberg adds that 'this is not to deprecate Woolf; being able to follow Moore's explanation of Berkeley's idealism, for example, is not necessarily a test of intelligence', but he is mistaken in both the original point regarding Woolf's knowledge of philosophy generally and in this additional remark on her understanding specifically of Berkeley.³ On the latter, apart from the fact that the quotation has been misconstrued, it will be argued in this chapter that Woolf demonstrates a clear understanding of idealism and arguably a certain affinity towards it, while the following quotation from her essay on 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son' provides proof of Woolf's knowledge of Berkeley and his theories:

Lord Chesterfield, though he was polite to everything, even to the stars and Bishop Berkeley's philosophy, firmly refused, as became a son of his age, to dally with infinity or to suppose that things are not quite as solid as they seem. The world was good enough and the world was big enough as it was. This prosaic temper, while it keeps him within the bounds of impeccable common sense, limits his outlook. (*CR2*, 83)

The reference is fleeting but precise enough to make it clear that Woolf knew and understood enough of Berkeley's empirical idealism to be able to use it as a means for describing Lord Chesterfield's character: he was a sensible and straightforward man, but limited in his perspective on the world. Berkeley on the other hand explained the reality of the world with an abstract concept, believing that nothing existed outside of experience, and so for whom 'things are not quite as solid as they seem' – the perfect juxtaposition for Woolf

² Steinberg, p. 163.

³ Woolf actually writes that she is 'too muddled' rather than 'too fuddled', and this is due rather more to a disturbed night's sleep than it is to any issue with the complexity of Berkeley's theories. See page 157 of this chapter for the full quotation and discussion.

to use against Chesterfield's 'prosaic temper'. A demonstration of Woolf's method of considering philosophical ideas in her work is thus provided here: through this character study of Lord Chesterfield, an explanation of idealism is brought to the fore, and in the language of the 'common reader' rather than the university academic. This style of implicit philosophical discussion also works as an example of how Anne Fernald describes Woolf's intertextuality in her discussion of how Woolf's allusions are more subtle and deliberately less celebrated than those of her male contemporaries, Joyce and Eliot, instead appearing as 'Woolf's gift to the text itself, a secret fount of pleasure'.⁴ Fernald's convincing argument proves a distinct likeness in the ways in which Woolf chooses to write philosophically and intertextually, with a tendency towards the understated clear in both.

Returning to Steinberg's first claim, that Woolf was unable 'to grapple with many of the basic concepts of philosophy,' not only will it be shown in the following pages that she dealt with more than just the basic concepts of the discipline, the method and direction of her philosophical insights will also be considered and clarified. For there is more of the philosophic in Woolf's writing than might perhaps be thought. While *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are texts in which Woolf is clear in her aim of asking important ethical questions, her fiction explores questions of ethics and epistemology in a way that is less immediately apparent. As in the previously quoted passage from 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son', they are carefully introduced into the narrative without drawing direct attention to this involvement or allowing their presence to disrupt the evenness of the text. This methodology of Woolf's – to subtly infuse philosophic ideas into her fiction removed of the trappings of formal academic language – is an essential aspect of her writings on thought, and will be one of the focuses of this chapter. The following quotation from Woolf, commenting on George Meredith, helps explain this position further:

[W]hen philosophy is not consumed in a novel, when we can underline this phrase with a pencil, and cut out that exhortation with a pair of scissors and paste the whole

⁴ 'Woolf and Intertextuality', in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, ed. by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 52-64 (p. 60).

into a system, it is safe to say that there is something wrong with the philosophy or with the novel or with both. (CR2, 225)

Just as Woolf criticised Charlotte Brontë for allowing what she believed to be the writer's own feminist voice to penetrate the narrative of *Jane Eyre*, Woolf charged George Meredith with the same regarding his philosophy. As shown in the previous chapter, she made a similar criticism of the poets of the 1930s in 'The Leaning Tower', arguing that in their attempts to disseminate political ideas through their art, they had been unsuccessful in producing worthwhile poetry (E6 268-69). This failure to maintain the integrity of her art was not something that Woolf intended to be accused of herself.

This chapter will scrutinise the influence of Stephen's philosophical writings upon Woolf, with the intention of examining how she represented her father's ideas on philosophy in her own work, and arguing that Woolf does not do this in order simply to reject Stephen and his philosophy, but that she plays out a rather more complex reaction to these theories in her texts. There are instances, specifically in the ethical works, where Woolf does move away from Stephen's ideas in order to develop them for herself and in line with her own twentieth-century reasoning, and the resulting effect is to position Stephen as an old Victorian patriarch. *Three Guineas* is the most obvious case of this. Yet at other times Woolf's work connects far more positively with her father's, highlighting his influence on her philosophical ideas.

In Woolf's work that deals with epistemology, her tendencies, perhaps surprisingly, are often towards Stephen's empiricism, with clear allusions to his texts and ideas on the subject. Woolf writes of Hume and Berkeley and their theories, taking a particular interest in Berkeley's empirical idealism (as has been mentioned previously), but nevertheless rejects both on the same grounds that Stephen found them to be at fault – in Hume's ultimate scepticism and Berkeley's reliance on God. Where Woolf splits from her father here is with the approach for discussing these philosophical notions. Whereas Stephen's works are

immersed in the style and theory of academia, Woolf deals with these ideas more organically, within and as part of her narratives.

In order to best assess and understand this relationship between the philosophical writings of Stephen and the work by Woolf which engaged with philosophical themes, the chapter will be split into two parts: the main section will be focused on epistemology, with a shorter section following on ethics. These are the areas of philosophical thought that receive the most attention from Woolf in her work and so provide the greatest opportunity for relevant analysis. By splitting the two, a distinction can be made between the works Woolf produced which involved concepts of epistemology, marked by the deliberately ambiguous style she used for approaching these more abstract ideas ('The Mark on the Wall', 'Modern Fiction', and *To the Lighthouse* are examples of these which will be focussed upon in this chapter), and those that dealt with questions of ethics and which dealt with ethical issues more directly, and thus with an ostensibly more obvious link to Stephen (*A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* will be looked at in particular).

The chapter will examine intertextual links between Stephen's philosophical texts and Woolf's fiction and essays: these links will show that there is a very firm connection between her modernist work and the Victorian philosophy of her father. The concept of an intertextual net is particularly helpful here in understanding Woolf's method of alluding to different texts and writers. Specific instances will be discussed in detail as the chapter proceeds, but it is useful to the discussion here to keep in mind the idea of a net spreading outwards from Woolf's text and catching in it different texts relevant to her purpose, each separated by varying degrees. For example, it has been argued that Woolf also reflects upon the work of G. E. Moore, a contemporary twentieth-century writer and a fellow member of the Bloomsbury Group, in her philosophical work. While this chapter will argue that if she does so it is in a manner which places that work in a subordinate position to those contemplations she makes upon Stephen's ideas, it is still possible to see Moore's work existing in the net but further out from where her father's texts sit. This positioning in itself reveals something

of Woolf's attitude towards Stephen, Moore, and the relative qualities of their philosophies. S.P. Rosenbaum and Steinberg have both made arguments for Moore having had a greater degree of influence than this upon Woolf's work, primarily through his text *Principia Ethica* (1903) which Woolf read and discussed in her letters and diaries and which appears in *The Voyage Out*. The level of significance that Moore actually had upon Woolf's thoughts will be given full consideration in this chapter, and with it his corresponding importance in her intertextual net.

This chapter will also contend that there is an analogous relationship between Woolf's considerations of Stephen's philosophy and the Victorian-modern debate she invokes throughout much of her writing. To elaborate briefly, this argument will show that Woolf rejects Moore's modernist philosophy and finds more in common with Stephen's Victorian philosophy and the philosophies he wrote about. Her thoughts on epistemology, revealed in the main through her fiction, lean towards either an empirical scepticism or an empirical idealism and regularly find critical fault with Moore's more modern philosophical realism. Where Woolf disengages with Stephen, and simultaneously the Victorian influence, is on ethical matters – both in terms of how philosophy as a subject remained the exclusive territory of male academics, and from a practical point of view: Woolf's normative ethics were regularly presented in opposition to the vestiges of patriarchal Victorian influence. Tellingly, Woolf does not necessarily find Moore, as a twentieth-century philosopher and academic, representative of the antidote to the Victorian era's failings on either point. A consideration of the philosophies of Stephen and Moore, respectively, will provide evidence towards these claims.

The Philosophy of Leslie Stephen

It is more to the purpose that I was a liberal after the fashion of those days: a follower of J.S. Mill, like Fawcett, and, unlike Fawcett, a reader of Mill's *Logic* as well as of his *Political Economy*. I read a little philosophy – Kant, Hamilton, etc. –

and was supposed at Cambridge, where the standard was very low, to know something about it. I read Comte, too. (*MBk*, 6)

Stephen, despite the comment above, had in fact read a considerable number of works besides those of Mill, Kant, Hamilton, and Comte as his notebooks from the time reveal (*LL*, 73), but he was undoubtedly drawn to Mill and the appeal of empiricism. Stephen's generation of Cambridge scholars also produced Henry Sidgwick, a follower of Mill and a distinguished philosopher in his time. He and Stephen were life-long friends, fellow members of the Metaphysical Club, and occasional jousting partners in the world of ethical debate. In the following extract from a letter to Sidgwick, on the instance of their most public of disputes, another of Stephen's major influences is revealed:

The fact is that I consider myself to have learnt very much from Comte, and I take a higher estimate of him than most people do, especially the scientific people who object to his religion. I only think that evolutionists have made his theory workable and have brought it into a quasi-scientific state more thoroughly than he could do. But I agree that much of my morality is contained in his. (*LL*, 352)

This was written following the publication of Stephen's *The Science of Ethics* and shows Stephen defending his position against Sidgwick's charge that Auguste Comte had not been given sufficient credit in the text. The question arises as to why the influence of this French philosopher was great enough on both Stephen and Sidgwick for it to be a matter of contention between the two.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was a French philosopher whose work had introduced modern positivism. From an epistemological point of view it was a form of empiricism in that it stated all knowledge to be verifiable only by appeal to experience; the only form of positive knowledge was therefore observable phenomena. What distinguished Comte's doctrine was its explanation of humanity's evolution as happening across three stages of development, termed the law of the three stages: these were the theological stage, the metaphysical stage, and the positive stage. In the first stage, humans believed all knowledge of the universe to be explained by the existence of some form of deity or deities, be they

physical or supernatural, and its/their deliberate actions. The second stage saw the explanation to be in terms of abstract concepts, or ‘realized abstractions’ as Mill termed it in his book on Comte and his theories:

In this stage it is no longer a god that causes and directs each of the various agencies of nature: it is a power, or a force, or an occult quality, considered as real existences, inherent in but distinct from the concrete bodies in which they reside, and which they in a manner animate.⁵

In the final stage, these forces and concepts were replaced by the results of scientific inquiry, and more importantly so too was the overarching desire to discover explanations for such phenomena replaced by that method of scientific inquiry. In this positive stage, theories would be put forward to be scientifically tested and considered, in an attempt to discover the fundamental laws governing all phenomena, rather than seeking out absolute explanations based on a concept of cause and effect.

Besides the law of the three stages, Comte’s positivism also heralded a classification of the sciences: this system placed all branches of science into a hierarchy, based upon the increasing level of complexity of the phenomena involved in each discipline. The laws governing each level of science supported the laws above it. At the top sat Comte’s new science of ‘Sociology, or the Social Science, the phaenomena of which depend on, and cannot be understood without, the principal truths of all the other sciences’.⁶

Comte’s six volumes of *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830-42) were abridged and translated into English by Harriet Martineau and published as *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (1853). It was, though, primarily through Mill’s *System of Logic* (1843) that Comte’s positivism found itself disseminated amongst the philosophically-minded students of the English universities. Mark Francis writes that ‘Comte’s ideas were scarcely modified

⁵ *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1891), pp. 10-11.

⁶ Mill, *Auguste Comte*, p. 39.

in the form in which they appeared in Mill's *System of Logic*,⁷ with Annan adding that Mill himself declared 'his inverse deductive method in the *Logic* [to be] derived from Comte (p. 193).' The two philosophers began a friendship in November 1841, when Mill wrote to his French counterpart to commend him upon the *Cours* and acknowledge the influence he felt Comte had had upon his own work. Comte replied in similarly flattering words, assuring Mill that his 'scrupulous modesty' had caused him to 'overemphasise' this influence.⁸ Their correspondence continued regularly until 1847 and a rather acrimonious parting of the ways, instigated by Mill after a number of disagreements between the two over political economy, psychology, and the social status of women. Despite this, Comte had, via Mill's patronage, come to the attention of Cambridge and both Stephen and Sidgwick.

Stephen recounts an anecdote in a letter to Minny dated 26 December, 1866, during the time of a visit back to Cambridge, which reveals almost incidentally how Comte and his ideas were on Stephen's mind.⁹ The story is of a conversation between Stephen and three dons (Percival, L. Smith, and Wolstenholme) in 'the halls' at Cambridge, which leads onto the future of religion. Stephen suggests that 'perhaps we shall be followers of Comte & worship our grandmothers or Humanity.' Wolstenholme responds that he doesn't 'think that will come off'; Stephen agrees but says that 'there must be some sort of religion in the future; and [illegible]¹⁰ as theology will clearly have exploded, we must have something more or less like Comte's.' Wolstenholme asks him what the creed would be, with Stephen answering he didn't know, but that if he did: 'In fact, I should be the Messiah!' He notes in the letter that an unfortunate silence had fallen over the hall just as he had uttered that final sentence rather loudly, adding to Minny: 'you may guess the effect upon all the old dons'.

⁷ 'The Evolutionary Turn in Positivism: G. H. Lewes and Leslie Stephen' in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by W. J. Mander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 285-305 (p. 285).

⁸ *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte*, ed. by Oscar A. Haac (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 1.

⁹ Durham, NC, USA, Duke University, Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Sir Leslie Stephen Papers, 1861-1959. Box 1, C. 1, fol. 1861-1866, Stephen to Minny Thackeray, 26 December 1866.

¹⁰ Possibly reads 'as far', but looks to have been crossed out by Stephen.

Stephen's prediction that it would be 'something more or less like Comte's' Religion of Humanity that would eventually replace traditional religions would apparently indicate that he had found more value in Comte's *la religion de l'Humanité* than might have been thought. Andrew Wernick describes Comte's ideological concept as being based

on a 'demonstrable faith', but otherwise homologous with the Catholic form of Christianity it was 'destined' to replace, the religion of Humanity was to be a triple institution. Its full establishment required a doctrine (*dogme*), a moral rule (*regimé*) and a system of worship (*culte*), all organised and coordinated through a Positivist Church.¹¹

Comte's Humanist religion received a mixed reception. Mary Pickering, in her biography of Comte, argues that it 'had a huge impact' in England, but this claim better reflects the divergent influence of the ideas contained within the theory than it does the popularity of the religion in terms of numbers of followers.¹² Even the original leading advocates of Comte's scientific philosophy, Mill, Martineau, George Eliot, and George Henry Lewes, ultimately rejected this doctrinal turn in his work.¹³ Mill described the general idea of the concept as based on a fundamental misconception, and the further details as being 'ludicrous'.¹⁴ Wernick writes that '[i]n practical terms, Comte's founding religious project was a complete, even preposterous, failure.'¹⁵

With this in mind, Stephen's remark that he believed that something similar to Comte's religion would eventually succeed traditional religion is interesting; it is entirely inconsistent to imagine Stephen embracing the aspects of the Religion of Humanity that mimicked Catholicism, considering the vigour he had taken to dismissing all forms of theism in his theological essays. In his essay 'An Apology for Plainspeaking', Stephen puts

¹¹ *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity: The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 2.

¹² *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography, Vol. III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 571.

¹³ See Roger Wunderlich's *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), p. 222.

¹⁴ *Auguste Comte*, pp. 138, 149.

¹⁵ Wernick, *Auguste Comte*, p. 5.

forward the case for why his candid views on religion had a legitimate reason to be aired without fear of offence to people of faith. His argument is that allowing ‘insincerity in such matters [...] is fast producing a scepticism not as to any or all theologies, but as to the existence of intellectual good faith’.¹⁶ The idea that Stephen would have recommended a system replicating much of which he had been so critical lacks credence. Notably, Stephen makes only fleeting references to Comte’s religion in his philosophical texts; the most direct allusion to it occurs in the essay, ‘The Religion of all Sensible Men’ (1880), where Stephen writes that Comte had correctly surmised that a ‘scientific system of sociology and ethics’ would soon emerge, once it has freed itself from superstition and ‘mystery’. He then wonders why, given Comte’s apparent understanding of this, he had attempted to create the *la religion de l’Humanité*, writing in conclusion: ‘Of Comte’s attempt to take the next step I need say nothing. His religion has been ridiculed, I think, more than enough’ (*Apology*, 335-36). There is evidence enough here both to conclude that Stephen was not a follower of Comte’s religious movement, and to repudiate Pickering’s unsubstantiated claim that he had ‘tried to impose the Religion of Humanity on his children, something his daughter Virginia Woolf deeply resented’.¹⁷

So if it has been safely established that Stephen did not follow Comte’s religious vision, the question left is what is meant by his remark that ‘there must be some sort of religion in the future’ but one without ‘theology [which] will clearly have exploded’. In fact these cogitations on the future of belief feature recurrently in Stephen’s philosophic work, most predominantly in the essays found in *An Agnostic’s Apology*. Stephen is certain that whatever it is that replaces traditional religion must contain an acceptance of scientific fact, as he argues technological progress had been too extensive and too beneficial to the general population for it now to be dismissed. He is similarly convinced that morality will continue to exist and progress in a post-theological future, believing that concepts of good and bad predated the religious symbols used to understand them. Any further details than this,

¹⁶ *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking*, p. 371.

¹⁷ *Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, p. 572.

though, Stephen recognises as being ‘simply absurd for any man to answer with the slightest confidence’ (*Apology*, 355); he nevertheless stands by the comment from the quoted letter that a form of religion will come to the fore. Stephen concludes the final essay of the book, ‘The Religion of all Sensible Men’, by stating that those thinkers who aspire to contribute to the religion of the future must accept that they are merely a subordinate part of the system, rather than new prophets, and need to follow very simple but required principles:

The utmost he can do is to help to clear the air from effete superstitions, to extricate moral truths from the misleading associations with which they have been entangled, and to encourage [...] the spread of truths which may find embodiment in any fresh development of thought. (*Apology*, 366)

Rather than a new religion, what Stephen’s speculations more accurately describe here is a new system of communally-developed, shared philosophic thought, with a focus on human morality and a basis in scientific reasoning. He describes this ‘mysterious creed of the future’ as being established upon ‘tenable and verifiable philosophy’ and the ‘measure of its success in laying down permanent principles for the regulation of human conduct’ (*Apology*, 367). And perhaps it is here that it becomes clearer why Comte’s humanism, for its own peculiarities and flaws, may have suggested to Stephen a vision of the future of religion – through having at its core a basis in secular philosophical thinking. Stephen also demonstrates his conviction in the idea of the strengths of a social organism (here it is working together to create this ethical system), as well as the belief in providing moral principles definable by scientific rationale.

So how did these different influences combine with Stephen’s own ideas? In the form of evolutionary positivism, Stephen’s version of which was most comprehensively laid out in *The Science of Ethics*. He believed that social and moral development could be theorised upon to the extent that, with the right knowledge, laws governing such changes could be determined; Comte’s positivism had provided him with a model of sociocultural evolution toward this end. Where Stephen differed from Comte was in the ‘evolution’ part of

that model. To his mind, there was not enough scientific explanation behind the original positivist theory of why this progression took place. Comte's postulations indicated 'a generalized mind stretching back to the ancient world,'¹⁸ and a reliance upon the dominance of human reason above all else, including biological or psychological considerations (both of which Comte eschewed in his theorising) a view that Stephen argued left positivism open to various criticisms (which indeed it did, not least in the form of Sidgwick and his text, *The Methods of Ethics* (1847)).¹⁹ By basing the moral advancement of humanity in scientific terms, Stephen had moved to redress this problem and provided an evolutionary positivism that granted more to the idea of an evolving social organism rather than its individual constituents.²⁰

Stephen's desire to use science to understand and explain human morality was in no small part due to his agnosticism. He wrote how morality was 'a product of human nature, not of any of these transcendental speculations or faint survivals of traditional superstitions. Morality has grown up independently of, and often in spite of, theology'.²¹ This point is particularly relevant to Comte's influence for Stephen credited the philosopher with being an important factor in his initial thoughts towards renouncing religious belief, writing in his *Mausoleum Book*: 'I read Comte, too, and became convinced among other things that Noah's flood was a fiction (or rather convinced that I had never believed in it)' (*MBk*, 6). As Julia held similarly views on religion (and had been drawn to Stephen's writing on the subject before they had become close friends), the Stephen children were raised in an agnostic household. Comte can thus be considered to have indirectly influenced Woolf's own theological point of view, via the effect his work had upon Stephen.

¹⁸ Francis, p. 291.

¹⁹ Mark Francis writes: 'Henry Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, which, in attacking Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, had threatened evolutionary theory. Sidgwick had breathed new life into utilitarian ethics, and had made the evolutionary perspective look homespun' (p. 303).

²⁰ Although Stephen greatly admired Charles Darwin, the evolutionary aspect of his positivism was not directly connected to Darwin. In fact, Francis argues, it was as closely associated with the work of 'non-Darwinians such as Spencer and Lewes' (p. 303).

²¹ *Social Rights and Duties: Addresses to Ethical Societies: Vol. I* (1896; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2011), p. 20.

Indeed, this is the only way to consider a Comtean influence on Woolf as he is entirely absent from her oeuvre. Taking into account Stephen's interest and Woolf's own wide-ranging and prolific reading, Comte's absence is perhaps puzzling. Woolf's letters and diaries contain numerous references to writers she had judged to offer little interest or literary ability, so the lack of any remarks on Comte cannot be conclusively equated with disinterest or dislike on her part. The question of whether this rejection of Comte is a deliberate ploy by Woolf or merely a reflection of his apparent irrelevance to her is, of course, moot; but knowing Comte's position is necessary for understanding an important influence on Stephen, and with it an aspect of the influence Stephen had on Woolf.

The History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century was the pinnacle of Stephen's achievements as a philosophical writer.²² While *The Science of Ethics*, a series of lectures to the Ethical Societies of London published as *Social Rights and Duties* (1896), and three volumes of *The English Utilitarians* (1900-1902) were still to come in his writing career, *History of English Thought* moved Stephen into the upper echelons of current English philosophical thought. The publication brought him into membership of the Athenaeum Club and was met with generally positive reviews (*LL*, 284). Stephen wrote the following on these turn of events to Norton:

My book has done well enough, and has been well received by everybody [...]. I have avoided reading reviews as much as possible, for they always vex me; but what I have read has been as favourable as I could wish. I have been elected by the Committee at the Athenaeum, which is pleasant in itself, and a pleasant indication of respect. (*LL*, 298)

Considering Stephen's general reticence when it came to self-promotion or congratulation in his letters, this appraisal of how *History of English Thought* had been received comes across as almost celebratory. Certainly in one respect the book played to Stephen's skills: it is a historical text, in which he works through the different branches of philosophical thought

²² For example, in his editor's review for *Mind* in June 1877, George Croom Robertson describes it as a 'remarkable work' and 'brilliant' ('English Thought in the 18th Century', *Mind*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (July 1877), 352-366 (pp. 352-53) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2246911>> [Accessed on 22 June 18].

that had made a significant impact in or around the eighteenth century, though invariably the history is guided somewhat by his own affiliations and views. Arguments that appeal to knowledge through experience find favour with Stephen's own empiricist background. This is exemplified in one instance in his withering assessment of George Campbell's (1719-96) argument for testimony as a separate and equally credible source of belief as experience:

Such a vague doctrine disqualifies Campbell from discovering any general test of the value of evidence. [...] We are bound to believe Livy equally, whether he asserts an ox spoke, or that Hannibal crossed the Alps. We are, in fact, deprived of any independent criterion whatever of the value of historical evidence; and have thus opened a door wide enough to admit any prodigies whatever. (*History*, 399)

To support this generally sceptical perspective, Stephen frequently appeals to David Hume, whom he describes as 'the acutest reasoner of his time' (*History*, 342) and whose influence on Stephen's thinking is clear.

Locke, Berkeley, and Hume – the British Empiricists – are lauded by Stephen as key thinkers of the century in *History of English Thought*, and their arguments, in certain parts at least, also appear to be advocated. There is, of course, criticism too, and equally informative. Locke is judged to be inconsistent in his argument for the knowledge of perceived objects, and Stephen criticises him for 'trying to get out of himself' (*History*, 37) – in other words, arguing for properties in the world existing outside of perception. In his essay, 'What is Materialism?' (1886), Stephen establishes that 'we cannot get outside of our own consciousness. We know nothing directly except the modifications of our consciousness, thoughts, sensations, emotions, volitions and so forth' (*Apology*, 135). As will be evidenced in the following sections, Woolf railed against materialism in literature in the same way as Stephen had done against philosophical materialism; she challenges the writers she describes as the materialists in 'Modern Fiction', arguing that the novels they produce present life as focused upon the physicality of life, on the details of the objects rather than on the thinking of the mind: 'Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this". Examine for a

moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day' (*E4* 160). Woolf's suggestion, like Stephen's, is that life exists in the 'ordinary mind', not in an external objective world.

In *History of English Thought*, Stephen admires Berkeley's reasoned argument for how it could be possible for ideas to exist outside of consciousness, but the theory's reliance upon the existence of a God ultimately fails in the face of Stephen's agnosticism ('Destroy the conception of cause as a living force, and his philosophy crumbles to atoms [...]. Now it was precisely this conception which Hume assailed most pointedly, and his assault upon it was that part of his doctrine which most impressed his disciples and followers' (*History*, 43)).

As has been noted, it is evident Woolf had read at least something of Berkeley's philosophy, and his position in Woolf's intertextual net will be a continued point of discussion, for he exists there both with a direct connection to Woolf's work *and* as a link between Woolf's and Stephen's work. Aside from that reference in 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son', Woolf comments in her diary from May 1920 of reading Berkeley in and amongst her daily activities (*D2* 36). But more than this, Woolf had an excellent understanding of Berkeley's phenomenalism. The following quotation, also from Woolf's diary of 1920, discloses a greater level of involvement in the text: 'Then I've read some Berkeley, whom I much admire, & would like to catch the trick in his style – only I fear its thinking' (*D2* 33). At first this comes across as self-deprecation on Woolf's part, with the implication being that 'thinking' is a trick she is not sure about, but a closer reading reveals more: that she is specifically remarking on the fact that thinking and thoughts are key to Berkeley's theories. His empirical idealism was built upon the maxim coined in *A Treatise Concerning Human Nature* (1710): '*esse est percipi*', or 'to be is to be perceived'. Nothing could exist outside of perception, and the only things that could be perceived were ideas. Berkeley divided his ideas into those of sense and those of imagination, and granted a greater logicity to sensible ideas. E.J. Furlong writes of Berkeley's theories: 'Imagination showed that minds, or spirits, to use the term Berkeley preferred, were causal agents. When

we imagine we ourselves produce the ideas we experience.’²³ So when Woolf writes of thinking being the ‘trick’ behind Berkeley’s philosophy, she is entirely accurate and, again through the slightest of observations, demonstrates the level of understanding she had of this philosophy. As will be shown in the following analyses of several key texts, Woolf would use this knowledge within her fiction to explore ideas of reality and perception. It will be argued that Woolf draws upon Berkeley’s concept of idealism in the ‘Time Passes’ section of *To the Lighthouse*, only to determine it as ultimately flawed due to its necessary evocation of God to support the potential for ideas existing outside of perception – just as Stephen had done in his text.

Stephen's form of empiricism was undeniably inherited from Hume, the last of the triumvirate of British Empiricists, and his reflections in *History of English Thought* on Hume’s arguments provide further details of Stephen’s own thoughts on this area of philosophy. For example, when Stephen writes of the ‘struggle between realists and idealists’ and the various speculations involved in that, he judges Hume’s account of why some maintain an erroneous ‘belief in an external world’ to be an accurate one (*History*, 47, 48). Stephen writes:

A simple inspection of a sensation will not reveal an external object to which it corresponds. Nor can we say that the object, in the sense of a continuous something as it exists out of relation to the mind, ‘resembles’ the sensation, for that would be to attempt the contradictory feat of contemplating an unrelated relation. Still further, we may admit that the philosophy attacked by Hume, and the popular conceptions upon which it was based, did involve an element of ‘fiction’. (*History*, 48)

Stephen is agreeing with Hume’s point that it is impossible to substantiate an external object’s existence through reasoning with the qualities of the sensation to which it apparently corresponds, as reason has no more evidence to validate the external existence of the sensation of pain, for example, as it does the sensation of colour. It is only the

²³ *Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1961; repr. 2004), p. 95.

imagination that suggests one has a continuous existence and one does not, and therefore still nothing is proven to exist outside of that imagination.

Hume is not treated as an irrefutable sage, however. His scepticism goes further than Stephen is prepared to follow, leading Stephen to conclude that ‘whilst Hume was right in limiting the mind to experience, and declaring the existing distinction of object and subject to involve an error, he was wrong in not observing that the very possibility of making the distinction implied an operative mind’ (*History*, 49-50). Stephen’s contention is that Hume ultimately reduced the potential of the human mind further than he should, with the ability to categorise impressions differently evidence of a more advanced faculty than the one Hume accounted for. Woolf would also write about Hume’s arguments on the external world, in a diary entry from 5 August, 1920:

By God! What stuff I’m writing! Always these images. I write *Jacob* every morning now, feeling each day’s work like a fence which I have to ride at, my heart in my mouth till it’s over, and I’ve cleared, or knocked the bar out. (Another image, unthinking it was one. I must somehow get Hume’s *Essays* and purge myself). (*D2* 56)

This quotation from Woolf’s diary presents much to consider; that it is from August 1920 is in itself notable, for this is only three months since Woolf commented that she was reading Berkeley. This suggests that 1920 represents Woolf’s most philosophically-minded year as, aside from her reading, she would also spend time with G. E. Moore. But more immediately relevant here is the indication that Woolf had read Hume; the context of her reference to him and his essays is, however, not immediately clear. Juliet Dusinberre argues that the allusion is in relation to Woolf’s concern for her own susceptibility towards writing in images and thus being drawn into a comparison with the style of essay writing that ‘evoked the belle-lettriste lady-like ambience which she detested’.²⁴ Thus when considered alongside Hume’s claim that, according to Dusinberre’s reading, the essay was a female genre, the suggestion

²⁴ *Virginia Woolf’s Renaissance: Woman Reader Or Common Reader?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), p. 41.

is that the philosopher would provide a timely reminder to Woolf in her intention to pursue a new form of essay composition. Although this interpretation is intriguing, Dusinger is perhaps quick to assume Woolf's reference to 'Hume's Essays' directly recalls his writing on essays. The more logical reference would be to Hume's *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1758), particularly given that Woolf was in the midst of a furious period of writing of *Jacob's Room* rather than on her own essays ('I write *Jacob* every morning now'). Similarly, it is more accurate to read something specifically philosophical from the remark linking images with Hume. Woolf writes of having thought of an image without realising that is what it was ('Another image, unthinking it was one'); therefore, she has confused an image with a material object. Hume theorised that objective things did not exist, rather that *everything* was an image; thus the reference to him and his essays is Woolf reminding herself of this epistemological distinction. There is humour in Woolf's comment, for she chides herself in her own diary for not remembering a principle of Hume's sceptical empiricism, but in virtue of making that witticism Woolf's displays her understanding of Hume's theories and by implication a certain interest in those ideas.

The above consideration of Stephen's work helps define the details of his epistemological position: the value he placed in knowledge from experience and his scepticism of an external world existing outside of perception. Comparisons have been made here with Woolf's work and the idea that she shared some of his thoughts on philosophical enquiry is already clear. This line of investigation will be continued through an examination of some of Woolf's key texts that relate to philosophical thinking. However, it is first necessary to consider the argument for another influence on Woolf's philosophical thinking – her Bloomsbury contemporary, G. E. Moore.

G. E. Moore

Woolf's comments on Moore in her letters and diaries require examination, as does the fact that he held a place of distinction amongst her friends. Moore, like his contemporary and

friend Bertrand Russell, was a proponent of analytic philosophy, which based philosophical investigation in logical terms, with an aim of bringing the discipline closer to scientific enquiry. Moore can be classed as a common-sense realist. He argued that certain propositions about the world were demonstrably true by their very nature ('obvious truisms') in that their not being true could not realistically be imagined. These propositions together confirm a belief in the truth of (at least in a common sense understanding of these things) material things, self, space, and time.²⁵ In terms of ethics, Moore was a realist in that he believed there to be an objective (i.e. mind-independent) truth (or falseness) about moral judgements; furthermore, he was a non-naturalist, arguing that moral properties were not definable by or reducible to natural terms. They are non-natural properties and so exist outside of the natural (or material) world. Good was an example of what Moore termed a simple notion, in the way that yellow was – it could not be defined in any other way or be reduced to any less complex properties. Moore's realism set him against prominent idealists of the time, such as J. M. E. McTaggart and H. H. Joachim, and the essay 'The Refutation of Idealism' (1903) was one of Moore's other principal works.

Woolf was reading Moore's *Principia Ethica* with interest in 1908, even if she does not appear to have been as entirely convinced by it as Leonard and other members of Bloomsbury had been. Extracts from Woolf's diaries and letters of the time evidence her varying experiences of reading the book – her 'nightly 10 pages' (LI 355). She writes of it for the first time in a letter to Clive Bell, describing herself as 'climbing Moore like some industrious insect [...] determined to build a nest on the top of a Cathedral spire'. In the same correspondence, she notes a particular sentence from Moore's text, 'a string of "desires"', which made her 'head spin with infinite meaning of words unadorned' (LI 348).²⁶ The section Woolf is almost certainly referring to is several pages into the first chapter, 'The Subject-matter of Ethics', as Moore explains that good is not reducible to any

²⁵ G. E. Moore, 'A Defence of Common Sense' in *Philosophical Papers* (London: George Allen & Unwin Publishers, 1959), pp. 32-45.

²⁶ Letter dated 3 August 1908.

more basic properties, and how it is not equivalent to what we desire. One example sentence reads: “‘Do we desire to desire to desire to desire A?’”.²⁷

A week later and Woolf had, according to her letter to Saxon Sydney-Turner, made progress with understanding Moore’s attempts to define good and the further distinction he drew between desire and pleasure: ‘I sent myself to sleep last night by thinking what I feel at the prospect of eating an ice; and woke this morning convinced Moore is right. He calls it a glass of port wine, but I suppose that makes no difference?’ (*LI* 355).²⁸ The point which Woolf writes of finding herself in agreement with was Moore’s analysis of the psychological state of desire; he argues that the desire for a glass of port, for example, is based on the feeling of pleasure the idea of that port produces. This is Moore’s argument against Mill, who theorises that pleasure is not present at the idea of the port, and instead is the end result of the action resulting from desire.²⁹ What is unusual about Woolf’s comment is that she tended to discuss more practical applications of ethics rather than these metaethical concepts, at least according to her own records. For example, she recounts discussing with Vanessa the moral implications of suicide (*LI* 193), how Bloomsbury’s ‘ethical code’ permitted affairs (*D2* 171), and of arguing with Leonard on the importance and influence of poets in regards to gaining ‘one’s morality’ (*L2* 529). But instances of defining the properties of good, or pleasure and desire, are few and far between, leading to the conclusion that Woolf really had little interest in the consideration of metaethics.

The following ten days of reading saw progress being exchanged for exasperation. A further letter to Sydney-Turner recalls Woolf ‘crawl[ing] over the same page a number of times, till I almost see my own tracks’ and doubting whether she ‘can even ask an intelligible question’ (*LI* 360). Another to Clive Bell is in the same vein, with Woolf describing herself as splitting her head over the book, ‘feeling ideas travelling to the

²⁷ *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903; repr. 1922), p. 16.

²⁸ Letter dated 10 August 1908.

²⁹ *Principia Ethica*, pp. 69-70.

remotest part of my brain, and setting up a feeble disturbance, hardly to be called a thought' (L1 365).³⁰ Ten days later saw Woolf write the following to Vanessa:

I finished Moore last night; [...] I am not so dumb founded as I was; but the more I understand, the more I admire. He is so humane in spite of his desire to know the truth. (L1 372)³¹

The overall sense given is best described as one of ambiguity, as though Woolf was determined to complete *Principia Ethica* and to find something of value in Moore's ideas, but that she had not necessarily been convinced by the book. Instead she compliments him mostly on a personal level, on his humanity.

On the occasion of Moore staying with the Woolfs in Asheham, in the autumn of 1916, Woolf wrote to Sidney-Turner on 30 August in a similar tone: 'He is a very great man, I think, so solid and direct [...]. He knows all the wild flowers and butterflies' (L2 120). Woolf, other than the platitude of greatness that Bloomsbury appeared to designate upon Moore, seems far more taken with his botany and entomology skills, even commenting on Moore's having 'discovered several varieties of Blue [butterflies]' a year later, in a letter to Vanessa on 26 April (L2 149). Considering the stock in which Moore was held by a large part of Bloomsbury, as a writer and philosopher but certainly as a person too, it is tempting to wonder if Woolf was politely bowing to popular opinion amongst her friends. Whilst Woolf is not often accused of feigning deference due to mere politeness, people she liked and admired – Leonard, Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey – did all hold Moore in the highest possible esteem.

Moore visited the Woolfs in the summer of 1920, though significantly, as has been shown, Woolf was immersed in Hume, Berkeley, and phenomenalism at the time, writing in one diary entry: 'Went out to buy a bun, called on Miss Milan about the chair covers, &

³⁰ Letter to Sydney-Turner dated 14 August 1908; letter to Bell dated 19 August 1908.

³¹ Letter dated 29 August 1908.

when I've done this, I shall read Berkeley' (D2 36). Moore's appearance one morning was most notable for his explanation of Berkeley's position, as the following quotation recounts:

I lay in the shallow light, which should be written dark, I think, a long time, & then Moore came & took a cold bath at 1 in the morning, consequently I was too muddled next morning to follow his explanation of Berkeley. He has grown grey, sunken, toothless perhaps. His eyes small, watchful, but perhaps not so piercing as of old. A lack of mass, somewhere. He went off to take 'my baby for a walk'. I don't see altogether why he was the dominator & dictator of youth. Perhaps Cambridge is too much of a cave. Yet (I don't attempt to balance this properly) of course there's his entire innocency & shrewdness; not the vestige of falsehood obscuring him anywhere. (D2 49)³²

Woolf's diary entry takes into its account the standing of Moore at Cambridge and she is clearly unconvinced that his elevated status in those university days was fully merited. Leonard and Strachey had been enamoured by Moore, with Leonard describing them and their fellow Apostles as Moore's 'disciples', and that 'George Moore was a great man, the only great man whom I have ever met or known in the world of ordinary, real life.'³³ As this attitude suggests, Moore's name had been celebrated amongst Bloomsbury almost as readily as it had by the Apostles, yet Woolf seems distinctly underwhelmed by him, unsure whether this is because he has aged and lost something of the verve of his youth or if he simply was never the prophet her companions had made of him. While it may be difficult to say whether her reference to Berkeley, both in the diary entry and in the event itself, is deliberately pointed, it is obvious Moore's status as a thinker would not distract Woolf from the very different book on philosophy she was reading at that time. Woolf records a later meeting with Bertrand Russell and her quotation of his musings on Moore's career is also illuminating:

[T]hen on to Moore. 'When he first came up to Cambridge, he was the most wonderful creature in the whole world. His smile was the most beautiful thing I have

³² 23 June 1920.

³³ *Sowing: an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), pp. 163, 145.

ever seen. We believed in Berkeley' (perhaps). 'Suddenly, something went wrong with him; something happened to him and his work. *Principia Ethica* was nothing so good as his *Essay on Judgment*' (?). (D2 294)

It is curious that Woolf adds her own 'perhaps' in parenthesis after Russell suggests that he and Moore 'believed in Berkeley' earlier in their careers – the obvious inference is that Woolf is questioning the likelihood of this. Certainly the notion that Moore and Russell were ever idealists could have provoked incredulity to a knowledgeable reader of philosophy.

Leonard also remarks on Moore's appearance, describing his face as 'amazingly beautiful, almost ethereal', but more pertinently echoes Russell's sentiment on Moore's longevity as a radical thinker, writing how the influence of *Principia Ethica* had waned as its formerly avid champions had grown older:

A good deal of the bloom of ignorance and other things has been brushed off us. *Principia Ethica* had passed into our unconscious and was now merely a part of our super-ego; we no longer argued about it as a guide to practical life.³⁴

The quoted remarks suggest that Woolf, Leonard, and Russell were all, in slightly different ways, of the mind that Moore's influence and abilities had waned over time, with Woolf showing little evidence that she ever found him as an engaging thinker as her Bloomsbury contemporaries had done, with a hint that his personality had been a large part of the reason for his popularity. The following description of Moore is the last mention of any length in Woolf's letters and diaries, from her entry on 20 May 1940:

Moor[e] has a thatch of soft unattached hair: red rimmed eyes, very steady; but less force & mass to him than I remembered. Less drive behind his integrity which is unalloyed, but a little weakened in thrust by the sense of age (65) & not quite such a solid philosophic frame as I suppose when we were all young we anticipated. (D5 286)

It echoes those earlier remarks in the sense of slight disappointment, seeing this older Moore as not having achieved as much as his friends had expected of him. In her essay on 'Early

³⁴ *Sowing*, pp. 151, 170-71.

Bloomsbury', Woolf does credit 'Moore's book' with setting off discussions of 'philosophy, art, religion' in those formative Thursday evening meetings of the Bloomsbury group;³⁵ but even then, during Moore's heyday, Woolf distanced herself. She wrote to Quentin Bell some years later on the group's being caught up in questing for 'Truth' under Moore's guidance: 'So we all did once; save for myself; who was always distracted by some other flippancy' (*LA* 56). To return to the possibility that the younger Woolf paid only lip service to Moore and his work, these later extracts seem to be the writer redressing earlier, possibly naively-formed opinions, and reinforce the suggestion that Woolf's interest in Moore was somewhat fleeting.

Despite this scepticism towards *Principia Ethica* on Woolf's part, some critics (most significantly Rosenbaum, but also Steinberg) have argued that the tenets of Moore's most important works are not only prevalent in Woolf's own philosophical deliberations but are a major influence upon them. The existence of a Moorean sentiment in Woolf's work does not entail a necessary contradiction of the argument for Stephen's influence, but the evidence from Woolf's diaries and letters is that she was not a convert to Moore's philosophy in the way Leonard had been. In addition to this, there is a more obvious intertextuality between Woolf's work and Stephen's; this will be discussed in greater detail in the following part of this chapter, but it is enough to say here that there is a much more definable likeness between their work than there is between Woolf's and Moore's, not in any small part due to the assertion that concepts of empiricism and idealism feature more heavily than realism in Woolf's work. This is key to the argument being presented here, and will receive due focus in the analysis of the texts being discussed.

On a final point, Ann Banfield makes the argument that, even if Woolf had not read specific texts popular amongst the Bloomsbury Group, she would have inevitably been caught up in the conversations and debates over writers like Moore, Russell, and Alfred

³⁵ *A Bloomsbury Group Reader*, p. 363.

Whitehead that ensued between her friends.³⁶ This is a completely reasonable assertion, and entirely likely; Bloomsbury was a vibrant environment of intellectual thought and ideas crossed back and forth, often between disciplines. What Banfield supposes, though, is that Woolf would necessarily have been won over by the principles of the philosophical realism being championed by her husband and others. Being involved in those discussions would certainly have developed her understanding of this popular modern philosophy, but it does not equate that Woolf would have found it more convincing than the philosophies she had discovered herself in *History of English Thought* or in Berkeley's *Dialogues*. This philosophical grounding of Woolf's own making was put to work in much of her fiction and essays, as the argument throughout this chapter has made clear. Through the following analyses of three of Woolf's most important philosophically-minded texts – 'The Mark on the Wall', 'Modern Fiction', and *To the Lighthouse* – this view will be expounded upon in greater detail, with specific examples to demonstrate Woolf's use of philosophy and how this was frequently linked to Stephen's work.

Writing Philosophy

'The Mark on the Wall'

'The Mark on the Wall' explores many of the ideas discussed in the previous sections of this chapter: empiricism, the debate between realism and idealism, materialism, and concepts of perception. Even more than this, the story adopts a satirical approach when writing of traditional philosophical attitudes, aspects of which are developed further in *To the Lighthouse* and *Three Guineas*. The first-person narrative focuses ostensibly upon a mark on the wall, with the narrator considering its exact nature and history; as the different possibilities are explored, Woolf simultaneously explores these philosophical ideas. The use of stream of consciousness in the writing allows this to be done seamlessly and without any

³⁶ *The Phantom Table: Woolf, Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 30.

sense of the narrative being coerced into deliberate or external philosophical suppositions. As has been established, Woolf was clear this should not happen in her writing and it is exemplified in this short text.

The attempts at identifying the mark on the wall carry the story along and at the same time demonstrate different perspectives on knowledge. Woolf takes a subtle incredulity towards realism, as the narrator's ruminations consistently present the concept of external reality as less convincing than perceptions based on sensory experience. The identity of the mark changes from a nail hole at the beginning of the story to a snail by the end of it, but far more effort is put into describing what the mark is thought to be rather than what it eventually is confirmed as being. The distinction between the concept of the external reality of the object and the concept of the perception of the object can be seen in this quotation:

And yet that mark on the wall is not a hole at all. It may even be caused by some round black substance, such as a small rose leaf, left over from the summer, and I, not being a very vigilant housekeeper – look at the dust on the mantelpiece, for example, the dust which, so they say, buried Troy three times over, only fragments of pots utterly refusing annihilation, as one can believe.³⁷

Despite the actuality of the mark being a snail, here it is perceived as possibly a 'round black substance,' while two pages earlier in the text it is described as being made by a nail. Later, it is described as seeming 'to project from the wall. Nor is it completely circular.'³⁸ By putting forward these varied and vividly described explanations of the existence of the mark, followed by confirmation of their lack of relation to what the reader is informed is the truth of the matter, the narrator points out the discrepancies between the world as it is perceived and the world as it is supposed in reality. Furthermore, the suggestion is that the 'reality' of the object is less believable than perceptions of that object: the perceptions of the mark are expounded upon in detail, whilst the idea of the mark as a snail comes across as pointedly

³⁷ *The Mark on the Wall and Other Short Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 5.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 7.

absurd in comparison, delivered much more abruptly and comparably less convincingly:

‘Ah, the mark on the wall! It was a snail’.³⁹

The musings on the mark that come before the final revelation are related by the narrator to human life. When the mark is thought of as a hole made by a nail, the reader is told what the family who had lived in the house would have hung from the nail (‘the miniature of a lady with white powdered curls [...]. A fraud of course, for the people who had this place before us would have chosen pictures in that way – an old picture for an old room’); when it is believed to be projected from the wall, the narrator compares the ‘tumulus’ of the mark to ‘those barrows on the South Downs which are, they say, either tombs or camps. I would prefer them to be tombs, desiring melancholy like most English people’.⁴⁰ These perceptions of the mark are imbued with a history and with a relevance to family and ‘English people’ – these ideas are put forward as life as it is experienced, as opposed to the realist and materialist views of the world where objects exist independently of a perceiver, and in forms quite different to how they may be perceived. Furthermore, both examples concern a loss of the presence of life: the family who have vacated the house, and the ancient people in their tombs beneath the tumuli. Both Beer and de Gay have commented on the elegiac nature of the questions raised by empiricism, of absence and preservation, and it would become an important theme in *To the Lighthouse*; here, Woolf begins to develop the connection between these concepts but leaves it incomplete.⁴¹

After the fluidity of the preceding passages, the confirmation of the snail’s existence is thrust suddenly and violently into the narrator’s world, ‘matter’ invading this sea of ideas: ‘Everything’s moving, falling, slipping, vanishing ... There is a vast upheaval of matter. Someone is standing over me’. The dialogue of this intruder is staccato and matter-of-fact:

³⁹ *The Mark on the Wall*, p. 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 3, 7.

⁴¹ De Gay, p. 109; Beer, p. 34.

‘Though it’s no good buying newspapers ... Nothing ever happens. Curse this war! God damn this war! ... All the same, I don’t see why we should have a snail on the wall.’⁴²

This new character is representative of a more material world; focused upon facts, in this case the war and newspapers and the truth behind the mark on the wall, it is also an unwelcome disruption to the narrator’s peaceful world of ideas.

This perspective on the material fits with Woolf’s more empirical attitude and she would after all criticise the writings of Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy due to their materialism in ‘Modern Fiction’, only two years later: ‘If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word we should say these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us’ (*EA* 158).

Whilst the materialism Woolf writes about here is not entirely the same as the epistemological materialism that has been discussed above, neither is it very different: in the philosophical sense, materialism considers reality as constructed entirely from matter, with ideas and consciousness being a product of such matter. Woolf’s criticism of this literary materialism is based upon its having placed all of its emphasis on the material and none on the immaterial (or on the ‘body’ and not on the ‘spirit’, as she terms it). This exact same charge can thus be levelled at the philosophical materialism, something which ‘The Mark on the Wall’ can be interpreted as doing. Stephen’s attitude towards materialism was similar to Woolf’s, for he too felt that by excluding the immaterial it could not satisfactorily explain the consistency and significance of thoughts and feelings. In his essay, ‘What is Materialism?’, he wrote:

We have to hold fast to the realities. We must recognise the truth which is distorted by the materialist conclusion. Emotions and feelings, I have said, are as ‘real’ as stocks and stones. They play as real a part in the great drama, and from them it derives its whole interest for us. (*Apology*, 148)

⁴² *The Mark on the Wall*, p. 10.

Stephen's words resonate throughout Woolf's haranguing of the materialists and her demands for writing to capture life (or the 'great drama', as Stephen describes it above) in 'Modern Fiction'. Similarly, the sentiment is shared in 'The Mark on the Wall', as the material world is portrayed as staid and incomplete.

The next quotation from the short story contains not only a continuation of the anti-materialist position taken by the narrator of the text, but one now reaching towards Berkeley's idealism:

I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes ... Shakespeare ... Well, he will do as well as another.⁴³

Facts are 'separate', not only to one another but also to 'I' and to the ideas that the narrator uses as a balance. Shakespeare is the idea she chooses, and he is described in terms of ideas – 'A shower of ideas fell perpetually from some very high Heaven down through his mind'. Hard facts are shunned in favour of ideas, produced in the mind from experience and providing the narrator with stability – for ideas *are* existence in Berkeley's theory. That the idea of Shakespeare appears independent of the narrator's mind, rather as a construct formed from a Divine 'shower of ideas', evokes Berkeley's theory of God existing as an overarching mind to perceive all other things. Stephen writes of this:

An idea, which is in this case independent of my mind, proves the existence of another mind, and the general order of the universe proves it to be the manifestation of one eternal, infinitely wise, and perfect Spirit. [...] The one omnipresent Spirit is revealed in the persistence and harmony of the universe; finite and created spirits manifesting their own existence through their spontaneous activity, and recognising the existence of the Supreme Spirit by the sense of dependence. This is what remains when we have got rid of matter. (*History*, 42)

This shared aversion towards materialism connects Stephen and Woolf in their philosophical outlooks, and Berkeley's *Dialogues* joins their writing together as a link in the intertextual

⁴³ *The Mark on the Wall*, p. 10.

net that exists between their texts (though both Stephen and Woolf finally reject Berkeley's theory in their work, as will be shown).

Returning to those hard facts mentioned above, they, along with the endless pursuit of them, receive a rather caustic treatment in 'The Mark on the Wall'. Whitaker's *Almanack* is mentioned several times, used to represent a world fixated on facts and regulations and a prescribed order, and Woolf writes of it with both disdain and ridicule.⁴⁴ She describes it as being established by 'the masculine point of view that governs our lives', the same point of view that establishes the line of religious and legal authority recorded in the *Almanack*: 'The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York. Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker'.⁴⁵ Woolf contrasts this world with one which questions the never-ending pursuit of knowledge, a 'quiet spacious world' that is able to do without 'professors or specialists', and is more concerned with the thoughts and reflections of people's minds. Woolf's separation of academic philosophy and 'common philosophy' (as in belonging to the common reader) could not be clearer here; the latter is a genuine interest of the workings of the mind, peaceful and free from the obsession with discovering ultimate truths (an obsession Woolf aligns with the patriarchal desire for authority over all things). The former is irrevocably associated with authoritarian social bodies, such as the universities, the church, and the justice system. Woolf's feelings towards these 'learned men' are made forcibly apparent when she writes: 'And what is knowledge? What are our learned men save the descendants of witches and hermits who crouched in caves and in woods brewing herbs, and interrogating the stars?'⁴⁶

In 'The Mark on the Wall', Woolf distinguishes between empirical experience and realist objectivity, and ends with what might be read as an argument for realism over empiricism, as the 'fact' of the mark is different to all the alternatives suggested by the

⁴⁴ An almanac of general contemporary matters, including lists and tables of data and information.

⁴⁵ *The Mark on the Wall*, pp. 6-7, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 8.

narrator prior to the confirmation of its identity. Yet the manner in which the perceptions of the mark are written about adds a much greater sense of ‘realism’ to those experiences than there is to the presentation of the truth of the snail (via an external entity), which is both plainly described and conceptually absurd. The intention to direct the focus of literature towards the internal, to observe the reality of the mind and its perceptions, was fundamental to Woolf’s modernism, and will be explored further in the following discussion of ‘Modern Fiction’.

The way in which endless facts and truths are mocked in ‘The Mark on the Wall’ also recalls the treatment of the philosophers in *To the Lighthouse*, in the form of Mr Ramsay and Charles Tansley. On that same point, Woolf uses the contrast between realism/materialism and idealism to illustrate the difference between a patriarchal preordained society obsessed with facts and figures and methods of ranking, and a freer society, allowed to reflect on human desires which she equates with the peaceful feeling of the sea. Significantly, ‘The Mark on the Wall’ prompts the consideration of matters of epistemology that are given full attention in *To the Lighthouse*, and ethical considerations that would be developed further in *Three Guineas*.

‘Modern Fiction’

Appearing in its original form only two years after ‘The Mark on the Wall’, Woolf’s essay on the direction she believed modernist writing should take and the problems with the fiction that preceded it is an important addition to her philosophically-minded work. In Woolf’s explications on the way in which a writer should capture real life in their work, she includes an insight into how she understood the mind to perceive the world. The essay thus exemplifies Woolf’s tendency to adopt aspects of her father’s empiricism, detailed in the previous section of this chapter, as well as utilising direct allusions to some of Stephen’s writings on the theory.

A comparison between the following two quotations demonstrates Woolf's allusions both to Stephen's ideas and to his texts. The first is taken from Stephen's *History of English Thought*, the second from 'Modern Fiction.'

The attempt to find a reality under-lying these impressions is futile, and even self-contradictory. We are conscious only of an unceasing stream of more or less vivid feelings, generally cohering in certain groups. The belief that anything exists outside our mind, when not actually perceived, is a 'fiction'. (*History*, 44)

The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday [...]. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (*E4* 160-61)

Stephen is writing of Hume's ideas on the existence of objects independent of the perceiving mind, Woolf on how she believed modern writers should attempt to reflect life as it is perceived by the mind in their novels. In both extracts the discussion is of how the consciousness perceives the world. Stephen's explanation of Hume's empiricist interpretation of this process is of 'an unceasing stream of more or less vivid feelings' resonating upon the consciousness; Woolf's own explanation is of 'an incessant shower of innumerable atoms' doing the same. Both descriptions of the way in which perception happens are in terms of impressions – or 'atoms' or 'vivid feelings' – impacting upon the perceiver's mind. And this is the empiricist's representative theory of perception: it is not an external object that our minds perceive but an experience via our senses that represents that object. The following quotation from Hume connects Woolf and Stephen on this point:

The most vulgar philosophy informs us, that no external object can make itself known to the mind immediately, and without the interposition of an image or

perception. That table, which just now appears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception.⁴⁷

Hume's account not only explains the theory behind the empiricism both Stephen and Woolf allude to in their descriptions of the perceiving process, but his text also acts as a link in the intertextual net existing between their work. The quote is referencing the table that Woolf would recall in *To the Lighthouse*: "Think of a kitchen table then," he told her, "when you're not there." So now she always saw, when she thought of Mr Ramsay's work, a scrubbed kitchen table. It lodged now in the fork of a pear tree (*TL*, 17).⁴⁸ The passage from Hume is cited approvingly by Stephen in *History of English Thought*, including his own reference to the table (*History*, 46-47). The concept of Bakhtin's dialogism is relevant here, with the idea of different and separate voices appearing in Woolf's text, but perhaps even more so is an aspect of Kristeva's intertextuality, which explains how all utterances depend on other, previous utterances for their meaning and significance.⁴⁹ When Woolf writes of the table in *To the Lighthouse*, the sense of her words is partly (and deliberately) dependent upon the words in Hume's text, as too are the words in *History of English Thought*. Not only this, Woolf's words derive an even greater level of meaning from their relation to Stephen's words. James E. Porter clarifies this aspect of intertextuality when he writes that 'every discourse is composed of "traces," pieces of other texts that help constitute its meaning'.⁵⁰

The discussion of the table, quoted above, from *To the Lighthouse* and the quoted passage from 'Modern Fiction' are instances taken from the dialogic literary conversation which Woolf is having with her father; that she is doing so through philosophic writing and allusions to Hume adds further consequence, for it establishes Woolf as a writing peer in Stephen's own area of expertise.

⁴⁷ *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (London: Penguin Classics, 1738-40; repr. 1985), p. 288.

⁴⁸ Gillian Beer was the first critic to highlight this connection between Woolf, Hume, and Stephen, and the table ('Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in *To the Lighthouse*', pp. 42-43).

⁴⁹ Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 37.

⁵⁰ 'Intertextuality and the Discourse Community', *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn 1986), pp. 34-47 (p. 35).

Those quotations from Woolf and Stephen also share a sense of scepticism, or at least uncertainty, towards the existence of a world outside of the consciousness. Stephen quotes Hume as describing the idea of a world outside of our perception as a ‘fiction’, and while Woolf’s language is not as absolute as this, her instruction for life to be recorded accurately includes the plea for it therefore not to include anything of the ‘external’. Similarly, the famous description of life being ‘not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged’ but rather ‘a luminous halo’ builds to the concluding fact that life, this halo, begins and ends with consciousness. Woolf’s theorising certainly appears here to link with the ideas of empiricism, and even Berkeley’s idealism, which argued that the existence of the world was entirely mind-dependent.

Woolf continues with this train of thought in her essay, reiterating the need to focus writing ‘closer to life’ and of how impressions imprint themselves upon the consciousness:

They attempt to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist. Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. (*E4* 161)

This quotation draws comparison to another passage from Stephen’s writing on Hume’s thoughts on the subject of object, subject and perception; the following is from the first volume of *The English Utilitarians* (1900):

Finally Hume gets rid of the soul as well as the outside world; and then, by his theory of ‘causation,’ shows that the ideas themselves are independent atoms, cohering but not rationally connected, and capable of being arbitrarily joined or separated in any way whatever.⁵¹

Woolf’s description of ideas or impressions as ‘atoms’ exactly matches Stephen’s terminology above. Not only this, she writes of the patterns of these atoms as being

⁵¹ Stephen, p. 148.

potentially ‘disconnected and incoherent in appearance’: this is extremely close to Stephen’s text, where he notes them as ‘cohering but not rationally connected.’ Again the shared use of words connects the two writers; Stephen’s writing flows into Woolf’s here, and her appropriation of the language of a late-Victorian philosophical text within a statement on modernism reflects Woolf’s literary heritage and the desire to continue that lineage in her own direction.

Clearly, then, the language Woolf and Stephen use here matches, but even if the subject of the quotations were to be taken separately from the writing, there is still consistency between them. Hume’s theory of causation, the subject of the quotation from Stephen, argues against the premise of cause and effect, stating instead that it is impossible to know that one thing is connected to another and it is just as plausible that those things are in fact not connected (even if they appear to be so). Woolf’s deliberations are on the nature of perception and how impressions can appear independent of one another, with no discernible connection in their ‘pattern’, and how writers must strive to capture this in their novels. So there is a reflection in the subject matter here, too: both discuss the disparity that can be observed between one idea or impression and the next, even if they may all appear connected.

That Woolf should be drawn to her father’s speculations on Hume here is not entirely surprising. Woolf understood Hume’s position as Stephen’s favourite philosopher well enough that she used it and him to great effect in *To the Lighthouse*. That he did hold that position also accounts for the prominence of Hume in Woolf’s selection from Stephen’s work on philosophy: Hume is mentioned in every chapter of *History of English Thought*, and frequently enough in *The English Utilitarians*. Even if Woolf did not begin by intentionally seeking out those passages Stephen devoted to Hume, she could hardly have avoided them.

Perhaps what is the most intriguing aspect of Woolf’s allusions to Stephen in ‘Modern Fiction’, as previously acknowledged, lies in the disparity between the modern,

forward-looking approach to literature and the use of Stephen's language and concepts. After all, that essay is Woolf's rallying call to her fellow modernist writers, urging them to give up on the 'two and thirty chapters' of their Victorian predecessors and to write life as it actually was, whilst proclaiming the virtues of Joyce and Chekhov (*E4* 160). Yet Woolf's philosophical imagining of the way in which the mind perceives the world recalls Stephen's empiricism, and her language resonates with that of her Victorian father as he recounted his histories of thought. The evidence here is that Woolf finds her philosophical inspirations in Stephen's work far more than she does in the twentieth-century discourses of Moore and Russell, once again demonstrating Woolf's desire to connect with her Victorian past within her work.

The chronology of 'The Mark on the Wall' and 'Modern Fiction' is pertinent here: in 1917 she wrote 'The Mark on the Wall', which has been shown here to feature ideas on empiricism that link strongly to Stephen's own on the theory. In 1919 she wrote 'Modern Novels' (on which 'Modern Fiction' was based) and which includes a theoretical exploration of these ideas of knowledge and very clear links to Stephen's work.⁵² From the theories formulated in 'Modern Fiction' Woolf applies these ideas in practice to her writing style, and thus a causal link can be identified leading from Stephen's philosophy to Woolf's modernist writing methods.

To the Lighthouse

To the Lighthouse delivers a powerful exposition of many of the philosophical ideas Woolf had been developing in her earlier writing. The line of thought on perception and subjective/objective knowledge that had emerged in 'The Mark on the Wall' and 'Modern Fiction' is a major theme in this, Woolf's fifth novel. Similarly, ideas on agnosticism and empiricism, including how the latter has an elegiac quality to it, are significant aspects of the book's narrative, as is Woolf's continued cynicism towards the academic pursuit of

⁵² The essay was published in 1919 as 'Modern Novels' and revised and republished as 'Modern Fiction' in 1925. As the discussion in Chapter 2 has shown, the essay also demonstrated how Woolf's literary theory was influenced by Stephen's work.

philosophy. The theories of both Hume and Berkeley are explored again in the novel and with important effect. *To the Lighthouse* is not only Woolf's most autobiographical piece of fiction but also her most philosophically-minded.

The appearance of two characters, Mr Ramsay, an aging philosopher, and Charles Tansley, an overzealous younger student, along with a humorous reference to Hume are nods to a more academic study of thought – one that is presented in a less than positive way, just as it was in 'The Mark on the Wall'. Mr Ramsay and Tansley represent formal philosophy, with the connotations of universities, theses, and awards (*TL*, 6), and thus the side of philosophy which Woolf found unappealing (*TG*, 20).

Instead of this more formal method she mocks, Woolf prefers to continue to coax out consideration of philosophic ideas within her fiction, and particular points of interest to be examined here include contemplations of an external world outside of perception, the Ramsay family's holiday home central as it is to the story, and the character of Mr Ramsay himself. These ideas find their focus in objects intrinsically linked to Stephen and his writing (the table, the curtain, and the house), and his presence is impossible to ignore in *To the Lighthouse*. That Mr Ramsay is his literary avatar is confirmed in Woolf's diary ('the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat, reciting, We perished, each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel' (*D3* 18-19)), as is her determination to use the book as a form of therapy in dealing with constant thoughts of her parents (*D3* 208). But of equal importance is Woolf's use of the novel, and as will be argued here use of empiricism, to reshape her relationship with Stephen. Knauer's concept of *Leitzitate* once again helps to understand Woolf's use of allusion; Mr Ramsay provides the obvious reference to Stephen and, with the reader aware of this connection, Woolf is then able to make more subtle allusions to Stephen's texts and philosophy.

Banfield, Beer, and de Gay have all written convincing accounts on the intertextual links between *To the Lighthouse* and Stephen's work, primarily *History of English Thought*,

with de Gay adding a further level of analysis in her text which suggests *The Mausoleum Book* and *An Agnostic's Apology* are also alluded to in Woolf's novel. The discussion here will argue that the intertextuality in *To the Lighthouse* is cast wider still, taking in Stephen's work but also alluding to texts found in his work, both directly and via Stephen's own references.

Much of this contemplation takes place in the middle section of the novel, 'Time Passes', but the first notable instance of a philosophical question, and perhaps the most famous, occurs in 'The Window' and revolves around a figurative table. A popular trope of philosophical discourse, Woolf uses the table image to invoke Hume's ideas, but it will be argued that she draws equally upon Stephen's influence; her intertextual net links to both writers here, maintaining the Bakhtinian dialogue she instigated in earlier works. At the same time, and now having established his subordinate place on Woolf's intertextual net, the Moorean interpretation of this discussion will also be considered here.

The Table

According to those critics forwarding Moore's case as the main influence upon Woolf's philosophical work, this is one of the clearest examples of an intertextual link between Moore's work and Woolf's: their shared use of a table existing in space. Yet on close inspection, there is a greater argument for a connection between this moment in *To the Lighthouse* and Stephen's work, as previously alluded to in the analysis of 'Modern Fiction'; nevertheless, further examination with the Moorean argument in mind is required here. The following passage is from Woolf's novel, as Andrew suggests how Lily might understand Mr Ramsay's work:

Whenever she 'thought of his work' she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table. It was Andrew's doing. She asked him what his father's books were about. 'Subject and object and the nature of reality,' Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. 'Think of a kitchen table then,' he told her, 'when you're not there'. (*TL*, 17)

Of this Rosenbaum writes the following:

Brief, vague, and fanciful as it is, this is an account not of Leslie Stephen's empiricism but of G. E. Moore's realism, where kitchen tables exist apart from our perceptions of them. "The Refutation of Idealism" is on this very subject. It even has an example of a table existing in space.⁵³

Here is the quotation from Moore's essay that Rosenbaum refers to:

[I]t becomes plain that the existence of a table in space is related to my experience of *it* in precisely the same way as the existence of my own experience is related to my experience of *that*. Of both we are merely aware: if we are aware that the one exists, we are aware in precisely the same sense that the other exists; and if it is true that my experience can exist, even when I do not happen to be aware of its existence, we have exactly the same reason for supposing that the table can do so also.⁵⁴

Linguistically it bears little resemblance to the passage from Woolf's novel: table is literally the only significant word used in both, leaving the possibility for comparison to be only in conceptual terms. This certainly has potential for a stronger argument, as both Woolf and Moore are discussing, implicitly and overtly in either case, the question of if and how objects we perceive exist independently of that perception of them. But Rosenbaum's assertion that what Andrew describes is Moore's realism is flawed; firstly, by attempting to think of an object external to your perception of it, you could conceivably be contemplating empiricism, idealism, or realism. The success of your attempt might determine which you would consider the best method of explanation – that Lily can only imagine the table in an absurd, abstract way, floating in a pear tree and partly anthropomorphised, does not lend itself overly well to a realist interpretation. Secondly, in this specific reference to tables Moore is asserting more than Rosenbaum indicates; not only that tables (or any external objects) exist independently of consciousness, but also that knowledge of external objects is exactly the same as knowledge of internal experience. And this is not what is being

⁵³ 'The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf' in *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 21.

⁵⁴ G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922), pp. 29-30.

presented as the philosophical concept in the passage from *To the Lighthouse*. Rosenbaum could perhaps reply that more than the initial idea of physical objects existing outside of perception would be too much to include in this brief exchange in the narrative, but as the ongoing analysis will show, Woolf covered equally complex ideas over the course of the novel and in equally concise form. Furthermore, a direct comparison with the relevant section from *History of English Thought* determines a closer correlation than does the quoted passage from *Principia Ethica*: ‘Yet it is a plain fact of consciousness that we think of a table or a house as somehow existing independently of our perception of it’ (*History*, 46-47). Conceptually it is the exact same principle being brought into question as the table scene in Woolf’s novel. Stephen is in the midst of his discussion and evaluation of Hume’s argument that objects do not exist outside of one’s perception; here, he is posing a challenge to this theory by virtue of the ‘plain fact’ that tables do *seem* to exist independently to us. And this is exactly what Woolf’s characters are discussing – the question of whether objects, such as tables, can be thought of as existing outside a subject’s perception.

The Divine Curtain

That this debate continues through ‘Time Passes’ demonstrates, again, that Stephen’s work is a more significant intertext than Moore’s *Principia Ethica*, and one positioned closer to Woolf’s novel in the intertextual net. Here, fully separating the subject and object, Woolf all but dispenses with dialogue and human presence. References to the Ramsay family exist as a mixture of vague reminiscences and matter-of-fact statements. The latter are delivered in parentheses and in a manner that mournfully parodies the form in which Stephen’s *Mausoleum Book* records a number of deaths in the final part of that text (*MBk*, 99-112). The following quotations are from ‘Time Passes’ and Stephen’s essay, ‘What is Materialism?’:

It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave falling; the boat rocking; which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But alas, divine goodness, twitching the cord, draws the curtain; it does not please

him; he covers his treasures in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth. (*TL*, 95)

I cannot get into a world outside of all experience. We try to do so, verbally at least, when we invent the imaginary substratum in which sensible qualities somehow stick, instead of using the word as a mere name for the coherence of certain groups of sensation. We cannot peep behind the curtain

Immerst in darkness, round the drama rolled,
Which for the pastime of eternity
Thou didst thyself enact, conceive, behold.

The curtain is the reality. The effort to look behind it is an effort to get out of ourselves. It only plunges us into the transcendental region of antinomies and cobwebs of the brain. (*Apology*, 144-45)

In the first of these quotations Woolf appears to be contemplating the nature of God, on how the world is imperfect despite the presence of a Creator; how the possibility of a perfect world can only be dreamt of, glimpsed at when the ‘curtain’ is parted, before the real, spoiled world is brought back into view. This interpretation can be extended further still, for Woolf is stating that the world behind the curtain is unreal, or a fiction as Hume terms it. The desire to look behind the curtain, then, is based upon the erroneous belief that there is a world outside of what we experience; the idea of a divine utopia is a mistaken one, and what we experience is exactly what there is and all that there is. Woolf links the empiricist’s doubt in an external world outside of perception with her agnosticism here, drawing a comparison between the belief in a God and the belief in an external world.

Stephen quotes from the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859), or rather misquotes from it: the final line, ‘Thou didst thyself enact, conceive, behold’, should read ‘He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold’.⁵⁵ The English translation by Edward Fitzgerald was widely

⁵⁵ Omar Khayyám, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: Rendered Into English Quatrains by E., Fitzgerald*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (Boston, MA: L. C. Page and Company, 1859; repr. 1899), p. 143. In Fitzgerald’s first edition (of five), the stanza in question (and others) are not included, so this

considered amongst contemporary Victorian literary circles to be a paean to hedonism and an argument against religious belief (though Fitzgerald himself was not overly enamoured with that reading of the poem).⁵⁶ The section of the poem from which the stanza quoted above is taken describes the narrator's fleeting desire to understand the secrets behind death and fate, a desire he quickly decides is a waste of the time he has to live and implores the reader instead to enjoy life as it is. Those specific lines refer to the possibility that the whole universe exists as a contemplation in God's mind, with the narrator's point then being: why attempt to reason with ideas of life and divinity if this might be the case? Stephen's adaptation changes the emphasis from 'He' to 'Thy' and so from God to the reader. It is now the reader who has enacted, conceived, and beheld the whole illusionary experience of the external universe, and it is they – not God, whose existence Stephen contests – who are the deceivers of themselves. Stephen's point is that the entire premise of there being something behind the curtain is false. Words are only representative of sensations, or groups of sensations, which we interact with; when we imagine that we speak of an external reality, it is born from a mistaken believe that there is a 'world outside of experience'. Reality and the world *is* experience, or, as Stephen puts it, the 'curtain is the reality', for there is nothing behind it.

These passages are heavily linked. Stephen is quoting from a poem that conjures up the idea of a divine curtain separating actual experience from a mythical external universe; a universe the poem regards as being in the mind of God, and which Stephen states as belonging to the imagination of the individual. Woolf writes about a similar divine curtain, behind which is a mythical utopia, allowing her to say the same things – there is no such place beyond the curtain, the impressions we have before us are reality, and there is no such God. Woolf's empiricism informs her agnosticism here, and vice versa, just as it does for Stephen. Comte is brought to the fore here, for it was his work which had first prompted

quotation is consistent with the fourth and fifth editions (the second and third editions use 'does' rather than 'doth').

⁵⁶ Sarah Lyons, *Algernon Swinburne and Walter Pater: Victorian Aestheticism, Doubt and Secularisation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), p. 91.

Stephen to consider a link between the arguments for sensory verified knowledge and belief in God. His influence on Stephen's ruminations on the concept of a divine curtain in 'What is Materialism?' is clear, and so, through Stephen's same influence upon Woolf, Comte's ideas have indirectly affected Woolf and these ideas in 'Time Passes'. To invoke the intertextual net in this case, Comte's work appears in an outer circle, not even linked to Woolf; yet he is connected to Stephen in the net, and Stephen is positioned within a very close proximity to Woolf at the very centre of the net.

There is a further reading here, one which interprets the divine curtain and the assertion nothing lies beyond it as a statement on the possibility of an afterlife. In both texts, Stephen and Woolf deny that there is anything beyond our consciousness, any utopian world hidden from view. The elegiac quality of empiricism, noted in the outset of this section, is apparent at this point and the agnosticism both father and daughter shared combines seamlessly with their philosophical position here: nothing exists outside consciousness just as nothing exists after consciousness.

These themes of theology and empiricism frame Woolf's narrative during 'Time Passes', and lead into an exploration of the Ramsays' now empty holiday home.

The House

The building is shown by Woolf to deteriorate outside of the consciousness of a human. Like an idea no longer in mind (or a table when there is no one there to perceive it) it fades away, consumed by the darkness of non-existence: 'a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms' (*TL*, 93). As with Lily's abstract concept of the table existing outside of her consciousness, Woolf demonstrates the implausibility of the existence of mind-independent objects through the slow disintegration of the material building. The following passage is from Stephen's *History of English Thought*, relevant to this point:

We cannot even think of anything but ‘ideas,’ and ideas are dependent on the mind. From this the natural inference is that, where there is no mind there is no idea – that is, nothing. [...] They must, then, vanish with the percipient subject. (*History*, 40)

Stephen is explaining a theory of Berkeley’s, an aspect of which is appropriated and used by Woolf here; the house, the idea, must vanish just as the characters, the subjects, have done. It is not immediate, however, for in lieu of a character’s presence the reader/writer serves as a proxy consciousness. Thus the darkness and the ‘stray airs, advance guards of great armies,’ (*TL*, 95) are slowed in their destructive paths, even completely halted at the most treasured places (‘the little airs mounted the staircases and nosed round bedroom doors. But here surely, they must cease. Whatever else may perish and disappear what lies here is steadfast’ (*TL*, 94)). The notion of a reader/writer acting as an omniscient perceiving mind recalls Berkeley’s again: specifically his theory that external objects can maintain a permanence outside of normal human consciousness by always being in the mind of God.

The presence of this God-like consciousness is shown not to be as effective as a *real* consciousness, with the ‘indefatigable fingers’ (*TL*, 94) of darkness coming night after night to the house to continue the process of deterioration. The decay is stopped, however, and the house renewed and restored by the re-appearance of human consciousness in the narrative with the arrival of the character of Mrs McNab. The house is remade under her presence – through her actions and her mind, she acts as both a physical and metaphysical custodian to the house, restoring it to its full existence.

Woolf’s agnosticism is evident again in this part of the text, as is the way she intertwines this with empiricist ideas. For Woolf entertains Berkeley’s theory of the omniscient God acting as a constant mind to perceive all ideas, only to show that it is ultimately flawed. It is unable to support the preservation of an idea by itself, even one as central to the novel’s world as the Ramsays’ house. As Beer argues, the house exists ‘only as lexical play’ until the reintroduction of a human presence – it is an object created by and for

human use, so in their absence it becomes functionless.⁵⁷ Stephen reacts in a similar way to Woolf in the face of Berkeley's turn towards a theological explanation for his empiricism:

[H]is argument seems to imply that a mind is necessary to the existence of an idea, not only, if we may say so, within, but without. We admit that there must be a mind impressed, but why should there be a mind impressing? Are we not confounding subject and object? or tacitly assuming an idea to be a kind of separable thing which may be taken out of one mind and preserved in another? (*History*, 41)

Stephen is critical of Berkeley for suggesting that the existence of an idea somehow requires an external mind as well as an internal one. This supposition not only contradicts the empiricist argument that there is nothing outside of experience, for there is no experience of this external mind, it is only supportable by appeal to a Divine presence. Stephen is thus faced by a theory that contends that, after all, ideas can exist outside of normal consciousness, and its explanation of this being possible is also used as evidence of God. Just as Woolf demonstrated the implausibility of the house existing outside of human perception, Stephen argues that Berkeley has had to resort to illogical reasoning in order to avoid the same sceptical outcome as Woolf would arrive at in 'Time Passes'.

Mr Ramsay

It is also possible to read Mr Ramsay's fear of not being remembered after his retirement or death as being analogous with the empiricist position that states an external object cannot exist outside of perception. Mr Ramsay's existence will not end at his death but when he and his work are no longer thought of by others. The following quotation describes Mrs Ramsay noticing her husband is reading one of Walter Scott's series of *Waverley* novels (which act here in the role of Knauer's *Leitzitate* in the way they act as a more obvious intertextual link to Stephen, and thus draw attention to the more hidden and complex allusions that exist close by), having been inspired to do so by Tansley's remark that they and Scott were no longer popular:

⁵⁷ 'Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in To the Lighthouse', *Essays in Criticism XXXIV* (01 January 1984), 33-55 (p. 50) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/eic/XXXIV.1.33>> [Accessed on 7 November 2016].

Oh, it was one of old Sir Walter's she saw, adjusting the shade of her lamp so that the light fell on her knitting. For Charles Tansley had been saying (she looked up as if she expected to hear the crash of books on the floor above), had been saying that people don't read Scott any more. Then her husband thought, "That's what they'll say of me;" so he went and got one of those books. (*TL*, 85)

Fearful of the same fate befalling him, Mr Ramsay makes an attempt to ensure Scott has not disappeared into the 'immense darkness' by fetching one of his books and thus bringing him into the light; whilst in Mr Ramsay's perception and mind, Scott cannot be so easily lost (this recalls Stephen's essay on Scott, as he writes: 'will there be some permanent residue to delight a distant posterity, or will [Scott's] whole work gradually crumble into fragments?').⁵⁸ It is striking that Woolf chooses to chronicle this desire on the part of her Mr Ramsay character to reassure his own anxieties at the same time as preserving his beloved Scott's existence. For this very action is being carried out by Woolf herself: she is retrospectively assuaging the same anxieties of Stephen's by bringing him, and aspects of his best work, back into the minds of the reading public. His existence is preserved by virtue of this act, for it pushes Stephen back into the realm of consciousness. De Gay makes this same point, noting also Scott's importance to Stephen and the *Waverley* novels being symbolically saved: 'By making Mrs McNab save Scott, Woolf implies that the reputation of Mr Ramsay – and Leslie Stephen whom he represents – might also survive to a future generation.'⁵⁹ This notion of Stephen surviving is important. It is through these allusions to her father's work that Woolf is able to ensure he remains a writing contemporary of hers, rather than one lost to time and from consciousness. Indeed, Woolf observed that reading Stephen after she had completed *To the Lighthouse*, she found (as the title of this thesis quotes) 'he comes back now more as a contemporary' (*D3* 208). Again, the intertextual relationship between Woolf and Stephen proves equally as consequential as their intersubjective one had been. Whilst father and daughter were both cynical about the concept

⁵⁸ *Hours in a Library: Vol. I* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1877), p. 221.

⁵⁹ De Gay, p. 119.

of an afterlife, in this way Stephen the writer could exist after Stephen the person was no more.

Beer and de Gay have pointed out there is something essentially elegiac about this form of empiricism; it explains existence as a refutation of external objects and therefore of people, too. Its presence as a thematic idea in *To the Lighthouse* is thus entirely appropriate, considering the parallel theme of loss in the novel. Yet the intertextuality existing here helps negate that sense of loss and, in a similar way to which perception of Stephen ensures continued existence, Woolf re-establishes her father as an author. Kristeva writes that all narrative can be considered as a dialogue between the subject of narration (the writer) and the addressee (the reader). Due to the latter acting in a dual role of ‘signifier in his relation to the text’ as well as ‘signified in the relation between the subject of narration and himself’, the subject of narration is converted to a temporarily undefined entity for he/she exists in the narrative system as a possibility of being subject *or* addressee (and therefore as a possibility of not being one of the two). Kristeva writes: ‘At the very origin of narration, at the very moment when the writer appears, we experience emptiness’.⁶⁰ But this entity, this emptiness she describes, is immediately replaced as it is transformed by the object of the narration, the addressee who is both signifier and signified, into an author. It is Woolf who acts as the addressee for Stephen’s subject of narration, and it is her presence that transforms the emptiness he would occupy into the role of author:

In this coming-and-going movement between subject and object, between writer (W) and reader, the author is structured as a signifier and the texts as a dialogue of two discourses.⁶¹

This last quotation from Kristeva accurately explains the dualistic nature of Woolf’s allusions to Stephen’s texts. Woolf both acquires further meaning to her novel from these intertextual links and confers greater significance back upon the original piece in doing so. In Woolf’s engagement with epistemological ideas, references to Stephen and his work are

⁶⁰ *The Kristeva Reader*, p. 45.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

entirely positive, and reciprocal in nature too; drawing on his texts to add to her own arguments and meaning, or acting to sustain his presence through her literature. This manner of conserving through intertextual connection is repeated in Woolf's complex use of parody in *Orlando*, as the following chapter on biography will demonstrate.

In Woolf's ethical deliberations, however, she maintains a different version of Stephen, one which suggests at least an aspect of Mr Ramsay's character: the traditional academic, with ideas on ethics that were formed in the nineteenth century. The following examination of Woolf's ethics demonstrate the more practical and political side of her philosophy, and how Stephen could be referenced differently at different times even within the same subject area or text.

Ethics

Woolf's interest in ethics was for the most part on a normative (or practical) level, as evidenced by her noted lack of real interest in Moore's *Principia Ethica* and the absence of any other metaethical ruminations in her diaries and letters. Most significantly, two of Woolf's most powerful texts deal with normative ethics. *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are written with Woolf's characteristically nuanced style, but both deliver an angry, demanding polemic, as she addresses socio-ethical wrongs. Stephen's philosophical texts tend in the main to deal with the metaethical, but his series of lectures to the Ethical Societies of London, published as *Social Rights and Duties: Addresses to Ethical Societies* (1896) across two volumes, deal with more applied ethics and these provide several points of comparison with Woolf's ethical work.

The preceding discussion has already drawn attention to two specific instances of Woolf debating ethical positions in her work, and it is worth briefly recounting those points here. In 'The Mark on the Wall', Woolf is critical of patriarchy ('the masculine point of view that governs our lives') and the bodies of social authority that it has founded, wishing instead for it to be replaced by freedom, which while patriarchy still exists can only ever be

‘illegitimate freedom’.⁶² In *To the Lighthouse* this same point of criticism is continued, though more specifically aimed at the education system: Woolf’s satire of the male-dominated university world is embodied in the characters of Mr Ramsay and Charles Tansley, both of whom are shown to lack emotional understanding and empathy, as well as sharing a devout belief in the importance of ‘degrees and coloured hoods’, something Woolf would later argue reflected a wider attitude of competitive masculinity she believed to be encouraged not only at university but throughout the education system (*TG*, 35). At that point and here, Woolf’s ethical position is one confronting social inequality, and most particularly gender inequality.

Describing Woolf’s ethical discourse here as ‘feminist ethics’ is, arguably, slightly ahistorical, for that label would not come into use until the 1970s/80s, but Woolf’s work is an important and influential part of the twentieth-century feminist ethical debate. This importance is illustrated by the fact that much of the feminist discourse found in *Room* and *Three Guineas* (and in numerous other moments from Woolf’s work) deals with ethical issues that the feminist philosopher, Alison M. Jaggar, has defined as characteristic aims of more recent feminist ethics:

On the practical level, then, the goals of feminist ethics are the following: first, to articulate moral critiques of actions and practices that perpetuate women’s subordination; second, to prescribe morally justifiable ways of resisting such actions and practices; and, third, to envision morally desirable alternatives that will promote women’s emancipation.⁶³

Woolf used her fiction to highlight patriarchal authority and criticise its ‘actions and practices’, the first of Jaggar’s listed goals, in ‘The Mark on the Wall’, by ridiculing patriarchal society’s obsession with hard facts, and in *To the Lighthouse*, by satirising its representatives of knowledge and authority. In *Room* and later *Three Guineas*, Woolf

⁶² ‘*The Mark on the Wall*’, pp. 6-7.

⁶³ ‘Feminist Ethics’ in *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (Second Ed.), ed. by Lawrence C. Becker and Charlotte B. Becker (New York: Routledge, 2001), 528 – 539 (p. 528).

achieves this and the second and third goals of feminist ethics, as she strives to offer solutions to the inequality she observes and critiques.

Whilst Stephen's ethics are not as progressive as Woolf's, as perhaps might be expected, he can hardly be accused of conservatism – something that might have been attributed to previous scholarly representations of Stephen. His fiercely anti-war position has already been discussed in Chapter 1 and will be referred to again here in a comparison with Woolf's ethical deliberations on the war and media in *Three Guineas*, and that along with his abolitionist stance and desire for educational reform, also discussed in Chapter 1, provide obvious evidence of Stephen's social conscience. Annan describes this in his biography of Stephen:

He was without question a man on the Left [...]. On the great moral division in politics he believed that though many people were wicked or weakly foolish, human beings should be treated as equal in dignity and potentially good. (p. 296)

As Annan suggests, Stephen adopted what can generally be described as classical liberal ethics. He believed in liberty and freedom for the individual, while advocating a number of state policies in areas such as law, banking, and social welfare. He argued for capitalism, as the following discussion will show, at the same time as believing that the accrual of an individual's wealth should have a limit, and that this limit could be ascertained by judging the social utility of that wealth. His natural inclination, as has been demonstrated in the first chapter of this thesis, was to improve and reform, not simply to maintain. 'I am, I confess it, one of those old-fashioned people who believe in progress,' Stephen explains in *Social Rights and Duties*.⁶⁴

Yet while Stephen may not have been an old Victorian conservative, during the time his and Woolf's lives intersected he was – literally – an old Victorian, and his writings on socio-political ethics occasionally remind the reader of this fact, as does Annan's comment on the 'wicked or weakly foolish'. For example, Stephen is convinced of a correlation

⁶⁴ 'Luxury', *Social Rights and Duties*, p. 119.

between social position and morality, writing that ‘a slight improvement in moral qualities [...] would make an almost indefinite improvement in the condition of the masses’.⁶⁵ The idea of a fundamental set of moral ideals, the adherence to which the working classes could most likely improve themselves, was not a controversial view for a middle-class Victorian liberal thinker to hold. Indeed, the parliamentary debates prior to the passing of the Reform Act of 1867, designed to extend the franchise to a greater number of the working classes, was focused on the moral fortitude of the proposed new electorate. Janice Carlisle describes an ‘almost obsessive attention on the question of whether such workers had the requisite character – respectability, honesty, rationality, self-discipline, and self-restraint – to deserve the privileges of such a trust’.⁶⁶ Stephen’s perspective was not unusual for its time, yet the idea of a rigid concept of morality, underpinning society as it might have done literature (Stephen had after all criticised the aesthetic movement for *not* maintaining this view in their work, as the second chapter has discussed) contrasts awkwardly with Woolf’s more modern and less didactic ethical approach, causing Stephen to look correspondingly more old-fashioned in his ideas than he ever was in his time.

An examination of some of the key points from Stephen’s *Social Rights and Duties* and Woolf’s texts, *Room* and *Three Guineas*, will provide more detail to these outlines of their positions, as well as indicating several important points of comparison between the two; these deal with financial equality, gender equality, and war.

Social Rights and Duties

Stephen’s primary text on practical ethics, *Social Rights and Duties*, will be examined here, providing an outline of his perspective on different aspects of social justice. The first of these is financial equality, established through Stephen’s discussion of the rights and wrongs of economic principles (which account for several chapters across the two volumes). He

⁶⁵ ‘Social Equality’, *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 207.

⁶⁶ ‘Mr J. Stuart Mill, M.P., and the Character of the Working Classes’, in *Mill and the Moral Character of Liberalism*, ed. by Eldon J. Eisenach (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 143-168 (p. 144).

finds fault with Political Economy but also suggests that it is not without some merit, and should not be entirely discarded without a more rational model being put forward as its replacement. Stephen's belief in this system of capitalism was, however, not motivated by a desire for further growth by the richer sections of society, or as an opportunity for Britain to forge ahead of its economic rivals. He was actually of the mind that the eventual effect would be the reverse of this, and saw capitalism as the most rational option for decreasing poverty and financial inequalities, as well as being a mechanism that would bring countries to work together in a fair trading system. In an obvious allusion to his evolutionary ethics, Stephen writes of the capitalist system: 'The whole organism should resemble one worked by a single brain, instead of representing the resultant of a multitude of distracted and conflicting forces'.⁶⁷

Stephen sees market competition as fundamentally important to economic theory and policy, not least because he argues that it emphasises meritocracy rather than nepotism, and makes a staunch defence of competition in all aspects of life into an ongoing theme. In doing so, Stephen's views on financial equality are illustrated:

[O]ur true ideal should be [...] a state in which competition should be so regulated that it should be really equivalent to a process of bringing about the best possible distribution of the whole social forces; and should be held to be [...] not a struggle of each man to seize upon a larger share of insufficient means, but the honest effort of each man to do the very utmost he can to make himself a thoroughly efficient member of society.⁶⁸

As the quotation suggests, Stephen strongly advocates regulation of competition, arguing that it is this that will bring about the ideal social circumstances: a fair and equal playing field, encouraging the best to come to the top (either due to intellect or commitment, but ideally both), but with a limit to prevent either too much or too little wealth being accumulated.

⁶⁷ 'Science and Politics', *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 52.

⁶⁸ 'The Morality of Competition', *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, pp. 172-73.

While Stephen may have been in favour of capitalism, his argument was not extended to a defence of the financial status quo of society. In fact, *Social Rights and Duties* makes a sustained argument against social advantage due to privilege, be that financial or influence, even questioning the justice of inheritance. Stephen points out that, from his experience, wealthy people manage to remain wealthy despite ‘vice, extravagance, and folly; whereas, there are plenty of honest people who, in spite of economy and prudence, can scarcely keep outside of the workhouse’. Stephen accepts the principle that a ‘man has a right, we say, to all that he has fairly earned’, but questions whether it is fair that this wealth then brings fortune and immediate advantage to the generation/s after him: ‘Are the merits of making money so great that they are transmissible to posterity?’⁶⁹ Stephen argues similarly that position due to birth unfairly presents the reward of opportunity, readily acknowledging that his own success in literary circles was in no small part due to the upbringing and education readily available to him.

Stephen discusses equality in job opportunities, asserting that ‘it is our duty to try and make men equal’, but also stating that all men are not the same, in that people are distinct and have different qualities and talents. Therefore, not everyone is equally adept at every position. He writes:

The equality of which I speak is that which would result, if the distinction into organs were not of such a nature as to make one class more favourable than another to the full development of whatever character and talents a man may possess. [...] The position into which he is born, the class surroundings which determine his development, must not carry with them any disqualification for his acquiring the necessary aptitude for any other position.⁷⁰

Stephen is arguing against a class hierarchy and for an equality of opportunity that ignores class distinction. He goes on to argue that ‘discontent’ towards class position is not a bad thing, as it encourages hope and improvement of position, but it needs to have been formed

⁶⁹ ‘Social Equality’, p. 178.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 203.

on fair grounds: ‘discontent is of the malignant variety when it is allied with a sense of injustice; that is, of restrictions imposed upon one class for no assignable reason’.⁷¹

Stephen demonstrates his social conscience again when discussing social laws, arguing that punishment of crime is necessary for the organisation of a peaceful society, but its role as an individual deterrent should not be overstated. Instead Stephen recommends the involvement of ‘the support of agencies for prevention, education, and reformation’.⁷² He concludes the discussion with a thought towards how one should view the punishment of crime, with his point being that it should never be enjoyed or based on feelings of revenge or vindictiveness, only considered as the enactment of a ‘necessary evil’.⁷³

Stephen’s texts, perhaps unexpectedly, also cover the subject of gender equality, as he identifies the injustice inherent in the way which society treats women, though it is without any obvious determination to establish why this has happened or what to do to resolve it. A comparison with Woolf, to follow in this section, shows a similarity in the criticisms they make of the inequity involved but with only Woolf carrying this through to its logical conclusion and finding the faults in the patriarchal system that allow it to occur. The following passage exemplifies Stephen’s somewhat detached attitude:

The demand for political rights of women is discussed, rightly no doubt, upon grounds of justice, and takes us to some knotty points. Does justice imply the equality of the sexes; and, if so, in what sense of ‘equality’? [...] We, at any rate, can no longer answer such problems by any traditional dogmatism.⁷⁴

Stephen acknowledges that justice requires that women’s political rights are sanctioned, only to direct his attention to the use of the term ‘equality’ (a theme throughout this essay, as Stephen queries whether any individual can be categorised as equal to another, betraying his roots in less practical philosophy). His conclusion here is more satisfactory, taking the view that new approaches and new thinkers are required in ethics and beyond to solve these

⁷¹ ‘Social Equality’, p. 204.

⁷² ‘Punishment’, *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. II*, p. 80.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 94.

⁷⁴ ‘The Aims of Ethical Societies’, *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 29.

questions, but still Stephen's lack of involvement or extra insight is frustrating and often characterises his writing on gender issues.

Stephen is more forthright and more impassioned when he tackles war, though this is more readily demonstrated in other writings. In *Social Rights and Duties*, it is only referenced briefly as part of other discussions; in a debate over Hobbes, Stephen remarks that war is 'immoral', a concise statement on his feelings towards to it, as will be shown.⁷⁵

These points on different aspects of social justice provide an overview of Stephen's ethical standpoint, and support the assertion that he was progressive on many of the issues he explores. Martin O'Neill in fact compares Stephen's arguments on social equality to ones made by the liberal twentieth-century philosophers, John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Brian Barry, and writes of his ideas that 'it is surprising but salutary to have them called to our attention by a writer whose egalitarianism coexisted with so much of the outward trappings of high-Victorian respectability'.⁷⁶ Woolf's texts can now be considered having established the nature and context of Stephen's ethics.

A Room of One's Own

Woolf's essay was based upon two lectures she gave in October 1928 at Cambridge, to Newnham College and Girton College, a relevant fact here, as, despite the compelling blend of fiction and criticism that Woolf employs, *Room* allowed her to engage with ethics in the academic world by virtue of its delivery as a lecture to a university college. Similarly, *Three Guineas* is an ethical essay in a more formal style than the narratorial reflections contained in *To the Lighthouse* or 'The Mark on the Wall'. Whilst neither *Room* nor *Three Guineas* can be described as conventionally academic, it is interesting that both are a step closer to Stephen's approach, particularly when Woolf's epistemological reflections were not only separated from academic form but often included alongside them a derisive commentary on

⁷⁵ 'Ethics and the Struggle for Existence', *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 229.

⁷⁶ 'On Leslie Stephen's "Social Equality"', *Ethics*, Vol. 125, No. 1 (October 2014), 214-216 (215-16) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/677011>> [Accessed on 04 August 2018]

that method (as with Mr Ramsay and Charles Tansley). The sense is that Woolf has chosen to meet her opponents on their own playing field for this discussion, even while parodying that style and form as she did so.

This is literally true in *Room*, as Woolf's narrator delivers the majority of the text from Oxbridge, her fictional conflation of the Cambridge and Oxford universities but most certainly based upon the former, as the descriptive passages of the campus and town make clear.⁷⁷ Over the course of the essay, Woolf ponders on the idea of 'women and fiction' and in doing so highlights how gender inequality has disadvantaged women throughout the history of literature, leading back to the claim she makes at the very beginning, that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' (*ROO*, 29).

Woolf's ethical considerations include a fierce opposition to the slavish adherence to 'hard facts' and measures in society which are used to support and explain away inequalities, particularly of gender. This theme was begun in 'The Mark on the Wall', as shown, and it picks up again here in *Room*, and would continue through *Three Guineas*. In *Room*, Woolf asks, 'is the charwoman who has brought up eight children of less value to the world than the barrister who has made a hundred thousand pounds?' (*ROO*, 55). But she finds she is unable to answer the question as there are no 'rods' by which to measure them, a point she returns to later in the same text:

There are no yard measures, neatly divided into the fractions of an inch, that one can lay against the qualities of a good mother, or the devotion of a daughter, or the fidelity of a sister, or the capacity of a housekeeper. [...] They remain even at this moment almost unclassified. (*ROO*, 88)

Woolf is questioning the circularity of the argument where the facts and measurements contained in Whitaker's *Almanac*, used frequently by Woolf as representative of this

⁷⁷ In 'Mapping the Ghostly City: Cambridge, *A Room of One's Own* and the University Novel', Anna Bogen notes that in earlier drafts Woolf had 'Cambridge and its colleges appear undisguised', but argues that the fictionality implied by the term 'Oxbridge' added to the sense of the idealised university that Woolf was challenging (*Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Vol. 1: Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 37-49 (p. 41).

devotion to statistics and as a source of evidence in *Three Guineas*, are not designed to record the achievements of women, but are yet used as evidence that women have not achieved as much as men and therefore why women do not deserve the same remuneration as men.

Stephen makes this same point as Woolf in *Social Rights and Duties*, that the work women do in the home is not fairly valued or rewarded, but does not carry the argument further to make the conclusions about women in society that Woolf forms. Stephen begins his discussion by stating that the influence of an individual upon an entire class or nation whatever their position must surely be fairly negligible, whereas the same individual in the domestic sphere may have their influence ‘confined within narrower limits’, but ‘within those limits it is incomparably stronger and more certain of effect’. He develops this idea further, stating the following of the position of a female friend whose husband was of ‘high political importance’:⁷⁸

I could not help thinking that a woman who was bringing up sons and daughters ready to quit themselves like brave men and women in the struggle of life, might be doing something more really important than her conspicuous husband, who was after all, only part of a vast and complicated machinery.⁷⁹

In this passage, Stephen is making the same argument as Woolf – the work of women is crucial and overlooked in favour of the ‘conspicuous’ efforts of men. So far as Stephen takes this, he and Woolf are of the same mind; it is when Stephen fails to progress the point any further that the gap between father and daughter is made clear. While Stephen recognises the importance of the work of wives and mothers in the private sphere, and indicates that it is not fairly measured against other forms of employment, he does not see (or at least does not state here) what this situation says about the inequity of patriarchal society, or the subjugation of women within that. This point recalls the difference between Stephen’s and Woolf’s analysis of *Jane Eyre*, in which both identify how Charlotte Brontë’s rather limited

⁷⁸ ‘Forgotten Benefactors’, *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. II*, p. 250.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 251.

life experience had impinged on her writing, but only Woolf connects this with Brontë's disadvantaged position within the patriarchal system.

This difference is significant, for it establishes why and how there is a distance between Stephen's and Woolf's ethical positions, despite sharing many of the same fundamental principles. Woolf does not merely recognise and comment on ethical issues, she is determined to take her analysis further and into the realms of the practical, explaining why these things are happening but also to offer solutions to them.

Three Guineas

Three Guineas sees Woolf confront the ethics of war, education, and capitalism, and, as in *Room*, where her arguments meet Stephen's they progress in a way that his do not. As well as this, Woolf's essay is a fascinating example of her ability to appropriate and adapt literary form as well as language for specific purpose. In answering the question posed at the very beginning, 'How in your opinion are we to prevent war?', she adopts a methodical, point-by-point examination of the gross gender inequality found in patriarchal society, including its inherent propensity for war, backed up with numerous pages of footnotes. It is ostensibly an academic methodology but one transformed into Woolf's own style, including multiple voices in the narrative (which is based on a male anti-war campaigner requesting financial and moral support from Woolf), historical deviations, literary flourishes, and acerbic condemnation of militarism and fascism. Teresa Winterhalter states that Woolf's use of this formal style in *Three Guineas* can also be interpreted as a critique of rational argument:

[Woolf] uses the established tropes of persuasive argumentation (read: reason, erudition, and clear thinking), not to endorse and privilege the ideal of such reasoning but rather to expose the implicit desire for competition and domination that she finds characterizes 'rational' style.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ "What Else Can I Do but Write?" Discursive Disruption and the Ethics of Style in Virginia Woolf's "Three Guineas", *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Women, Art, and Aesthetics (Autumn - Winter, 2003), 236-257 (p. 242) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810982>> [Accessed on 25 August 2017]

Woolf's reinterpretation of this scholarly approach holds up academia itself as one of the principal targets of its polemic, the irony of which is deliberately cutting. This point requires some examination for Woolf's use of parody here is complex, working as it does on dual levels of form and content. The parody of form has already been explained; Woolf's text mimics the academic approach by replicating its accepted conventions, from the language to the footnotes. On this first level of interpretation, it is important to note that it is not parody in the sense of invoking the comic or the absurd, rather it is parody through repetition coupled with ironic inversion – Woolf is using the form to her own advantage, putting forward a case supported by vast swathes of research, at the same time as criticising it. In this case the inversion lies with Woolf's adaptation to the standard academic discourse, as she removes any single voice of authority and disrupts the text with interruptions, gaps, and questions; the irony in the fact that Woolf's alterations serve in part to demonstrate the issues with the original approach. In parodying the style and form of academic discourse, Woolf challenges its authoritative voice. And, though she does not reference Stephen here, he is already so heavily linked to the idea of old Victorian academia and its approach that she does not need to, for, he is part of that context the reader interprets in Woolf's text.

The matter of the photographs included in the essay exemplifies this point. Despite the research Woolf committed towards writing *Three Guineas* and the numerous footnotes she utilises, the photographs of war that she discusses in the text are entirely absent from her work. Woolf's discussion, however, does not recognise the physical absence of the photos and maintains their presence through her textual discourse, necessitating an interruption into the argument as the reader must stop and imagine the evidence Woolf describes. Jessica Berman makes a similar point on the missing war photos, writing that 'Woolf's essay immediately undermines its own evidentiary impulse and posits a narrative politics of hiatus, involution, and substitution.'⁸¹ Woolf's use of absence and interruption here diverts her argument away from the expected aim of authoritative conclusion, instead provoking

⁸¹ *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 64.

thought and questioning the objectivity of war photography in any context (something Woolf's narrator suggests in her suspicion of the gentleman's horror of the photos she describes: 'For now at last we are looking at the same picture' (*TG*, 10)).

The content of *Three Guineas* also has an element of irony, as while Woolf is parodying academia's methodology she is at the same time criticising its wider existence as a body of social authority in her rhetoric. Woolf charges the education system and its officials with playing an integral part in perpetuating patriarchal rule and gender inequality, and of encouraging in its students a competitive and aggressive attitude towards life:

Need we collect more facts from history and biography to prove our statement that all attempt to influence the young against war through the education they receive at the universities must be abandoned? For do they not prove that education, the finest education in the world, does not teach people to hate force, but to use it? (*TG*, 29)

Woolf's case against the education bodies and particularly the universities states that they are complicit in preparing students for war and patriarchy through the highly competitive milieu of their schooling, where huge emphasis is placed upon specific achievements duly rewarded with titles and decorations. Not only this, Woolf argues that the universities and their past students profit directly from war, with her rhetorical questions to the treasurer of the women's college revealing Woolf's precise accusations: 'Have you taken a leading part in the invention of the implements of war? How far have your students succeeded in business as capitalists?' (*TG*, 32). Stephen's hope that capitalism would have a unifying and equalising effect across the world seems somewhat naïve, or perhaps just old-fashioned, in comparison with Woolf's more critical analysis of the system's perpetuation of warfare. As with the issue of gender inequality, Woolf does not directly critique Stephen's argument; instead, the distance left between his position and hers serves to leave this version of Stephen in the past.

It is worth investigating further into Stephen's attitude towards war as it is difficult to believe that Woolf's own opinion was not influenced at least in some way by his, if only

due to the similar level of disdain both father and daughter held towards it. Woolf remarked that the only caveat on his children's 'right to think one's own thoughts and to follow one's own pursuits' that Stephen stipulated was that his sons should not enter the army or navy (E5 588). Maitland writes how Stephen truly 'loathed war', adding that he actively avoided newspapers headlines which announced loss of life during any conflict (LL, 436), a comment to consider against Woolf's treatment of the unseen photographs of 'ruined houses and dead bodies' in *Three Guineas*. For in very different ways Woolf and Stephen are reacting against the potential glorification of war reporting and its frequent use as a means to elicit a particular, and angry, response from its readers. Stephen did this by physically avoiding the offending reports and headlines, Woolf by enacting the same avoidance on behalf of her readers, through deliberately withholding the pictures she discusses.

Yet Woolf's ideas on political and social 'outsiderism', which proliferate through *Three Guineas*, serve to separate her from Stephen. Arguing from an intersubjective perspective, Hermione Lee claims that the origins of this outsiderism were founded in Woolf's youth and her 'political blueprint' based on experience of hierarchy within the Stephen household, and writes that Woolf's 'social satire is inextricable from her experience of family life.'⁸² This may be true, but Lee is perhaps mistaken for judging Woolf's identification of Stephen as patriarch as being entirely sincere rather than at least partially designed, at least as far as her work was concerned.

For Woolf's discourse on ethics reflects subjects and arguments that Stephen had written of, particularly in *Social Right and Duties*, even if avoiding the same direct allusion she often employed in creating dialogue with her father's work. But by writing, and with some agreement, of the same issues such as gender inequality and capitalism, and then by developing the argument in a way that Stephen did not, Woolf is making a statement just as certainly as she does when their intertexts correspond more exactly (as they frequently have been shown to do on epistemology). Woolf's arguments on ethics are powerful and entirely

⁸² *Virginia Woolf*, pp. 52, 53.

her own, with no space or need to include a sideways critique of Stephen's position. Thus the combination of the advancement in her argument *and* Stephen's absence from that conversation allows Woolf to separate their texts here. Her work is dynamic, twentieth-century polemic; Stephen's is underdeveloped and obsolete Victorian theory in comparison.

Lee's contention is that Woolf used her family hierarchy as a basis for her political and social theorising, with Stephen the patriarch. The textual reading of the Woolf-Stephen relationship is more nuanced than this, although in the case of their ethical debate, it has the same end result: Woolf allows Stephen to be the embodiment of Victorian patriarchy. In doing so, Woolf created a distance between her father, as an old (and old-fashioned) Victorian man with views typical of his age, and herself, as a modern and progressive twentieth-century thinker.

Conclusion

As this chapter has established, there is an undeniable link between the way in which Woolf and Stephen write about philosophical ideas, particularly with the concept of an external world existing outside of consciousness. Both grapple with this thought through the lens of the British Empiricists, and Berkeley and Hume are shown to provide intertextual links between them. Woolf's allusions to her father's philosophical work appear to have influenced as significant a modernist statement as her famous description of how the 'mind receives a myriad impressions' (*E4* 160-61), shown in this chapter to correspond closely to Stephen describing the same phenomena.

Woolf wrote often of the way in which the mind understands the world and used Stephen's writing on epistemology to add a layer of reasoning to her own. The dialogue that this opens is intricate, with meaning bestowed either way through the intertextual connections Woolf creates, points of influence are recognised and highlighted in Stephen's work (such as the British empiricists), and the version of Stephen Woolf is alluding to in the conversation is

clear: a like-minded thinker concerned with the internal world, sceptical of objective, undeniably facts and of God, and a fellow writer. By engaging with his work, Woolf is able to restore Stephen's presence to the literary consciousness.

Woolf splits from Stephen's influence in the matter of ethics, however. While he is somewhat miscast as the personification of Victorian patriarchy in the matters Woolf deals with, Stephen's work did not (and perhaps could not) seek to challenge social and political failure in the way Woolf demanded and intended to do herself. It is unquestionably true that while both father and daughter wrote texts which analysed ethical issues, only Woolf offered practical solutions to those problems. Perhaps this can be explained by Stephen having committed the great majority of his theorising to the realms of the abstract, where conclusions were often as theoretical as the questions, but whatever the truth, Woolf progressed the issues much further than he had done. The distance Woolf leaves between their positions is recognised and understood in terms of time, and Stephen and his ethical work is thus categorised by its theoretical nature and even more so by its age. A less prevalent version of Stephen, but a version nonetheless.

Chapter 4: Biography: From the *DNB* to *Orlando*

Yesterday morning I was in despair [...] I couldn't screw a word from me; and at last dropped my head in my hands: dipped my pen in the ink, and wrote those words: *Orlando: A Biography*. No sooner had I done this than my body was flooded with rapture and my brain with ideas. (*L3* 436)

Woolf penned these words on 9 October 1927, in a letter to Vita Sackville-West, and goes on to explain to her friend that this literary revelation had taken the shape of a biography based loosely on Vita's life, but all the time still remaining in the world of fiction. Woolf had speculated on the future of biography in an essay on the subject, 'The New Biography' (1927), that same year, and a deliberate but measured collision between truth and fiction had been integral to her vision. The earlier emergence of Sackville-West into Woolf's life had provided her with an ideal subject to lend to this theorising, bringing her plans 'to revolutionise biography in a night' into motion (*L3* 437). And *Orlando* was a revolt: against social and sexual conventions still in ascendancy, and against the traditional form of the nineteenth-century biography. Woolf wrote critically in her essays on the preponderance of facts found in the work of Victorian biographers, as well making this an ongoing debate in *Orlando*, where she writes that: 'The true length of a person's life, whatever the *Dictionary of National Biography* may say, is always a matter of dispute' (*O*, 151). Woolf's declaration that fact was not enough to portray a life in writing argued instead that it required a slender mix of fiction alongside to capture an accurate impression of a subject. The direct reference to the *DNB* cannot help but draw Leslie Stephen into the debate, it being his creation and most lasting literary legacy, and *Orlando* presents a fascinating continuation of the textual dialogue between father and daughter.

This chapter will examine Stephen's and Woolf's principles on biography before assessing how two of the most fundamental principles Woolf sets out work to separate her from and, in more subtle ways, align her with Stephen. The first of these principles is the significance Woolf believes biography should place on obscure lives, arguing that all lives

are of equal interest and importance, and that writing of the less well-known would help redress the obvious patriarchal bias in biographical history. In examining this alongside Stephen's views on which lives were appropriate for biography, more common ground is found existing between the two. The second principle is concerned with the merging of facts and fiction, and how Woolf defined and used the concepts of truth, facts and fiction in her ideas for biographical writing. *Orlando* is crucial to the discussion, for it exists as the apex of Woolf's biographical work and incorporates within it the key points of this debate: the practical application of Woolf's fictional biography, alongside her meta-commentary on this through the novel's narrator; the parody of nineteenth-century biography and the many nuances of this within the text; and the intertextual links to Stephen's work and how these carry on the dialogue between Woolf and Stephen. As the argument in this chapter considers these points, a significant new reading of *Orlando* is revealed, one that does not simply censure Stephen through its use of parody; rather, the parody is used simultaneously to criticise and to sustain his work.

Stephen's career in biography began with his work for John Morley's *English Men of Letters* series, which published *Samuel Johnson* in 1878 and followed that with his life of Jonathan Swift four years later. By this time George Smith and he had also made serious headway with their intentions for a biographical dictionary, and a first volume of the *DNB* was issued at the beginning of 1885. Stephen's early *Dictionary* work had been interrupted by something of a labour of love, the death of Henry Fawcett having compelled Stephen to write a biography of his friend, also published in 1885. Ten years later, Stephen was repeating this task in even more personal circumstances, with his brother James Fitzjames's death in 1894 requiring Stephen to assume the role of family biographer. Stephen's four volumes of *Studies of Biographer* were published between 1898 and 1902, and comprised a series of essays. The majority these had appeared previously in the *National Review*, *Fortnightly Review*, or the *Cornhill*, and deliberated upon a variety of biographical texts, such as *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son* (1897), with reflections on wider

biographical concerns, such as editing and censorship. Stephen's career in biography ended as it began with two final entries for the *English Men of Letters* series: *George Eliot* (1902) and *Hobbes* (1904). Whilst Stephen never wrote an autobiographical piece explicitly intended for publication, his *Mausoleum Book* does go some way to filling this gap.

Woolf's forays into biography included numerous biographical essays, many of which took the same subject as Stephen's had done, including short lives of Swift, Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and John Donne. Her essays on 'The New Biography' and 'The Art of Biography' (1939) detailed Woolf's vision for the genre, while the biography of Roger Fry (1940) and her biographical novels, *Orlando* and *Flush* (1933), attempted to put her theories into practice. Like Stephen, Woolf also shunned writing a full-length autobiography but did provide two essays that detailed periods of her life, 'Reminiscences' and 'A Sketch of the Past'.

Stephen on the *DNB* and biography

Just as Stephen's character has been due a critical reappraisal so too has his most notable work: his editorship of (and vast contribution of articles to) the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Julia Briggs writes that '[i]ts purpose was to keep a national record of the lives of great men [...], the greatest British writers, statesmen and thinkers';¹ Jane Goldman describes the *DNB* as 'this monumental Victorian enterprise';² and Alexandra Harris writes of it being 'a monumental record of the nation's great public figures.'³ But while this prevalent idea of the *DNB* existing as a grand Victorian body of work, detailing the lives of illustrious British men throughout recent history, is not a false one, it does ignore a different side of the publication, both from ideological and practical perspectives. At the outset and under Stephen's direction the *Dictionary* proposed to record the lives of the obscure just as

¹ *Reading Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 26.

² *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5.

³ *Virginia Woolf*, p. 16.

readily as it would the famous, as Stephen would explicitly state in the inaugural announcement of the *DNB*.

The following discussion will question three popular perceptions of Stephen's biographical ideology that are exemplified by those critical quotations: his inspiration and direction were derived from a sense of nationalistic duty; he was committed to only fact-based biography; and his desire was to commemorate great figures. The following argument will challenge each of these interpretations of Stephen's principles, leading to a clearer view of how his idea of biography bears comparison with Woolf's in several significant ways.

Beginning with that last point, the image of the 'monumental Victorian enterprise', as Goldman terms it, unfairly disguises the personal efforts and ambitions of Stephen and his publisher, George Smith, in dragging their fledgling idea for a 'Biographia Britannica' into publication, circulation, and eventual success. That this was done while deliberately maintaining the organ's autonomy, and consequently without any public funding, should be acknowledged even when considering the much larger entity the *Dictionary* would grow into over the proceeding decades. Indeed, the details of the creation of the *DNB* indicate a shared sense between Stephen and Smith that their efforts were not aimed at creating a national monument or institution but rather something much more independent. Gillian Fenwick draws attention to the personal nature of Stephen and Smith's scheme:

Leslie Stephen edited *Cornhill* for 11 years, and, despite the declining circulation, he and Smith remained friends. By 1882 Smith knew he must make radical changes if it were to survive, and so he conceived a project out of the desire to help a friend and came up with the idea for a biographical dictionary, offering Leslie Stephen the opportunity to step down from *Cornhill Magazine* and assume the editorship. Smith's original idea was for an international biographical dictionary, but Stephen advised against such a large-scale project, persuading Smith there would be more than enough work and interest in British, Irish, and colonial biographies.⁴

⁴ 'The "Athenaeum" and the "Dictionary of National Biography", 1885-1901', p. 181.

Fenwick's explanation of the *Dictionary* coming into existence through the enthusiasm of two chief protagonists captures the sense of innovation and camaraderie that certainly propelled its conception, as do Smith's own remarks on the shared *laissez-faire* attitude towards solicitors' letters which demanded prior notice of their client's biographical entry.⁵ It was, though, more collaborative than is suggested in the quotation from Fenwick, with both Stephen and Smith recording their discussions on the birth of the *Dictionary* (LL, 344, 350).⁶ The two were in regular communication on the matter and both later recount with some relief Stephen's successful persuasion of Smith to scale down his original scheme for a world-wide dictionary of biography to one which accounted only for biographies from the British Isles and the Colonies.

It is worth staying with that last point, for it opens up the wider discussion on Stephen's and Smith's motivations for embarking on the dictionary project. In this instance the reason for the 'national' aspect of the *DNB* is revealed to be one of pragmatism on Stephen's part, rather than due to any particular thoughts of patriotism. And while Fenwick is correct in asserting that the *Cornhill's* readership had fallen during the ten years of Stephen's stewardship (though its reputation was greatly enhanced by the writers Stephen brought to the paper, with Oscar Maurer commenting that 'he had made the *Cornhill* the best magazine of its kind in the nineteenth century'),⁷ there is no evidence to suggest that the *DNB* was born out of a generous face-saving exercise on the part of the publisher. In fact, Smith's motivations are clearly stated as being born out of a desire to produce an invaluable aid to English literature, demonstrated when he wrote: 'I owed that this should be my gift to English letters'.⁸ But there was more to it than only this benevolent gesture: Smith was determined that the *DNB* would be a private enterprise, as opposed to being a state-owned

⁵ 'The [legal] correspondence which gathered round the Dictionary would be a very amusing chapter of literature', remarked Smith in his discussion of this matter, as he described the regular notices from solicitors, which they 'learned to treat [...] with entire equanimity' (Huxley, *The House of Smith Elder*, p. 184).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷ 'Leslie Stephen and the Cornhill Magazine', p. 67.

⁸ Huxley, p. 182.

and funded organ. This idea seems to have pricked a sense of adventure in Smith, his pleasure being evident when he wrote of it:

I liked the idea of a private individual undertaking a work which was really national, and which outside England is only possible by virtue of the resources of the State. There are national biographies in continental literature, but they are never the result of private enterprise.⁹

Smith's comments here also reiterate the *Dictionary's* independence from the 'State'; he may have envisaged his publication as a gift to English literature, but the *DNB* belonged to George Smith not to the nation.

That both the institution and the contents of the *DNB* were based rather less on patriotic fervour than might be thought is relevant, as the argument here will challenge the related assumption of Stephen as representative of a *DNB* that sought chiefly to proclaim the greatness of its country's most famous men through a compilation of facts and dates.

The second challenge to the concept of Stephen's biographical approach is the idea that he emphasised the use of external facts above all else. Woolf wrote at one point that her father was entirely analytical and his creative powers 'crude, so elementary' (*MoB*, 126), and that reputation appears to have stayed with Stephen, surviving other more implicit suggestions by Woolf that this may not have been exactly the case. The following discussion will demonstrate that Stephen's thesis on biography is rather less susceptible to Woolf's most patent criticism of the *DNB* and Victorian biography generally, that being a rigid devotion to verifiable, researched facts.

Stephen's advertisement of a 'Biographia Britannica' printed in the pages of the *Athenaeum*, in December 1882, serves as his manifesto on biography. It defines the governing principles for the *Dictionary*, including what each entry must include, what must be always be excluded, and the overall ethos of the biographical content. Even permitting that the criteria Stephen sets down here is for the governance of a dictionary of biography,

⁹ Huxley, p. 182.

there is little doubt that the explanation of the approach to be taken reflects his wider views on all forms of biography. This following quotation from the article covers what Stephen believed to be mandatory for every life recorded in the *DNB*:

We should aim at giving the greatest possible amount of information in a thoroughly business-like form. Dates and facts should be given abundantly and precisely; it is of primary importance to give in all cases, and upon a uniform plan, a clear reference to the primary authorities; and in the case of literary biographies it is important to give a full bibliographical notice.¹⁰

This description of the ‘business-like form’ Stephen intended to apply perhaps comes as no surprise considering the prolific output of the *Dictionary*. Furthermore, Stephen was always adamant that history should be grounded in fact before it could be allowed to theorise, and his insistence here that dates and facts be given due attention reflects this and his desire to integrate a more scientific process into history and biography. Stephen then adds to these stipulations those things he considers entirely expendable: ‘Philosophical and critical disquisition, picturesque description, and so forth, are obviously out of place, and must be rigorously excised.’¹¹ While this compulsory limitation on literary or critical flourishes is understandable given the space constraints inherent in the *DNB*’s format, it nevertheless encourages a sense that Stephen’s vision of biography was somewhat prosaic, particularly when coupled with his previous instruction on the importance of facts and dates. In her essay on ‘The Art of Biography’, Woolf’s criticism of Sidney Lee (Stephen’s co-editor and eventual successor at the *DNB*) for his apparent disinclination towards anything in biography but ‘hard facts’ and verifiable truth brings to mind Stephen’s instructions for the *DNB*’s content:

For the truth of which Sir Sidney speaks, the truth which biography demands, is truth in its hardest, most obdurate form; it is truth as truth is to be found in the British Museum; it is truth out of which all vapour of falsehood has been pressed by the weight of research. (*E4 473*)

¹⁰ ‘A New “Biographia Britannica”’, *Athenaeum*, No. 2878 (23 December 1882), 850.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

It will be argued later in this chapter that Woolf deliberately refers to Lee ahead of Stephen in her criticism here, but even ignoring that supposition she certainly invokes the wider *DNB* in her charge against Lee's style of biography. In *Orlando*, Woolf goes further and directly refers to the *Dictionary* as being culpable of measuring a life only in verifiable facts (*O*, 151). Considering Stephen's directions on what to include and what not to include when writing a short biographical life, Woolf's criticism towards the *DNB* and its form of biography would appear justified in its charge of an overreliance on dry facts. Yet such criticism either ignores or dismisses a further stipulation Stephen made, on style. This is a significant point, for it suggests Stephen reasoned that biography entailed more than only compiling facts, and an accurate written life needed something more. His advice was as follows:

I think that it would be hard to exclude anything which fairly deserves the name of biographical. I have been asked whether anything in the way of 'literary style' is to be admitted. If style means superfluous ornament, I say emphatically, No. But style, and even high literary ability, is required for lucid and condensed narrative, and of such style I shall be anxious to get as much as I can.¹²

Stephen's remarks here are characteristic of his critical opinion on literary style generally. He did not appreciate attempts towards 'superfluous ornament' in any context of literature and Woolf wrote that he 'loved clear thinking. He hated sentimentality and gush' (*E5* 587). But it would be unfair and inaccurate to say that Stephen disliked anything but short, plain literature; he was entirely aware of the constraints entailed by writing for a biographical dictionary. In 1896, five years after his association with the *DNB* had ended, Stephen wrote an essay, 'National Biography', for the *National Review* (republished in *Studies of a Biographer*) reflecting on several facets of the *Dictionary*, including its style:

I am painfully aware of the hideous sentences which I have constructed in trying to say in ten words what, as I fancied, might make quite a pretty passage if spread over a hundred. I have groaned over some charming anecdote which seemed to beg for a

¹² 'A New "Biographia Britannica"', 850.

few little dramatic accessories, and wedged it remorselessly into its allotted corner [...] Perhaps – so one thinks when looking at some modern biographies – the training in condensation is not altogether bad. But the problem is to condense without squeezing out the real interest.¹³

Stephen knew from an aesthetic point of view that the *DNB*'s format had certain limitations and that writing within them would frequently be frustrating. Nevertheless he was determined that this should not hinder well-written biographical pieces, and there is a clear sense that even while acknowledging these restrictions Stephen felt the *Dictionary*'s format had much to commend it for writing lives, as his hint about the need to reduce 'modern biographies' indicates. In his 1893 essay, 'Biography', Stephen writes:

[A]rt, as it is often observed, may show itself best under such limitations. The writer of a sonnet, if the comparison be not too ambitious, knows his success is due to the difficulties he has surmounted. His gems are imperishable if he has fitted his thought precisely to the prescribed form.¹⁴

If Stephen admired the precise nature of this style, he displayed a contrasting impatience with the lengthy biographical tomes he observed to be increasing in popularity amongst his peers, hence his recommendation for a 'training in condensation', a similar complaint made by Woolf in her essay on 'The New Biography' (*E4* 475).

Stephen advised that 'characteristic anecdotes' should be included by the *Dictionary*'s contributors, even if his later essay suggests that this was often a challenge to the author; he wrote that a successful entry 'may not only be useful, but intensely interesting, and even a model of literary art.'¹⁵ Producing something of genuine interest and not just a useful selection of facts was paramount to Stephen's vision of the *DNB*, a point he reiterates in 'National Biography' when he states that a condensed biographical life should not be 'reduced to the bare dates and facts capable of being arranged in mechanical order. The aim should be to give whatever would be really interesting to the most cultivated reader, though

¹³ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, pp. 1-36 (p. 23) (first publ. in *National Review*, 157 (1896), 51-65 (p. 60).

¹⁴ *Men, Books, and Mountains*, p. 130.

¹⁵ 'A New "Biographia Britannica"', 850.

leaving it to the reader to put the dots over the i's.¹⁶ Stephen extolled biography based on facts (and he does not escape a related charge of recording life as though defined by evidenced life events) but that was not meant to result in dullness or poor literature; he expected a biographer to write well and engage the reader. Although a single example may not be sufficient to make a case for whether or not Stephen translated this theoretical approach into his practical writing, it can still demonstrate his style. Taken from Stephen's 1896 *DNB* entry on Alexander Pope, it is an ironic anecdote commenting on the rather complicated turn of events surrounding the earliest mention 'of anything like a love affair' in Pope's life:

In 1717 an edition of his poems was published, including the 'lines to an unfortunate lady.' Ayre, followed by Ruffhead, constructed out of the lines themselves a legend of a lady beloved by Pope who stabbed herself for love of Pope. Bowles heard from a gentleman of 'high birth and character,' who heard from Voltaire, who heard from Condorcet, that the lady was in love with a French prince.¹⁷

Stephen goes on to provide a more accurate account of the affair, though no less complicated, and the inclusion of a fairly personal matter as a means to show something of Pope's character is typical of Stephen's style of writing in the *DNB*. The addition of the above-quoted version of events, which includes Voltaire and a French prince, likewise serves here to demonstrate Stephen's belief that biography should be enjoyable as well as candid. If, then, Stephen goes at least some of the way towards avoiding the biographical pitfalls Woolf found prevalent in the nineteenth century, the question remains as to whom or in what direction she aimed that criticism.

This leads to the third and final aspect of Stephen's biographical approach to be queried, that being his purported belief in biography existing primarily to commemorate the most prestigious and celebrated names from history, with the *DNB* acting as a means to achieve that goal. The following discussion will challenge this assumption, arguing instead

¹⁶ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, p. 24.

¹⁷ 'Alexander Pope', *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XLVI*, ed. by Sidney Lee (London: Macmillan and Co., 1896), p. 114.

that Stephen envisaged the *Dictionary*'s main purpose as a scholarly tool, with its real value found more in detailing lesser-known lives than those of the great and famous, consequently reflecting the kind of biography Stephen found altogether more interesting. He imagined the *DNB* as an invaluable aid to students, acting as 'a confidential friend constantly at their elbow, giving them a summary of the knowledge of antiquaries, genealogists, bibliographers, as well as historians'.¹⁸ In Stephen's hands, the *Dictionary*'s facts were intended to fill in the gaps where previously undocumented lives had stood and to present a more encompassing and accurate conception of history, both for the academic and the layman.

Alongside the stated aim of providing an academic reference work, Stephen explained that it was not the lives of the famous that would prove the *DNB*'s worth and lasting value to both the scholar and the common reader but the inclusion of the lesser-known or even the unknown lives. He discussed the importance of recognising these lives in the essay, 'Forgotten Benefactors', writing of:

the enormous debt which we owe to men and women who lived in obscurity, who never had a thought of emerging out of obscurity, and whose ennobling influence has yet become a part of every higher principle of action in ourselves.¹⁹

This sentiment echoes in Woolf's discourses on history and biography, famously in *A Room of One's Own*. In the following quotation, Woolf's narrator provides a glimpse of the lives ignored by history and biography:

All these infinitely obscure lives remain to be recorded, I said, addressing Mary Carmichael as if she were present; and went on in thought through the streets of London feeling in imagination the pressure of dumbness, the accumulation of unrecorded life, whether from the women at the street corners with their arms akimbo, and the rings embedded in their fat swollen fingers, talking with a gesticulation like the swing of Shakespeare's words; or from the violet-sellers and match-sellers and old crones stationed under doorways; or from drifting girls whose

¹⁸ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. I*, p. 266.

faces, like waves in sun and cloud, signal the coming of men and women and the flickering lights of shop windows. (*ROO*, 91)

The next passage is from Stephen's essay on 'National Biography':

There is Bampfylde Moore Carew, the volunteer gypsy, who anticipated Borrow in the previous generation, and gives us a passing glimpse into the vagrant life in old English lanes and commons. There is John Case, the astrologer, who, as Addison tells us, made more money by his poetry than Dryden had done in a lifetime. There is the worthy Cat, who had an 'educated and thoughtful mind,' whose story illustrates the early growth of clubs [...] There is the modern hero, Ben Caunt, to illustrate the halo which lingered round the last days of prize-fighting.²⁰

There is a clear similarity in the way in which Stephen and Woolf present their case for the obscure names, helpfully demonstrated by these two pieces of text. Both writers guide their reader along their respective galleries of forgotten characters, Woolf taking hers from an imagined London, Stephen from the pages of the *DNB* ('honestly at random'), with a shared intention of proving the worth and inherent interest within these lives.²¹ Of course, while Stephen is able to pick these *almost* unknown lives from the *Dictionary* and enthuse about them, Woolf's selection is necessarily fictional, emphasising her point that the obscure lives of women are not published anywhere. Yet if this is where the comparison between the two falls short, with Woolf's thesis rooted in more political ends, there is still much in common here. The following passage, also from *A Room of One's Own*, makes a precise point about the need for greater research into the lives of the obscure, specifically those of women, and even suggests the need for facts in biography:

All these facts lie somewhere, presumably, in parish registers and account books; the life of the average Elizabethan woman must be scattered about somewhere, could one collect it and make a book of it. (*ROO*, 59-60)

Woolf's description of the compiling of the minutiae of the life events of long-forgotten people so as to inform potential biographies and histories matches Stephen's ambitions for

²⁰ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, pp. 32-33.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 30.

the *DNB* almost exactly, even in its acknowledgment of the usefulness of facts. This point of comparison between Woolf and Stephen, on which lives should merit biography, will be looked at further on in this chapter, but for now it is enough to acknowledge the similarity and how it connected certain aspects of their views, and to recognise the value Stephen placed on writing of these less celebrated names, belying his reputation for commemoration through biography.

Staying with that last point about the usefulness of facts, Stephen may have demanded a high level of literary prowess from his contributors, and more importantly interesting contributions, but the lives recounted in the *DNB* were ultimately founded upon several prominent details. Each and every entry began with dates of birth and death and in most cases ended with a short bibliography, creating a life bookended by facts. While this was eminently suitable for the research needs of a scholar, it was the antithesis of the concept of life-writing Woolf was advocating which sought to create impressions of a personality rather than communicate notable dates. And perhaps this is the crux of the antipathy Woolf felt towards the *Dictionary*. Its identity was tied to the purpose the editor envisaged for it and while a fact-laden biography was acceptable for a dictionary designed to support research, either scholarly or spontaneous, as Stephen imagined it, a similar style but with the intention of commemorating great lives was not.

If their shared outlook on illuminating obscure lives brings Woolf and Stephen, and his vision of the *DNB*, together, it just as surely separates both from Sidney Lee and how he imagined the *DNB*'s purpose under his editorial lead. It is important to note that there was a shift in conceptual emphasis at the *DNB* under Lee's direction and one that clearly reflected his biographical principles – principles with which Stephen and then Woolf disagreed. Lee intended for the *Dictionary* to commemorate the lives of the great and the good, forsaking Stephen's stated aim to offer biographical value through detailing lives less well known and less well documented. This separation is important, for it places Lee squarely in line with Woolf's critique of Victorian biography and Stephen rather more out of its intended aim.

This is keenly felt in *Orlando*, as Lee becomes the more obvious target of Woolf's parody, something which will be discussed fully in the analysis of that text at the end of this chapter.

Lee joined Stephen's ranks at the *DNB* in August 1883 as sub-editor, having graduated from Oxford in History and with a developing interest in Shakespeare. He remained in that position until the final months of 1889, at which point Stephen's declining health caused the two to share editing duties. Lee took full control in 1891 up until the series end in 1901, which concluded with his extended life of Queen Victoria. Lee wrote of what he considered to be the principles of biography in a lecture to the Royal Institute, in 1896, and again in the Sir Leslie Stephen Lecture of May 1911. If there is a primary principle consistent in both lectures, it is as Lee describes it here:

Biography exists to satisfy a natural instinct in man – the commemorative instinct – the universal desire to keep alive the memories of those who by character and exploits have distinguished themselves from the mass of mankind.²²

Lee believed that the 'commemorative instinct' defined the purpose of biography, of passing down the histories of men and women who had achieved something deemed worthy of recognition to future generations. This worthiness was explained further and with reference to ancient Greek ideas on corresponding themes of suitability for tragedies: 'A fit biographic theme is, in the Aristotelian phrase, a career which is "serious, complete and of a certain magnitude." An unfit biographic theme is a career of trivial aim, incomplete, without magnitude, of or below mediocrity.'²³ Immediately a divergence appears between Lee's principles of biography and Stephen's. Here, Lee is arguing the case for the centrality of commemoration in biography and the *DNB*, while Stephen had judged its motivation to be much more as a guide to the student and the interested amateur. In keeping with his idea of the 'commemorative instinct', Lee emphasised biography selecting lives above the mediocre; conversely, Stephen argued that it was exactly mediocre lives that should be the

²² Lee, *Principles of Biography; the Leslie Stephen lecture delivered in the Senate House, Cambridge, on 13 May 1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 7.

²³ *Principles of Biography*, pp. 11-12.

mainstay of the *Dictionary*'s contents. Their contrasting views are illustrated in the following passages, the first from Lee, the second from Stephen:

For the life of a nonentity or a mediocrity, however skilfully contrived, conflicts with primary biographic principles. Unless subject-matter and style be both of a commensurate sufficiency, biography lacks 'the qualities which it ought to have,' the qualities which ensure permanence, the qualities which satisfy the commemorative instinct.²⁴

It is the second-rate people – the people whose lives have to be reconstructed from obituary notices, or from references in memoirs and collections of letters [...] and who really become generally accessible through the dictionary alone – that provide the really useful reading. There are numbers of such people whom one first discovers to be really interesting when the scattered materials are for the first time pieced together.²⁵

Lee had little room in his vision for lives which were not remarkable in some very discernible way. He argued that otherwise they failed to fulfil the criteria he appropriated from Aristotle, and instead focused his attention on lives of 'magnitude', marking out Shakespeare's achievements as being perfectly suitable for his biographical model. These principles place Lee quite comfortably within the ideology of writing exemplary lives that was endemic in Victorian biography, whilst Stephen's position him outside of it. The 'ability of biography to teach by example', Juliette Atkinson explains, 'was constantly reaffirmed. The Victorians cherished this aspect of the genre perhaps above any other. The majority of biographies published during the period are exemplary.'²⁶

Lee's position clashed with Stephen's own stance that asserted that the lives of 'second-rate people' were not only useful for understanding social and historical periods and notable events but also interesting in their own right. Stephen suggests that the lives of 'great men' were not the real treasure amongst the *Dictionary*'s entries, and would be more

²⁴ *Principles of Biography*, p. 10.

²⁵ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, pp. 21-22.

²⁶ *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth-Century 'Hidden' Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 24-25.

sensibly accessed from a library and all the resources found therein than by reference to the *DNB*. He added in a later essay that the pomp and ceremony surrounding such figures was somewhat questionable, ignoring as it does equally necessary but less celebrated contributions: ‘I do not see the connection between this [admiration] and the desire to exalt the great man by ignoring the unknown who followed in his steps, and often made them possible.’²⁷ Stephen wrote about this discrepancy between the two editors’ ideological perspectives, particularly in reference to the *DNB*, in his ‘National Biography’ essay, prompted to do so by Lee’s 1896 lecture to the Royal Institution:

If I were to deal with [Lee’s] subject from the same point of view, I should have little more to do than say ‘ditto’ to most of his remarks. [...] But I also think that in dealing briefly with a large subject, he left untouched certain considerations which are a necessary complement to his argument.²⁸

While Stephen’s conciliatory tone befits their lengthy working relationship, he is nevertheless politely sceptical towards Lee’s belief in the ‘commemorative instinct’. He wonders how an explanation based on commemoration would answer those critics who question the inclusion of the numerous obscure names, then criticises any undertaking thought to be based on instinct as being irrational. Stephen states that Lee’s condition for determining who should merit a place in the *Dictionary* was not the most objective method for the task; instead he proposed a simpler if less grand criteria – anyone who has been referenced (not necessarily by name) in an existing history or dictionary or biography should warrant inclusion in the *DNB*, thus securing its value as a research aid.

It is clear Stephen was uncomfortable with Lee’s declaration of the *DNB* being written as a monument to great lives. Apart from his argument for an admission rationale that was far more appropriate for the academic utility of the *DNB* than it was for patriotic grandstanding of any degree, Stephen’s long-held belief in the greater value and interest in

²⁷ *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. II*, p. 228.

²⁸ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. I*, p. 1.

the lives of the obscure rather than the famous was incongruous with Lee's appeal to 'the magnitude of human action'.²⁹

Recalling that Stephen and Smith, as founders, deliberately maintained an unaffiliated relationship between their dictionary and the nation, Lee's steer towards 'commemorative instinct' strikes as more of a turning point for the *DNB*. At the beginning of this section, a disparity was noted between the popular view amongst critics of the *DNB* existing as a national monument ('[i]ts purpose was to keep a national record of the lives of great men [...], the greatest British writers, statesmen and thinkers') and the formation at its outset of something different, and certainly less grandiose.³⁰ While the institutionalisation of the *Dictionary* is certainly due in a large part to its longevity and ever growing size, if there was an ideological change that played a determining part in its gradual transformation the evidence indicates that it occurred in the transition from Stephen to Lee as editor. This change has consequences in understanding Woolf's relationship to both Stephen and the *DNB*. Stephen's manifesto and his later writings on biography share many important similarities with Woolf's ideas on the subject, whilst her critical opinions of the *DNB* appear more pertinent to Lee's conception of the *Dictionary*. In order to extend this analysis, Woolf's biographical theories will be discussed next.

Woolf and the New Biography

Woolf's two essays on biography, 'The New Biography' and 'The Art of Biography', can almost be read as one extended thesis on the subject. In the former, originally published as a review of Harold Nicolson's *Some People* (1927), Woolf introduces what she believes to be the key aspect of new biography – the juxtaposition of fact and fiction, her 'granite and rainbow'. At the same time, Woolf was drawing together her plans for her fictional biography of Vita Sackville-West based on the structure of a Daniel Defoe adventure, and Defoe's own disregard of generic distinctions in his literature appears to have prompted

²⁹ *Principles of Biography*, p. 17.

³⁰ Briggs, *Reading Virginia Woolf*, p. 26.

similar deliberations in Woolf, as will be discussed later in this chapter alongside further study of Stephen's attitude towards biographical facts. Woolf's examination of the potential of biography to marry both factual and fictive elements without incongruity emerges as the major theme through both essays, with Woolf paying particular attention to Nicolson in 'The New Biography' and to Lytton Strachey in 'The Art of Biography' and their efforts to achieve this same feat.

It is important to consider that over the course of her two essays Woolf is presenting her own modernist perspective on biography, one driven by the concept of reproducing impressions of a life and disinclined towards the lists and dates featured in so many of the biographies compiled by her Victorian predecessors, the *DNB* included. Furthermore, Woolf's designation of Victorian biography as one body necessarily involves a generalised conception of it, the idea of which is encapsulated in her depiction from 'The New Biography' of both the writer and their subject: 'the Victorian biographer was dominated by the idea of goodness. Noble, upright, chaste, severe; it is thus that the Victorian worthies are presented to us' (*E4* 474-75). From Woolf's description it is clear that her representation of Victorian biography is rooted in the exemplary lives ideology, the form of biography that sought to extol the virtues of moral and intellectual achievement through the eulogising of model lives, and which the previous discussion demonstrated was adopted by Sidney Lee. Juliette Atkinson writes:

The didactic content could be religious, with exhortations to lead a pious life, or secular, as in Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*. The potential power wielded by such works was such that biographies aimed at working-class readers were very cautious in the ideals they promoted and made a careful distinction between self-improvement and social improvement.³¹

This, then, was the ethos behind the style of biography: to provide moral and heroic standards through the lives that were recorded, with an aim to influence society, particularly

³¹ Atkinson, p. 25. Trev Broughton also examines the developments in auto/biography during the Victorian period, drawing attention to Stephen's biographical work (*Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Literary Auto/biography in the Late-Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1998)).

working-class society, into following the lead of these exemplary men. Arthur Stanley's *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D.* (1844) frequently features in critical studies as the archetypal exemplary life of the period, with Stanley's affectionate and respectful portrait of Thomas Arnold avoiding any hint of controversy and instead concentrating on furthering the idea of Arnold's model life.³² William N. Weaver writes of the critical consensus that views Stanley's book as 'crucial in promoting Thomas Arnold and his Rugby schoolboy subjects as exemplary Victorian icons, and the Arnoldian ideal as a powerful, class-specific Victorian ideology.'³³ It thus achieves the expected didactic element of the typical exemplary life whilst steadfastly refusing to countenance coverage of the less desirable episodes from that life, an aspect of the style of biography that caused Woolf to lament how 'the Victorian age was rich in remarkable figures many of whom had been grossly deformed by the effigies that had been plastered over them' (*E6* 183).

John Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens* (1872-74) acts as a useful example of the obvious drawbacks of the exemplary lives style, with Forster imitating Stanley in his side-stepping of any of the thornier incidents from Dickens' life, such as the separation from his wife Catherine, and producing a white-washed version of his subject as a consequence. Forster, Dickens' close friend, embodies Woolf's criticism of the Victorian biographer as 'the serious and sympathetic companion, toiling even slavishly in the footsteps of his hero' (*E4* 475).

Arriving at the very end of the Victorian era and in three volumes, John Morley's *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (1903) not only corresponds to Woolf's complaints over the length of Victorian biographies but is specifically referred to in 'The New Biography' as lacking in precisely the qualities Woolf demanded from biography:

³² Examples of these studies include Ruth Hoberman's 'Biography: General Survey', in *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*, ed. by Margaretta Jolly (London & Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), pp. 109-112 (p. 110), and James Eli Adams' *A History of Victorian Literature* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), p. 334.

³³ "'A School-Boy's Story': Writing the Victorian Public Schoolboy Subject', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2004), 455-487 (p. 455) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3829669>> [Accessed on 25 February 2018]

In the end he produces an amorphous mass, a life of Tennyson, or of Gladstone, in which we go seeking disconsolately for voice or laughter, for curse or anger, for any trace that this fossil was once a living man. (*E4* 475)

Morley joins Sidney Lee as the personification of all that was wrong with traditional biography, his *Gladstone* charged with failing to express any of the emotional qualities of his subject, while at the end of 'The New Biography' Woolf imagines the way in which Morley and Lee would have written of a few years of 'one's own life': 'how strangely all that has been most real in them would have slipped through their fingers' (*E4* 478). The inability to look past the rigid, verifiable facts of a life was Woolf's strongest indictment of a biographer and it is in the work of two of Stephen's chief collaborators that she finds it most noticeable. This leads to Stephen himself, but, as the preceding discussion has revealed, his biography cannot easily be placed under the exemplary lives label, suggesting again that Woolf is carefully distinguishing her father from the form of biography she is criticising, as well as from the institutional biography of which she sees Lee and Morley representative (despite Stephen's own connection with both the *DNB* and the *English Men of Letters* series).

Woolf was hardly clutching at straws when constructing her image of the Victorian biography, as these examples demonstrate. Life writing during the Victorian era was dominated by a concern with didacticism and commemoration, and Atkinson confirms that the 'majority of biographies published during the period are exemplary'.³⁴ Nevertheless Woolf's argument assumes a homogeneity that was missing. She notes James Anthony Froude's *Life of Carlyle* as an outlier, a daring foray into a more forthright style of biography that acted as the exception that proved the rule, but this interpretation of events avoids any discussion of other biographies that did not fit the exemplary lives formula. For instance Carlyle's own *Life of John Sterling* was an influential text that saw its author establish the precedence of his own vision, and opinion, over attention to precise, verifiable

³⁴ Atkinson, p. 25.

detail; in other words, a conception of biography not so far removed from the modernist new biography.³⁵

Woolf is also inconsistent in her criticism of exemplary lives, with J.G. Lockhart's *Life of Scott* (1837–38) causing Woolf to include its author alongside Boswell and Johnson as the 'only three great biographers' in 'The Art of Biography' (*E6* 181), yet his is a biography in seven volumes and still short on candid commentary (Lockhart was after all Scott's son-in-law), if not on grandiose statements regarding Scott's character. The following example is from Lockhart's conclusion at the end of the book: 'it is already to be hoped that the spirit which breathes through his works may continue to act on our literature, and consequently on the character and manners of men'.³⁶

Lockhart clearly sets out his belief that Scott's life and works would have a beneficial effect on morality in society, with the biography of him a means of homage. This begs the question as to how Lockhart's *Scott* was distinguishable from Woolf's categorisation of Victorian biography, other than its being several years early. It was certainly lengthy, the narrative was discreet and carrying with it a fulsome praise of Scott's moral bearing, while Lockhart's writing was concerned with a factual rather than impressionistic likeness of Scott himself. The distinction for Woolf between Lockhart's book and the numerous instances of Victorian exemplary lives she dismissed lay, of course, in its success as a readable biography. Woolf found it compelling, just as Stephen had, and she wrote of it in the fondest terms in her early diaries: 'Went up to read with father, and then began my beloved Lockhart – which grows more and more beautiful every day – Read all the morning' (*APA*, 25). What this inconsistency in Woolf's critiquing serves to establish is that her generalisation of Victorian biography is exactly that – a generalisation, and one

³⁵ Anne M. Skabarnicki describes Carlyle as taking an 'imaginative approach' to the biography, and writes how he 'subtly reshapes Sterling's career and character to make them emblematic of futile poetic idealism' ('The Life of John Sterling', in *The Carlyle Encyclopedia*, ed. by Mark Cumming (Madison and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), pp. 287–88 (p. 288)). Interestingly, Woolf notes Stephen giving her the book to read in 1897 (*APA*, 59).

³⁶ *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 7 vols (London: John Murray and Whittaker and Co., 1837–38; 2nd edn, 10 vols, 1839), VII (1838), pp. 416–17.

that served a purpose for Woolf. It was unnecessary for her to unpick the various strands of Victorian life writing, as the generalised concept she was presenting was accurate enough and recognisable enough for the argument she was making: that Victorian biography had caused the genre to become archaic and dull, and that new biography would change all of that.

‘The New Biography’

It is essential to include in this analysis of Woolf’s ‘The New Biography’ some scrutiny of the way in which she uses facts, fiction, and truth in her writing, and by drawing attention to the long-existing centrality of the dichotomy of fact and fiction in biographical writing and the way new biography, and Woolf specifically, would adapt it. *Orlando* plays a key role in this extended discussion, as the analysis of that text will show.

While Woolf does not offer an explicit definition of her terminology, it is possible to interpret it from her writing. Facts are events and details that are true of the external world (or, more accurately, referentially true), for instance, someone’s date of birth. In Woolf’s words, this is ‘truth in its hardest, most obdurate form’ (E4 473). Conversely, fiction represents something more fluid in Woolf’s work. It is not necessarily referentially true and can describe external and internal experiences, though Woolf uses it frequently as a means of describing the internal (‘the life which is increasingly real to us is the fictitious life; it dwells in the personality rather than the act’ (E4 478)). Truth is used to determine a certain value, rather than act to confirm binary yes/no decisions or to judge the veracity of substantial evidence, and, though she states of fiction and fact that ‘both truths are genuine’ (E4 477), Woolf tends to find a greater value in fictional truths than factual ones.

This is a significant point in understanding Woolf’s position, as it helps explain her criticism of biography heavily reliant on factual details; it also helps explain the success, both in terms of the finished output and the process of writing, of *Orlando* compared to *Roger Fry: a Biography*. Laura Marcus acknowledges Woolf’s distinction, noting how

“‘imaginative’ truths are always perceived as of a higher order than truths of ‘fact’”.³⁷ Elena Gualtieri does the same, drawing attention to ‘Woolf’s privileging of psychology over action’ in relation to facts, and attributes it to being part of her modernist outlook.³⁸ This is true, but there is a more complex explanation as to why Woolf takes this point of view, one which will be expounded upon in the following discussion.

Stephen’s contemplations on biography inevitably cover concepts of truth, and his argument that biography should go beyond Victorian propriety is ultimately an argument over distinctions between fact, fiction, and truth. A written life may be based entirely on fact yet not necessarily represent the truth of its subject if other details are deliberately obscured – something altogether more unforgivable than mere notions of discretion, as Stephen makes clear in his essay, ‘Biography’ (1893):

The biographer of modern times may be often indiscreet in his revelations; but so far as the interest of the book goes the opposite pole is certainly the most repulsive. We want the man in his ordinary dress, if not stripped naked; and these dignified persons will only show him in a full-bottomed wig and a professor’s robes.³⁹

This commitment to the autonomy of biography not only confirms Stephen as outside of dominant biographical opinion, for the subjects of exemplary lives were not customarily stripped naked, but also prompts another comparison with Woolf. In the following passage from ‘The Art of Biography’, Woolf makes her own demand for the biographer’s privilege:

The biographer [...] has the right to all the facts that are available. If Jones threw boots at the maid’s head, had a mistress at Islington, or was found drunk in a ditch after a night’s debauch, he must be free to say so. (*E6* 185-86)

If this sentiment might be expected from Woolf, considering her attitude towards literature and convention, the fact that it parallels Stephen’s opinion is less so. Even the manner of its expression is reminiscent of the quotation from his essay, with a similar image conjured in

³⁷ *Auto/biographical Discourse*, p. 108.

³⁸ ‘The Impossible Art: Virginia Woolf on Modern Biography’, *The Cambridge Quarterly Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2000) 349-361 (p. 351) <<https://academic.oup.com/camqtly/article-abstract/XXIX/4/349/366359>> [Accessed on 02 November 2017].

³⁹ *Men, Books, and Mountains*, p. 136.

both texts. This discussion on propriety in biography will be returned to in a discussion on Froude and his *Life of Carlyle*; for now it is enough to establish Stephen's position.

The privileging of fictive truth over factual truth in Woolf's work indicates a modernist inclination towards placing internal experience at the centre of biography (and literature, as she argues in 'Modern Fiction'), but her two essays on the subject advocate a measured selection of factual *and* fictive details as the method for new biography to successfully reflect the personalities of its subjects. This was easier said than done, however, according to Woolf:

[The biographer] is trying to mix the truth of real life and the truth of fiction. He can only do it by using no more than a pinch of either. For though both truth are genuine, they are antagonistic; let them meet and they destroy each other. (E4 477)

Woolf is careful to convey the importance of not allowing the 'truth of real life and the truth of fiction' to meet and to reduce the effect of the other. This appears to place the biographer in something of a conundrum, required to apply the right mix of facts and fiction but in the knowledge that the two are dangerously incompatible. The problem is surmountable, however, and less contradictory than it may at first appear. When Woolf writes that 'a little fiction mixed with fact can be made to transmit personality' (E4 477), she is recommending this as the best method for conceiving biography. An over-reliance upon facts is what in Woolf's view caused so much of Victorian life writing to be dull and devoid of real character, like Morley's *Gladstone*, as will be discussed in greater detail shortly. This was most of all because the prominent biographical style of the time, belonging to writers like Sidney Lee, failed in Woolf's view to take into consideration the internal life of the subject, instead only recording the notable external events that occurred over the course of his or her life. To capture the internal – the thoughts and feelings and psyche – was to capture the real personality and this, Woolf argues, required the use of fiction: 'For it would seem that the life which is increasingly real to us is the fictitious life; it dwells in the personality rather than in the act' (E4 478). Therefore, by the prudent selection of a certain number of external

facts about a life combined with the essential fictive details of the subject's inner self, the skilled biographer could express the true essence of the whole life. This is how facts and fiction could and should be combined according to Woolf's theory; what must not happen, or risk the work being 'blown sky high' (*E4* 477), is for facts and fiction to be allowed to adapt or corrupt the other. In other words, the biographer must not attempt to fictionalise a fact, nor present a fiction created by him or herself as though it were fact: 'Let it be fact, one feels, or let it be fiction; the imagination will not serve under two masters simultaneously' (*E4* 478). The reader, faced by an uncertainty over the veracity of the separate truths due to the inability to recognise which is the fiction and which is the fact ('the one casts suspicion upon the other'), will lose faith in both the biography and the biographer (*E4* 478).

As this analysis makes clear, Woolf maintained the dichotomy of fact and fiction in her theorising and though this willingness to uphold such a strict division seems at odds with Woolf's general attitude towards generic, social, and genre distinctions, there is a cogent explanation to this apparent exception. This is that even while maintaining the separation, Woolf suggests that facts have a far greater impermanence to them than might be expected, for they are 'subject to changes of opinion; opinions change as the times change' (*E6* 186). As society and perspectives alter, so too do the interpretations of facts. Therefore the authority of facts, criticised by Woolf in *Three Guineas* for being complicit in the gender inequality endemic in society, is already weakened in the context of biography (*TG*, 26). Woolf writes that the modern biographer's 'sense of truth must be alive and on tiptoe' in an age where facts are understood to be open to different interpretations, often existing as 'contradictory versions of the same face' (*E6* 186). Anna Snaith acknowledges this too, stating that 'Woolf does not view "facts" as monolithic and permanent [...]. Facts are contingent, determined by context'.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ 'Virginia Woolf and Auto/biography' in *Representing Lives: Women and Auto/Biography*, ed. by Pauline Polkey and Alison Donnell (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p. 103.

The conflict between facts and fiction is a necessary device for this vision of new biography: as Gualtieri notes, for Woolf, ‘biography is both constituted by this tension and confronted by it’.⁴¹ So Woolf makes use of this literary and epistemological contrast between the two poles, juxtaposing the granite and rainbow, the external and the internal, in the knowledge that facts have a diminishing power to act as a dominating force due to their transience. What is more, Woolf is active in this coup, as she prioritises fictional truth (and therefore the internal) above factual truth. Thus Woolf’s adherence to the fact/fiction separation allows her to exploit the tension between the two sides and at the same time point to the inevitable fragility of truth.

This intrinsically modernist perspective might appear to hold little attachment to Stephen’s ideas on biography, but his essay, ‘Some Early Impressions’ (1903), which Woolf had reprinted in 1924 by the Hogarth Press, offers evidence to the contrary. In the essay, Stephen writes of his earlier life, reminiscing particularly of his time at Cambridge and the people he met there, and contemplates how memories are formed from more than just fact:

When, therefore, I summon up remembrance of things past, I am forced to confess that my little panorama is full of gaps, often blurred and faded and too probably distorted in detail. Yet I preserve a good many tolerably vivid impressions of the people among whom I have lived and of the influences they have exerted upon me. Some of these may be worth a record. If my confession implies that they must be taken with a certain reserve, an impression is in its way a fact.⁴²

This is an intriguing contribution to this debate on concepts of truth in biography, as Stephen is indicating that the memories he has of people, the impressions of them, do not consist solely of facts but have something else included alongside, or, in some cases where the memory of facts has faded, as a replacement for them. This corresponds surprisingly closely to Woolf’s own conception of melding fact with fiction to create the most compelling impression of a person. Stephen explores his point further in the essay, noticing that as he

⁴¹ ‘The Impossible Art’, p. 350.

⁴² *Some Early Impressions*, p. 10.

tried to recollect anecdotes from a particularly loquacious friend, something was missing: ‘when one tried to collect the phrases, the process was like trying to speak to a friend seen distinctly but through a closed window’. Even though Stephen argued he could recall ‘some brilliant passages of talk’, they had ‘lost the context which gave them point. Boswell is still unique. No one has inherited his capacity for the dexterous touches which reproduce the dramatic effect as well as the bare words.’⁴³ Both Stephen and Woolf admired Boswell, something which will be examined shortly, and his presence here is used to signify an ability for capturing the essence of his subject’s personality and conversation, beyond just recounting the ‘bare words’ which had been spoken; or, in other words, just recording the bare facts. Stephen argues for an additional quality to this to achieve a more exact record of a life, and while this might not have matched exactly with the enhancement of fiction that Woolf prescribed, it is at the least a writing style that allows the biographer freedom to express the personality of the subject. Stephen’s concluding point in the first quotation from the essay, that ‘an impression is in its way a fact’, also makes the same point as Woolf’s argument that fictive facts had as much validity as external facts themselves.

By contrast, Woolf’s concept of the intermingling of ‘truth of fact and truth of fiction’ finds a natural foe, in the form of Sidney Lee (*E4* 478). Woolf’s critique of Lee’s biographical output centres upon his steadfast reliance on ‘hard facts’ and complete avoidance of any attempt to record his subject’s personality:

Truth thus being efficacious and supreme, we can only explain the fact that Sir Sidney’s life of Shakespeare is dull, and that his life of Edward the Seventh is unreadable, by supposing that though both are stuffed with truth, he failed to choose those truths which transmit personality. For in order that the light of personality may shine through, facts must be manipulated; some must be brightened; other shaded; yet, in the process, they must never lose their integrity. (*E4* 473)

Woolf identifies Lee’s apparent inability to negotiate the correct balance between the manipulation of fact and the integrity of fact necessary to reflect personality in biography.

⁴³ *Some Early Impressions*, pp. 8-9.

The manipulation is founded on the use of fiction, allowing the writer to brighten and shade external facts by adding the insight of the internal facts, and which consequently reproduces the personality rather than a collection of impersonal details about the life. When Woolf pronounces that Lee's *A Life of William Shakespeare* (1898) and *King Edward VII: A Biography* (1925-27) are 'stuffed with truth', she is making that exact criticism – the biographies are without personality, and dull and unreadable because of it.

Woolf stays with Lee and the following passage from the essay is significant, not least because Lee's presence here as architect of the 'monument' of the *DNB* is overshadowed by Stephen's glaring absence:

Only when truth had been established did Sir Sidney Lee use it in the building of his monument; and no one can be so foolish as to deny that the piles he raised of such hard facts, whether one is called Shakespeare or another King Edward the Seventh, are worthy of all our respect. (*E4* 473)

Stephen was the original editor and co-founder of the *DNB* (and the other half of an ongoing textual conversation with Woolf), yet it is Lee and his style of biography that is being directly referenced and critiqued. And, as was discussed in the first section of this chapter, there were substantial enough differences between Stephen and Lee to indicate that Woolf is specifically distinguishing Lee, rather than using him as a proxy for Stephen or as a representative of the same biographical school of thought. Stephen is absent because it is neither he nor his iteration of the *DNB* that Woolf wishes to challenge; is it Lee's testament to great English men that is being called into question, 'the building of his monument' to the lives of which Woolf had no interest.

'The New Biography' sees Woolf identify Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791) as a watershed moment in biography, representing a successful attempt by the writer to record the personality of his subject rather than simply chronicle the events of his life. Woolf writes of Boswell as being 'one of those curious men of genius', whose voice had carried the essence of his subject so effectively that it had changed biography:

Once we heard those words we are aware that there is an incalculable presence amongst us which will go on ringing and reverberating in widening circles however times may change and ourselves. All the draperies and decencies of biography fall to the ground. We can no longer maintain that life consists in actions only or in works. It consists in personality. (*EA* 474)

As the earlier discussion has shown, Stephen admired Boswell too, perhaps favouring his *Life of Johnson* more than any other book,⁴⁴ and wrote of the same ability and the same effect his work had on biography that Woolf later identified:

He produces that effect of which Carlyle often made such powerful use, the sudden thrill which comes to us when we find ourselves in direct communication with human feeling in the arid wastes of conventional history; when we perceive that a real voice is speaking out.⁴⁵

Both Woolf and Stephen distinguish Boswell's writing from that of his contemporaries by its power to impart a sense of Johnson's personality, and more specifically of his voice. Woolf describes how the sound of Johnson's speech carried through Boswell's words reverberates so strongly in the reader that other biographical writing is left to 'fall to the ground'. Stephen refers to the same idea of the essence of Johnson's voice, the 'human feeling', being relayed so effectively by Boswell that the reader believes a 'real voice is speaking out'. Boswell thus proves to be another connection on the intertextual net.

Woolf complains that biography regressed rather than progressed from this point, for it was hampered by a Victorian propensity for didacticism and a stifling sense of modesty. Woolf confronts this sense of propriety she associated with Victorian biography, arguing that it obscured truth:

Suppose, for example, that the man of genius was immoral, ill-tempered, and threw the boots at the maid's head. The widow would say, 'Still I loved him – he was the father of my children; and the public, who love his books, must on no account be disillusioned. Cover up; omit.' The biographer obeyed. And thus the majority of

⁴⁴ '[Stephen] told his nurse that his enjoyment of books had begun and would end with Boswell's "Life of Johnson"' (*LL*, 486).

⁴⁵ *Men, Books, and Mountains*, p. 136.

Victorian biographies are like the wax figures now preserved in Westminster Abbey that were carried in funeral processions through the street. (*E6* 182)

As well as connecting Victorian biography with both monuments and lifelessness via some bleak imagery, Woolf portrays the biographer as obedient to the whims of the family and friends of the subject, limited not just by factual constraints but also by nineteenth-century social decorum.

This comes across as particularly archaic when contrasted with Lytton Strachey, whose twentieth-century style and attitude Woolf compares with these prudish Victorian writers. She does, however, note an influential development in biography occurring between the two opposing centuries in the form of Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, written with the express intention of following its subject's own candid manner, ensuring that Froude captured Carlyle's vices as readily as his virtues. This caused a great deal of controversy at the time, for not only was Carlyle shown to be frequently unpleasant and rude company but also hostile towards his wife, Jane Welsh Carlyle. In detailing these moments, the book itself challenged existing notions of confidentiality in the private sphere. It is because of this previously unheard of approach to writing life that Woolf praises Froude, writing that his *Carlyle* avoided the common practice of sanitising its subject's life and marked a change in society that 'won a measure of freedom' for the biographer (*E6* 182).

Stephen's own reaction to the publication of Froude's divisive study, in his essay on 'The Browning Letters' (1902), bears comparison with Woolf's later commendation, with Stephen championing the right of the biographer to prioritise truthful expression over social niceties as keenly as Woolf. The ostensible subject of the essay was the publication of the correspondence between Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but this gives way to a more general discussion on publishing letters or diaries posthumously. Sparing little sympathy for the impassioned Carlyle supporters who had accused Froude of both impropriety and deceit in the matter of his biography, Stephen adjudged Froude's account to have been an attempt to represent the whole of Carlyle's character, 'with due depth of

shadow to throw out the intensity of the lights', declaring that it was 'precisely what a biographer ought to do'.⁴⁶ This insight reveals Stephen's attitude towards integrity in biography, as does the wider point of the essay. Stephen debates the ethics of publishing delicate or personal biographical details after the subject's death and is firmly on the side of the biographer who intends to include such material, assuming they write truthfully of it, noting his suspicion of 'commonplace morality on such matters' and the hypocrisy inevitably involved in this 'affectation of prudery'.⁴⁷

The outcry over the Froude/Carlyle controversy signalled that a certain reserve certainly still existed in late-Victorian literary society towards public inspection into what had been considered private life, but Stephen's reaction demonstrated his biographical ideals were more advanced than this.

Woolf reports that the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century heralded a welcome change in the genre, eschewing this didactic form for one more concerned with reproducing the essence of the subject through 'the tone of a voice, a turn of a head, some little phrase or anecdote picked up in a passage' (*E4* 476). But this was not without its difficulties. Woolf examines Harold Nicolson's work in light of this dilemma she has uncovered in biography:

Nicolson has proved that one can use many of the devices of fiction in dealing with real life. He has shown that a little fiction mixed with fact can be made to transmit personality very effectively. [...] Yet if he carries the use of fiction too far, so that he disregards truth, or can only introduce it with incongruity, he loses both worlds. (*E4* 477-78)

Woolf concludes that Nicolson ultimately fails to achieve the correct 'mix' of fact and fiction in his book, though she praises his efforts in pointing the form of biography in the

⁴⁶ For example, David Wilson accuses Froude of being unmanly and unconscientious in *Mr. Froude and Carlyle* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1898; repr. 1970), p. 162; Stephen, *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. III*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *Studies of a Biographer: Vol. III*, p. 2.

right direction, stating that the biographer capable enough ‘to present that queer amalgamation of dream and reality’ had not yet emerged (*E4* 478).

The Lives of Fry and Fitzjames, and ‘The Art of Biography’

By the time she published ‘The Art of Biography’ twelve years later, Woolf had stepped into the role she had anticipated herself, having written the fictional biographies *Orlando* and *Flush*. Despite Woolf’s own concerns over *Orlando*, worrying that it ‘may fall between two stools, be too long for a joke, & too frivolous for a serious book’, it was a critical and commercial success (*D3* 177). The book acts as a pivotal point in Woolf’s biographical oeuvre and will be scrutinised in the following and final section of this chapter.

What will be considered first is how Woolf’s only foray into formal biography, *Roger Fry*, demonstrates how her biographical ideals were challenged by practical and personal concerns, and how this is reflected in Woolf’s second essay on the subject, ‘The Art of Biography’. Both book and essay offer further insight into how Woolf thought about the capacity for biography accurately to reflect a person’s life, and the question of whether biography is an art or a craft, as posed in the essay, has a clear parallel with the ongoing and fundamental question in Woolf’s biographical thinking of how, and even if, fiction can be mixed with fact satisfactorily. Alongside this debate there will be an analysis of Stephen’s biography of his brother, the *Life of James Fitzjames Stephen*, for the book exists in similar relation to Stephen as *Roger Fry* does to Woolf, providing corresponding challenges to Stephen’s own theoretical approach to writing biography. Not only this, the *Life of Fitzjames* further evidences how Stephen could not easily be categorised with the Victorian biographers identified in Woolf’s criticism, even when he was compelled to adapt his principles somewhat in tackling such a personal project.

Woolf held some reservations towards writing *Roger Fry*, particularly in negotiating expectations of the book and the various influences likely to be placed upon it. ‘How do I feel about it?’ she asked herself. ‘If I could be free, then there’s the chance of trying

biography; a splendid, difficult chance – better than trying to find a subject – that is, if I *am* free’ (*D4* 260). Not only this, Woolf wrote of her worries over the amount of material that required processing into useful information:

Roger Fry’s family have asked me to write a life of him: What am I to say? There are masses of private papers, letters, etc: I’ve refused to write a whole big life; but promised to read through the papers and see if I can do something lesser and slighter’. (*L5* 352)

Despite this, a sense of obligation encouraged Woolf to overlook her concerns and agree to write the biography, prompting an immediate comparison with Stephen’s *Life of Fitzjames*. Stephen had taken on his task fully aware that it would be a challenging experience, particularly as Fitzjames had passed away only two months prior to his commitment to the writing:

I have now undertaken a task which, in some ways, I dread namely, to write his life. It is very difficult for me; but, having offered to do it, and my offer having been evidently pleasing to my sister-in-law, I must do what I can. (*LL*, 418)

As well as shared feelings of hesitancy and obligation as they embarked on their respective biographies, Stephen and Woolf both proposed approaches to writing that would avoid a traditional biographical style. Stephen stated that: ‘My desire is to make a portrait of him rather than a history of facts; and I have before me, as an ideal, Carlyle’s “Sterling”’ (*LL*, 418). As has been discussed, the *Life of John Sterling* was a departure from the exemplary lives form of biography, with Carlyle instead more interested in portraying Sterling’s life as he had experienced it. Stephen’s admiration for the work (he had already declared it as the model for his *Life of Henry Fawcett* (1858)), indicates his desire to go beyond that didactic and carefully worded biographical style, and ‘give the most faithful portrait I can’ of his subject (*LL*, 386). Woolf’s diary illustrates the same intention to forgo ‘conventional’ biography and produce something able to better represent Fry: ‘The more I read of Roger’s papers the more impossible it seems to write a conventional life of him: If I do write anything, I shall plunge and forget all relations and their feelings’ (*L6* 186).

Stephen is exempt from Woolf's later criticism concerning unnecessary length in biography, producing a book considerably shorter than some comparable lives of the time: Morley's *Gladstone* is more than three times its size. Aside from attesting to Stephen's belief in concise biography, it is perhaps also reflective of the fact that Fitzjames's life was not Gladstone's and, whilst not without moments of controversy, had passed relatively free of colourful incident. Stephen acknowledged this as a potential issue before beginning on the work, clarifying his intention to emulate Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* by pointing out that not only was he not Carlyle, but perhaps more importantly Fitzjames 'was very different to Sterling'. Stephen explained that there was not 'very much incident' in Fitzjames's life, 'and what there is is, in part, of or belonging to the legal side of things, and therefore rather outside my knowledge' (*LL*, 418). Stephen nevertheless documents his brother's career, and, as part of a more general aspect of his biographical style in the book, engages with the legal debates that it navigated, bringing in when necessary other expert opinions to maintain the critical perspective he employs throughout. Stephen takes a more certain position during the discussions of his brother's philosophical arguments, which range from general contemplations on Mill and Bentham to specific ethical or epistemological debates in which Fitzjames was involved. The following passage details Fitzjames's indifference towards Darwin and evolution, and at the same time relaying something of his personality:

To many of us on both sides theories of evolution in one form or other seem to mark the greatest advance of modern thought, or its most lamentable divergence from the true line. To Fitzjames such theories seemed to be simply unimportant or irrelevant.⁴⁸

The impression of Fitzjames here, sceptical towards Darwin's science and its relevance to his own thinking, is consistent with the wider character of the man depicted in Stephen's biography: typically conservative in his views, despite his liberal political affiliation, and in possession of a strong self-confidence that distinguished him from other Stephens, Leslie included (Fitzjames was 'of opinion that he inherited a greater share of the Venn than of the

⁴⁸ *The Life of Fitzjames Stephen*, p. 375.

Stephen characteristics’).⁴⁹ Aspects of Fitzjames’s nature can often be drawn out from the legal and philosophical dialogues in the book, to which Stephen applies an even-handed and often critical judgement on Fitzjames’s achievements, avoiding the role of ‘sympathetic companion’ Woolf deplored in her view of Victorian biography (*E4* 475).

Stephen does not, however, manage to compensate entirely for the accepted lack of incident, exemplified by a lengthy section from Fitzjames’s time spent in India concerned only with imparting details of the legislative work conducted there. It is meticulous in its detail but inevitably rather dry reading, as Stephen attempts to clarify Indian legal minutiae enough to determine what his brother’s work had involved and how successful it had been. The sense here is that Stephen was caught between writing an interesting life and giving due weight to Fitzjames’s accomplishments, even if they were not particularly enthralling to read about and dependent on lengthy explanation. The book is far more engrossing when Stephen is recounting the more lively moments from Fitzjames’s life, such as his involvement with the Metaphysical Club (‘It called itself metaphysical, and four out of five of its members knew nothing of metaphysics’, Stephen points out drily), or when sinking his narratorial teeth into studies of lesser known names.⁵⁰ Stephen’s interest in such characters and his liking for lively anecdotes to describe them, determined in the first section of this chapter as important aspects of how he approached biography, shines through the book. From his portrayal of the individuals involved in a murder case taken on by Fitzjames as a junior barrister that Stephen compares to *Jane Eyre*, to the detailed descriptions of his brother’s colourful literary colleagues, there is an obvious fascination with uncovering obscure but thought-provoking lives.⁵¹ The following is a passage from Stephen’s account of John Douglas Cook, Fitzjames’s editor on the *Morning Chronicle* in 1855:

He had received some appointment in India, quarrelled with his employers, and came home on foot, or partly on foot, for his narratives of this period were generally,

⁴⁹ *The Life of Fitzjames Stephen*, p. 33.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 368.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 146-48.

it was thought, marked rather by imaginative fervour than by a servile adherence to historic accuracy. He found work on the 'Times,' supported Mr. Walter in an election, was taken up by the Duke of Newcastle, and was sent by him to inquire into the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall.⁵²

Stephen's description does not stop here and its length and detail would be notable for a person with only a fleeting appearance in Fitzjames's life if Stephen did not pay a similar amount of attention to other, equally incidental characters along the way. It is when dealing with Fitzjames's character, or more accurately with flaws in that character, that proves the truly troublesome task for Stephen, as he predicted it would in correspondence to Norton:

Boswell showed his genius by setting forth Johnson's weaknesses as well as his strength. But if Boswell had been Johnson's brother? I cannot be simply eulogistic if the portrait is to be life-like; but I shall find it very hard to speak of defects without concealing my opinion that they were defects, or, on the other hand, taking a tone of superiority and condescension. By 'defects' I mean rather limitations. (*LL*, 418)

Stephen's difficulty with writing of these 'limitations' does not cause this to be only a positive and affectionate portrayal of Fitzjames; rather that Stephen frequently appears compelled to soften the blow of his criticism, either by passing no further word ('I will not go into such discussions', 'I cannot even touch such controversies here', 'I will not try to decide' (*LL*, 277, 367, 413)) or by adding some extraneous explanation. The following passage demonstrates this as Stephen describes how Fitzjames had a tendency to overlook his own limitations and so was consequently disadvantaged when they required attention:

The obstacle to his success was just the want of appreciation of certain finer shades of conduct, and therefore remained unintelligible to himself. He was like a painter of very keen and yet narrowly limited vision, who could not see the qualities which lead people to prefer the work of a long-sighted man. Yet he not only never lost heart, but, so far as I can discover, was never for a moment querulous or soured.⁵³

The additional platitude in defence of Fitzjames's fortitude reads as a reflection of Stephen's admitted awkwardness towards elaborating upon his brother's 'defects', and is redundant in

⁵² *The Life of Fitzjames Stephen*, pp. 149-50.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 357.

terms of the impression of Fitzjames created here. Instead it reveals more about Stephen himself; a diligent biographer, unwilling to allow sentimental attachment to overrule a true account of his subject, he was nevertheless unable to remove those last traces of impartiality towards Fitzjames's character.

The uncomfortable instances where Stephen had been required to pass judgement on his brother's character caused him to declare that the book was 'about the stiffest piece of work I ever undertook' (*LL*, 419), and it is clear that Stephen had not been able to write entirely as he wanted. On one hand, the biography successfully creates an impression of its subject, presenting a Fitzjames who shared the Stephen work ethic if not its nervousness, and whose ethical and political outlook became less liberal, and less like Stephen's, over the course of his life. Yet, on the other hand, the restrictions caused by the obvious personal feeling Stephen had towards his subject determined that there was more dry fact than he himself would have expected from a biography, and rather too much delicacy in dealing with character.

In terms of Woolf's later biographical debate, the text would not have passed muster as new biography even if Woolf and Stephen did have plenty in common in their thinking about biographical writing. But then this would be an unreasonable expectation; Stephen was not a modernist writer. What the *Life of Fitzjames Stephen* helps to prove is that, despite the individual flaws in that text, Stephen was also not the Victorian biographer Woolf railed against in 'The New Biography'. Woolf may have even sympathised with the problems of writing such a personal biography, as she faced the same dilemma when writing her life of Roger Fry and with the same requirement to adjust her approach that Stephen had experienced.

Before work had begun on her first conventional biography, Woolf found herself 'looking at boxes of Roger Fry's letters and wondering how anyone writes a real life', adding how an 'imaginary one wouldn't so much bother me. But oh, the dates, the

quotations!’ (L6 135) Woolf’s determination to guide the book ‘very stiffly’ through the required pages of facts in order that she then be able to invigorate it with ‘a dive into fiction’ is notable, and alongside other remarks reveals Woolf’s ever-present longing to reach the fictive sections between all the facts (D5 164). Her comment on the necessary stiffness of the writing recalls Stephen’s same description of his Fitzjames biography and brings with it the same sense of unease towards dealing with the facts produced out of the boxes of letters that Stephen had with navigating his brother’s shortcomings.

An insight into Woolf’s intention to blend these contrasting sections of facts and fiction together in *Roger Fry* is provided in her diary entry of 20 September 1938, as she explains her plan to record her first encounter with Fry:

A separate paragraph quoting what R. himself said. Then a break. Then begin definitely with the first meeting. That is the first impression: a man of the world, not professor or Bohemian. Then give facts in his letters to his mother. (D5 172)

Facts were to be used to record Fry’s voice in the world, whilst fiction would supply the impression he made on others and the feelings he invoked. The connection made again here between facts and letters is also important, and one that Woolf refers to on numerous occasions when she deliberates on writing the biography in her own letters and diaries. Not only did the piles of correspondence literally represent the weighty, imposing facts that threatened to overwhelm Woolf’s writing, they also figuratively represented the influence of Fry’s sister, Margery Fry, and partner, Helen Anrep, whose wishes had directed Woolf’s concept for the book in the direction of Fry’s letters (D4 262)

A further aspect of Woolf’s style in *Roger Fry* was the removal of the biographer’s voice, substituted instead for analysis within the text and selected quotations from Fry’s letters, articles, and reviews:

Even when nobody praised his work, and he was oppressed by the conviction that art after the war must be esoteric and hidden like science in the middle ages ‘we can

have no public art, only private ones, like writing and painting, and even painting is almost too public', he wrote (to Virginia Woolf), he still went on painting.⁵⁴

Woolf refrains from adding any commentary of her own here, despite the opportunity afforded by the quotation from the letter to her from Fry, indicative of the deliberately uninvolved narration as a whole. The intention was to concentrate on finding Fry's voice, not to air Woolf's own, and utilising his correspondence as per the family's wishes allowed her to do this. Leonard Woolf, however, complained Woolf's approach had left the book devoid of feeling and real interest: 'he was almost angry that I'd chosen "what seems to me the wrong method. Its merely anal[ysis], not history. Austere repression. In fact dull to the outsider"' (D5 271).

Adam Parkes argues too that, as well as successfully removing the biographer from the text, Woolf remakes the traditional biographical structure so that it is 'determined less by time than by space'.⁵⁵ While Parkes is correct that the construction of the text is focused less around specific life events and more on themes, *Roger Fry* still reads as a conventional biography and the structure remains linear, with the thematic approach to chapter topics attached to a chronological order. For example, chapter five, 'Work', discusses Fry's general attitude to his critical writing but nevertheless picks up from exactly where the preceding chapter ended, at the end of the Frys' honeymoon and the beginning of Helen Fry's illness.⁵⁶ Even Woolf's mostly successful attempt to eradicate the biographer's ego from the text wavers on occasion; it is difficult not to hear Woolf's own frustration with writing the book coming through when she writes of Fry's 'drudgery' (repeated three times in one page) in expressing himself through text criticism rather than in art.⁵⁷

But it is Woolf's apparent reticence towards fictional embellishments that causes *Roger Fry* to remain most obviously a traditionally constructed biography rather than

⁵⁴ *Roger Fry: a Biography* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1940), p. 238.

⁵⁵ *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 172.

⁵⁶ *Roger Fry*, p. 104.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 106.

anything approaching a literary cousin to *Orlando*. An instance from Chapter 3 of the book illustrates this during an account of Fry's trip to Italy in his twenties, where correspondence between Fry and his friend Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, the political philosopher, supplies Woolf with the details of the adventure. The following quotation describes Fry having fallen in love during the trip:

To fall in love for the first time and in Venice in the spring must have been the most exciting of all those exciting new experiences. But his feelings must be guessed, for though he was on terms of perfect intimacy with Lowes Dickinson, falling in love was a topic that he did not find it easy to discuss with him.⁵⁸

What seems an opportunity for Woolf to add to the account by expressing Fry's emotions and thoughts is not taken, the narrative stopping with the letters to Lowes Dickinson. This occurs several times over the course of the book, including when Helen Fry's illness is diagnosed as untreatable: 'What that defeat meant to one so sanguine, and so dependent upon private happiness, is only to be guessed at, and only from his own words'.⁵⁹ Woolf does exactly that to describe Fry's grief, relying entirely on quotations here:

To his mother he wrote:

It is terrible to have to write happiness out of one's life after I had had it so intensely and for such a short time. ... I suppose we learn more from suffering than from happiness. But it's a strange world where we are made to want it so much and have so little chance of getting it.

He also wrote:

... with all the terrible trouble that these years have brought ... I do feel a kind of pious gratitude for it all.

And to Lowes Dickinson:

⁵⁸ *Roger Fry*, p. 76.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 146-47.

I think I could get used to the dullness and greyness of life without love if it weren't for the constant sense of her suffering.⁶⁰

Instead of offering a fictional account of his feelings, Woolf uses extracts from different letters by Fry to piece together an idea of how he had been affected by the news. Woolf did include some fiction in the book, for example imagining Fry's contemplations as they skip from his neighbourhood to his critical reception:

Why, he demanded, was there no English novelist who took his art seriously? [...] And then, before he went to busy himself in the kitchen, out came the picture that he had been painting that morning. He held it out with a strange mixture of anxiety and humility for inspection.⁶¹

Woolf imagines Fry's thoughts here as he comes to the realisation that he is finally making progress with his post-impressionism, but this is not reflective of the style of the biography as a whole. Yet despite the comparative lack of fictional input to the narrative and its divergence from Woolf's own theoretical approach, the book has many strengths. Diane Gillespie argues that in minimising the biographical voice and instead concentrating on quotations from Fry, Woolf allows her subject to present a 'verbal self-portrait', while Anna Snaith puts forward a convincing reading of *Roger Fry* that explores the idea of Woolf finding in Fry's life hope of creative preservation in wartime.⁶² Complex reactions to a complex book, even if it was not the biographical revolution that *Orlando* had been.

Woolf had grown frustrated with what she describes repeatedly as the 'grind' of writing, and it is difficult to read her diary entries and letters from the time without concluding that she found the day-to-day writing of a biography wearying, with the task of condensing those seemingly endless letters and documents into useful and interesting biographical details proving to be a 'sober drudgery' (*D5* 138, 133). Coupled with this was the very real impact that friends and family had had on the writing. Not only had the family

⁶⁰ *Roger Fry*, p. 147.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 164.

⁶² Gillespie, 'Introduction', in *Roger Fry: A Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell-Shakespeare Head, 1995), pp. xi-1 (p. xxv); Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

pushed for the inclusion of a large number of Fry's letters, but Margery Fry had specifically asked Woolf not to write frankly about his relationship with his family (*D4* 262). Friends had proved a similar concern, with Woolf wary of including details that may have caused disharmony amongst them, not least the affair between Fry and Vanessa Bell in 1911 or Fry's falling out with Lady Ottoline Morrell the previous year.

The *Life of James Fitzjames Stephen* thus bears significant comparison with Woolf's *Fry*, with both books inhibited by their author's relationship with the subject. Stephen is drawn into defending his brother's character from criticisms he feels compelled by his biographical integrity to air, whilst Woolf avoids some of the more contentious subjects from Fry's past, either due to his family's wishes or her own sense of loyalty to Fry and her friends; both, then, falling prey to a certain sense of propriety, despite sharing an aversion to it in their theorising. Furthermore, Stephen and Woolf appear to have been unsure as to how best to deal with large swathes of facts about their subjects, with Woolf overwhelmed by the number of Fry's letters needing to be condensed and adapting her style as a solution, and Stephen allowing his narrative to be swamped in places by his determination to cover matters of Fitzjames's career in respectful detail.

The process of writing Fry's life compelled Woolf to return to essaying on the subject. As well as informing her theoretical position, the experience had provided Woolf with a greater insight into the practicalities of biography, with 'The Art of Biography' allowing for a greater emphasis on the biographer's need to work within constraints:

It seems, then, that when the biographer complained that he was tied by friends, letters, and documents he was laying his finger upon a necessary element in biography; and that it is also a necessary limitation. (*E6* 185)

Woolf had been given ample opportunity to familiarise herself with the limits imposed by friends and family, and the combination of antagonistic Frys and the drudgery of dealing with the endless facts caused Woolf to contemplate whether the biographical process was indeed an art, or if it actually resembled something more like a hardworking craft.

To answer the question Woolf adapts some of her terminology; facts are associated in this wider question with craft, fiction with art. These expanded terms bring new connotations to the debate, as well as revealing that beneath the more explicit question of art or craft, the essay remains equally concerned with untangling the fact/fiction dilemma, or, indeed, leaving it tangled. It is this aspect of the essay that will be considered here. Woolf contemplates her theories on biography by means of an analysis of Lytton Strachey's work, specifically *Queen Victoria* (1921) and *Elizabeth and Essex: A Tragic History* (1928), considering the two texts to represent varying degrees of success in writing new biography. In *Victoria*, Strachey was almost entirely bound to fact in his account as the details of Victoria's life were already well established. Instead, Woolf writes, Strachey's skill lay with 'the biographer's power of selection and relation' – essentially, knowing which facts to include to best bring out the strongest and most accurate impression of his subject (*E6* 184). Writing the life of Queen Elizabeth provided Strachey with a different challenge, the comparative lack of general historical knowledge about Elizabeth lending him a greater degree of literary freedom, and when Woolf discusses the book, she describes it as having offered a perfectly-timed opportunity for biography to intertwine facts and fiction:

Everything seemed to lend itself to the making of a book that combined the advantages of both worlds, that gave the artist freedom to invent, but helped his invention with the support of facts – a book that was not only a biography but also a work of art. (*E6* 184)

The book does not achieve this status, though Woolf does not blame Strachey for why 'the combination proved unworkable'; rather that biography itself had fallen short in being unable to contain both the facts of Elizabeth's life and the flourishes Strachey had contributed. Previously Woolf had found the fault of attempts to master new biography lying with the practitioner, but here she locates the problem as an intrinsic failure in the practice. The conclusion to the essay suggests Woolf is dissatisfied with the concept of adding fiction to biographical pursuits, as she decides that the biographer 'is a craftsman, not an artist; and his work is not a work of art, but something betwixt and between' (*E6* 187).

Contrary to what these misgivings might suggest, however, ‘The Art of Biography’ does not signal Woolf’s abandonment of her theory. This categorisation of biography as ‘betwixt and between’ art and craft lends Woolf’s verdict an ambiguity, one which Amber K. Regis has argued pervades the entirety of what she describes as a ‘contradictory essay’ and not necessarily ‘a straightforward retraction of the biographer’s claim to be an artist.’⁶³ Indeed, there is a strong argument that the principal feature of Woolf’s biographical theory – the mixture of facts with fiction – carries on into ‘The Art of Biography’, despite the reticence towards its effectiveness in the conclusion. Woolf enthuses over the potential of the approach earlier in the essay, writing:

Could not biography produce something of the intensity of poetry, something of the excitement of drama, and yet keep also the peculiar virtue that belongs to fact – its suggestive reality, its own proper creativeness? (*E6* 184)

This echoes Woolf’s earlier theorising, as does her keen appraisal of Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians*, the description of which hints towards at least a degree of success in mixing facts with fiction. Furthermore, the manner in which Strachey’s *Elizabeth* is presented as a missed opportunity causes the sense that Woolf still believes in the potential of her method to remain. Marcus also notes this same consistency between ‘The New Biography’ and ‘The Art of Biography’, writing that in ‘both essays [Woolf] suggests that the way forward for biography lies in the amalgamation of these oppositions’ of fact and fiction.⁶⁴

Yet those moments in ‘The Art of Biography’ where Woolf seems disinclined towards the combination she had previously championed are explainable. The practicalities of producing a biography under particular and difficult conditions had exasperated Woolf, but it was not sufficient to warrant a complete change of tack in her theorising; only enough, in fact, to cause these contrasting ideas to be expressed within ‘The Art of Biography’ and

⁶³ ‘But Something Betwixt and Between: *Roger Fry* and the Contradictions of Biography’, in *Contradictory Woolf*, p. 83.

⁶⁴ *Auto/biographical Discourse*, p. 106.

thus to produce an essay concerned not with solving contradictions but with allowing them to exist together.

One final point from ‘The Art of Biography’ requires attention. While Woolf concludes from the evidence of *Victoria* and *Elizabeth* that ‘the two kinds of fact will not mix’ and so no biographer may ‘make the best of both worlds’, this is not as straightforward as it may seem as Woolf goes on to challenge the notion of an unassailable fact in matters of opinion (*E6* 185). Similarly, she reflects upon the changing perception of facts over time (‘the accent on sex has changed within living memory’ (*E6* 186)) and the hermeneutic aspect of facts, describing the numerous different views and perspectives on any single instance (and bringing to mind how Woolf herself viewed Stephen with the same sense of plurality). In this light Woolf envisages the ideal biographer as challenging social conventions in a pursuit of truths that may no longer be binary, ready to identify and remove the obsolete and instead seek to chart the diverse and negotiate the contradictory. Woolf writes of the obvious and intended consequence of this for biography:

Is not everyone who has lived a life, and left a record of that life, worthy of biography – the failures as well as the successes, the humble as well as the illustrious? And what is greatness? And what smallness? We must revise our standards of merit and set up new heroes for our admiration. (*E6* 186)

Woolf was, like her father, enthused by writing of the lives of the obscure, finding them more stimulating and less limiting, and removed from notions of greatness or being of a ‘certain magnitude’, as Lee phrased it. Laura Marcus argues that Woolf imagines a concept of biography very clearly separated from Lee’s ‘definitions of its nationalistic, monumental functions’, a separation Stephen had also created himself when he criticised Lee for the same reason.⁶⁵ The following chapter section will examine this very point, on how their choice of biographical subject demonstrates a similarity between Woolf and Stephen.

Lives of the Obscure

⁶⁵ *Auto/biographical Discourse*, p. 98.

As the *DNB* gathered momentum, Stephen, having been installed as editor, wrote a notice published in the 23 December 1882 issue of the *Athenaeum* in which he detailed the purpose and scope of the proposed biographical dictionary. That article has been referred to in detail in the previous section of this chapter, but what is of interest here is the prompt response by H.S. Ashbee, a prominent book-collector and bibliographer of erotic literature. Ashbee complained that Stephen's manifesto appeared to describe a piece of work that would fall between being too voluminous for the general reading public and yet too superficial for students. After politely dismissing Ashbee's charge by explaining it was indeed intended for the use of 'serious' students but that he hoped it would still appeal to a wide number of 'antiquarians', Stephen's full response shows what he believed to be the point of the *DNB*. He states that 'obscure names are of the greatest importance, and that the value of the dictionary will depend chiefly upon the number and thoroughness of such articles. I hope to have as many thousands of obscure names as possible'.⁶⁶ This was not to be an almanac of the most celebrated names of history but a view of history through the 'coverage of occupations such as acting, journalism, pugilists, and jockeys'.⁶⁷

In this context, Woolf's essay 'The Lives of the Obscure', where the writer imaginatively explores and expands the biographies of unknown names in a 'faded, out-of-date, obsolete library', does not read as the antagonistic riposte to the *DNB* that it could appear as being (*CRI*, 106). Margaret M. Jensen nevertheless puts forward this case, arguing that it 'seems to stand in direct opposition to Leslie Stephen's work on the *DNB*, which recounted the lives of the "great."⁶⁸ But as has been discussed it was not the 'great' lives that caught Stephen's interest, nor were they even his chief concern for the *Dictionary*. Stephen is adamant throughout his essays that there is much to be gained from documenting the lives of the lesser-known, and as he provided some examples of these, Woolf's own

⁶⁶ 'The New Biographical Dictionary', *Athenaeum*, No. 2881 (13 January 1883), 54.

⁶⁷ H. C. G. Matthew, 'Leslie Stephen and the *New DNB*', Leslie Stephen Lecture (1995), <<https://global.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/freeodnb/shelves/lslecture1/lslecture2/>> [Accessed on 04 May 2016]

⁶⁸ Margaret M. Jensen, *The Open Book: Creative Misreading in the Works of Selected Modern Writers: Writers as Readers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 194.

ruminations on the obscure are brought to mind. The first of the following quotations is from Stephen, the second from Woolf:

Here is Margaret Catchpole, a real heroine of romance, who stole a horse and rode seventy miles to visit her lover, and after being transported for an offence which excited the compassion of her judges, became one of the ‘matriarchs’ to whom our Australian cousins trace their descent.⁶⁹

If ever a woman wanted a champion, it is obviously Laetitia Pilkington. Who then was she? Can you imagine a very extraordinary cross between Moll Flanders and Lady Ritchie, between a rolling and rollicking woman of the town and a lady of breeding and refinement? Laetitia Pilkington (1712-1759) was something of the sort – shady, shifty, adventurous, and yet [...] so imbued with the old traditions of her sex that she wrote, as ladies talk, to give pleasure. (*CRI*, 117)

The enthusiasm exhibited by both writers in detailing the lives of two unfamiliar yet interesting women is marked, and both essays make the same point, albeit in different ways: that the lives of the obscure hold intrigue and importance, and an exploration of their histories will be rewarding and illuminating.⁷⁰ Woolf uses the idea of a lineage of unknown women writers as a central tenet to her concluding argument in *A Room of One's Own*, explaining that without the existence of obscure predecessors there is no female literary heritage for a great writer, like her imagined Judith Shakespeare, to draw upon. Stephen makes a similar point in his essay, ‘Forgotten Benefactors’, when he states that despite the inevitable glorification of ‘great names’, their achievements have always depended just as greatly on the ‘co-operation of innumerable nameless fellow-labourers’.⁷¹

Orlando

Several key points on biography have been established so far in this chapter, and it is useful to recap them here before beginning with the analysis of *Orlando*. Through the discussion of the *DNB*, it has been shown that Woolf recognised Stephen and his work as distinct from the

⁶⁹ *Studies of a Biographer*, Vol. I, p. 30.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁷¹ *Social Rights and Duties: Vol. II*, pp. 225-26.

generalised concept of Victorian biography which she criticised. Just as Stephen's *Dictionary* could be distinguished from Sidney Lee's *Dictionary*, so too could his more progressive approach to biography be seen as recognisably different from the ideology behind exemplary lives in biography, epitomised in Lee's work. Of course an allusion by Woolf to the *Dictionary of National Biography* must carry with it some echo of Stephen; as Kristeva would argue, he is so contextually bound to the *DNB* that any allusion to it must refer to him also, whether that might be Woolf's intention or not. What it does not necessarily entail is that the allusion must only be to Stephen.

In separating Stephen from the body of nineteenth-century biographers of whom Woolf was critical, it becomes apparent that not only did he escape her most vehement censure but that in several key areas their biographical principles are aligned. For one, Woolf and Stephen shared a fascination for the biographies of more obscure lives, with both claiming that, alongside offering a degree of intrigue not found in more celebrated examples, the records of these lives would make history more complete.

Finally, it has been established that the concepts of truth and of fact and fiction were fluid ideas in Woolf's biographical theorising, with fictive facts being awarded more significance and treated with an equal if not greater veracity than externally objective facts. While Stephen may not have shared this precise point of view, the preceding analysis of his work and ideas has shown less emphasis on dry facts and a much greater one on well-written and evocative biography than might have been thought, as well as a similarly unexpected attitude towards propriety in biography – just as Woolf would do, Stephen believed in honesty taking precedence over modesty.

It should be acknowledged that the analyses in this chapter have not followed the chronology of the publication of Woolf's work on biography, with this discussion of *Orlando* following the later Fry biography. This has been a necessary deviation, for it has allowed these aforementioned points, on Woolf's theoretical position and Stephen's

relevance to her biographical thinking, to be fully established and therefore better able to inform the proceeding examination. *Orlando* exists as the highpoint of Woolf's biographical output, and even the work that was subsequent to it, such as 'The Art of Biography' and *Roger Fry*, contributes towards understanding how Woolf was writing biography and how she was writing both to and about Leslie Stephen in that one key novel. By understanding the specific nature of Woolf's ideas about fact and fiction, the importance of Daniel Defoe as an influence on Woolf and as a significant link on the intertextual net is made clear. Furthermore, knowing how Woolf defines Stephen as a biographer is crucial to understanding how she represents him in *Orlando*. The following analysis of the text will build on these ideas by identifying another passage in the dialogue between Woolf and Stephen as it examines Woolf's use of parody in *Orlando*, the role of the narrator, and the allusions to writers, specifically to Alexander Pope and Defoe.

Repetition, Ironic Inversion, and 'The New Biography'

It is widely accepted that *Orlando* is Woolf's inverted interpretation of traditional biography. What is less unanimously recognised is the exact nature of the inversion, with different critics understanding it in different ways.⁷² What Woolf does do, without any reasonable question, is to write her fictional biography to match the structure of a traditional, non-fictional biography, with an exaggerated chronological order marked by specific life events, such as marriage and parenthood for the female Orlando and career advancement for the male Orlando. Woolf's version, however, features various alterations to the style of the traditional biography, such as the subject changing sex and the chronology being extended further than any real life story. Interpreting these alterations defines the book's intentions

⁷² Max Saunders asks who and what Woolf has in mind as her book vacillates between perpetuating biographical standards and flouting them (*Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 144). Ira B. Nadel attempts to answer this in her interpretation of Woolf's use of biography in *Orlando*, suggesting that 'biography is both victim and victor' (*Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984; repr. 2014), p. 141). Hermione Lee, in her biography of Woolf, considers the target of *Orlando*'s biographical satire to be wider than just its nineteenth-century iteration, but shares the conclusion that the concept of biography is challenged: 'It is a biography which makes a mockery of the very idea of biography' (p. 523).

and the lines between satire, parody, intertextuality, and pastiche can be fine ones; arguably a case can be made for each as the most suitable for labelling *Orlando* and thus the difficulty of categorising the novel becomes clear. Woolf appears somewhat unsure herself, expressing surprise at Leonard's declaration that the book was a satire, despite having termed it as precisely that in her diary during the days of its gestation (*D3* 184-85, 131).

The argument being made here, however, is that the book is a parody of biography but parody as Hutcheon defines the term; an altogether more complex and more nuanced concept in her hands than when used simply to denote the ridiculing of a source subject. Parody in this sense is distinguished from satire as a genre by the latter necessarily entailing a political objective (parody does not), and should be considered as a closer linguistic cousin to intertextuality, existing on both a formal and pragmatic level (Hutcheon queries whether parody can actually be parody if no one other than the author is aware of it). Hutcheon defines parody broadly as 'a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity', but goes into greater detail here:

Like irony, parody is a form of indirect as well as double-voiced discourse, but it is not parasitic in any way. Transmuting or remodelling previous texts, it points to the differential but mutual dependence of parody and parodied texts. Its two voices neither merge nor cancel each other out; they work together, while remaining distinct in their defining difference.⁷³

This definition of the term allows *Orlando* to be interpreted as acting as a parody of biography, but without the accompanying ridicule or scathing reproach that might be expected of parodic reinterpretation. Instead, *Orlando* can be understood to mock biographical form and style, to vehemently criticise some of the social values underpinning biographical discourse, and to poke fun at its most respected players; at the same time the book reassures and revives biography, revealing Woolf's genuine fondness for the genre in the familiarity of *Orlando*'s irony. Indeed, the book can be seen as a microcosm of Woolf's literary relationship with her Victorian forebears: at times mocking, critical, and ironical; at

⁷³ Hutcheon, p. xiv.

others affectionate and preserving. This complex mix of feelings can be read for her relationship with Stephen too, as has been argued throughout this thesis, leading to the conclusion that *Orlando* offers more favourable allusions to him and his work than are often recognised in critical opinion. This analysis of the book, then, identifies these moments and considers their impact, as well as discussing the more accepted instances of separation between the text and Stephen's work.

This way of reading *Orlando* opens up the argument made at the beginning of the chapter: that the book parodies traditional biography but in a more affectionate manner than has often been stated, with, correspondingly, the same being said of how Woolf relates to Stephen through *Orlando*. Woolf's treatment of Vita in the book helps explain this distinction. She was, of course, Woolf's model for Orlando, and much of the eponymous heroine's story can be traced in some form back to Vita's life and history. Consequently, where Woolf is critical or mocking of her character Orlando, her friend Vita appears to be the target.⁷⁴ Yet not everything that befalls Orlando needs to be thought of directly in terms of Vita. For example Woolf uses the Sackville-West family heritage to aim several barbs at the aristocracy, in particular at their literary ability and achievements, yet despite using an actual aspect of Vita's life here, the criticism is not of her or even of her family *per se*.

Her son Nigel Nicolson's famous description of *Orlando* as 'the longest and most charming love letter in literature' reflects the degree of Vita's wider influence on the book.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Vita's unconventional lifestyle and sexuality provided the opportunity for Woolf to engage with the matters of respectability and censorship in biography and both feature as themes throughout the book. Leslie Kathleen Hankins discusses this and Nicolson's description of the book as love letter in her lesbian feminist reading of *Orlando*:

⁷⁴ Hermione Lee discusses Woolf's parody of Vita in *Orlando*: 'Vita is made love to, but she is also made over; her characteristics are exploited. Where Vita was romantic, private and gloomy, Orlando is showy, glittering, witty and camp' (*Virginia Woolf*, p 523).

⁷⁵ *Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Bantam, 1974), p. 218.

The complex text of *Orlando* is a letter with multiple dueling addressees, addressed not only to Woolf's 'common reader but lovingly to Vita (the lesbian lover), mockingly to the censor (intent on banning lesbian love), and polemically to straight, gay, and lesbian readers – and the tension between the addressees provides much of the wit, delight, and power of the novel.⁷⁶

As Hankins suggests, reading Vita's role in *Orlando* is complex but illuminating, and many other critics, such as Suzanne Raitt, Louise DeSalvo, and Sherron E. Knopp, have presented different interpretations of the book focused on Vita and her relationship to Woolf.⁷⁷ Vita is thus represented in *Orlando* in various ways, with parody working to different, even contradictory effects, and Woolf uses this same form of parody in the way she writes about Stephen in the novel.

Hutcheon states that 'parody always implicitly reinforces even as it ironically debunks', and this is pivotal to the argument being put forward here; from this perspective, Woolf's use of biography must include a degree of inherent approval of the genre, even while she challenges particular aspects of it.⁷⁸ But this is not an entirely controversial claim. Woolf appears to have enjoyed adopting a biographer's attitude to writing *Orlando* as she went about researching the Sackville ancestral tree and the history of their home at Knole, making her diligence clear to Vita in a letter: 'The whole thing has to be gone into thoroughly. I am swarming with ideas' (L3 430). Furthermore, there are allusions to Stephen's biographical work in *Orlando*, as will be discussed shortly, which indicate that Woolf consulted her father's work before embarking on her historical fiction, using them both as a historical source and as a means for continuing her textual dialogue with him. Stephen's presence infiltrates *Orlando* but is hidden from direct view, Woolf carefully

⁷⁶ 'Orlando: "A Precipice Marked V": Between "A Miracle of Discretion" and "Lovemaking Unbelievable: Indiscretions Incredible"', in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, ed. by Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer, New York: New York University Press (1997), pp. 180-202 (p. 182).

⁷⁷ Raitt, *Vita & Virginia: The Work and Friendship of V. Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); DeSalvo, 'Lighting the Cave: The Relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf', *Signs*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1982), 195-214 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173896>> [Accessed on 13 July 2018]; Knopp, "'If I Saw You Would You Kiss Me?': Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*", *PMLA*, Vol. 103, No. 1 (1988), 24-34 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/462459>> [Accessed on 13 July 2018]

⁷⁸ Hutcheon, p. xii.

concealing allusions to her father and his work through layers of textual disguise. The reference to the *DNB* is an exception to this, though, as has already been argued in this chapter, may indeed target Sidney Lee and his model of the *Dictionary* more directly than it does Stephen.

The Ambivalent Biographer

The precise nature of the fictional narrator, or Biographer, of *Orlando* can be as difficult to define as the exact categorisation of the book itself. At times and most obviously he or she assumes the air and position of a slightly aloof, occasionally condescending biographical voice, deliberately reminiscent of the Sidney Lee school of traditional biography in its desire for facts and events, and displaying a distrust of anything of the internal or psychological ('that riot and confusion of the passions and emotions which every good biographer detests' (*O*, 6)). This is apparent as soon as the book begins, with the Biographer first appreciating the openness of Orlando's features – 'A more candid, sullen face it would be impossible to find. Happy the mother who bears, happier still the biographer who records the life of such a one!' – then noticing with concern the depth of thought and feeling evident there: 'Directly we glance at eyes and forehead, we have to admit a thousand disagreeables which it is the aim of every good biographer to ignore' (*O*, 6). The Biographer's attitude bears an unmistakable likeness to that found in the style of biography Woolf was challenging, if exaggerated, with a marked enthusiasm for an agreeable and easily understood subject and a corresponding suspicion of anything less palatable about that life. It is even possible to hear Sidney Lee in the Biographer's demeanour, specifically the tone he adopts as a biographer interrupting the text. From his *Queen Victoria* (1902), Lee writes that 'it is the duty of a biographer sternly to subordinate his scenery to the actor who is alone his just concern'; and later, that the 'inevitable candour of the historical biographer can never be unwelcome to those who honour the Queen's memory aright.'⁷⁹ From his *Life of Shakespeare*, Lee discusses the 'obligation that lies on the biographer of indicating succinctly the character of

⁷⁹ *Queen Victoria: A Biography*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1904), pp. ix, xi.

the successive labours which were woven into the texture of his hero's life'.⁸⁰ Even if the style indicated in these examples is not unique only to Lee's writing, the similarity is intriguing and involving one book, his *Shakespeare*, that Woolf directly critiqued in 'The New Biography'.

Stephen's presence here is elusive but still recognisable. As the previous discussions in this chapter have shown, Woolf does not identify her father's biography as being entirely focused on hard facts and exemplary lives, nor does his language match the Biographer's particular turn of phrase. Nevertheless Stephen is undoubtedly involved in this dialogue. Just as with the reference to the *DNB*, it is impossible to separate him completely from the idea of a biographer appearing in Woolf's work; he is too contextually bound to this identity/role in her writing. Woolf exploits this perfectly, with the Biographer allowing her specifically to satirise Lee's form of traditional biography and at the same time cast a more generally mocking eye on the role of all biographers, Stephen included.

This only partly explains the Biographer's purpose, however, and a closer examination of the text reveals that Woolf also uses the Biographer to act in the role of a more radical biographer; rather like a new biographer and rather like herself, in fact, and one not totally removed from Stephen's principles. For Woolf's narrator fails to fulfil several basic duties of the more traditionally-minded biographer; there is a palpable lack of factual information about Orlando – no date of birth, no full name – and that which there is consistently contradicts conventional biographical expectations. For instance, as Kathryn N. Benzel has pointed out,⁸¹ the very first sentence of the novel subverts the reader's idea of what to expect: 'He – for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it – was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the rafters' (*O*, 1). By immediately confirming Orlando's gender, something the reader would expect to be a matter of certainty, the Biographer effectively causes it to be a point of

⁸⁰ *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898; repr. 1901), pp. v-vi.

⁸¹ 'Reading Readers in Virginia Woolf's "Orlando: A Biography"', *Style*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Fiction (1994), pp. 169-182 (p. 172).

conjecture instead. This swift act of vagueness causes the idea of gender normativity in the novel to be problematic and something to be questioned rather than confirmed, and, at the same time, the Biographer is revealed to be perfectly comfortable with an ambiguity towards basic facts about the subject's life. Indeed, throughout the book the Biographer struggles to provide the cascade of hard facts and details about life that Woolf criticised in Victorian biography, and prefers to present Orlando's life in an impressionistic way, her character gleaned through the manner in which she thinks and feels about the various events described in the narrative. Thus the Biographer can be seen as a reflection of Woolf herself as biographer, and her own voice in the text when she so chooses. Most often this comes through when the Biographer's announcements are ironic ('the first duty of the biographer [...] is to plod, without looking left or right, in the indelible footprints of truth' (*O*, 31)), and this point will be examined in the following discussion of parody, but at times it is simply to offer an opinion:

For though these are not matters on which a biographer can profitably enlarge it is plain enough to those who have done a reader's part in making up from bare hints dropped here and there the whole boundary and circumference of a living person; can hear in what we only whisper a living voice; can see, often when we say nothing about it, exactly what he looked like; know without a word to guide them precisely what he thought — and it is for readers such as these that we write — it is plain then to such a reader that Orlando was strangely compounded of many humours. (*O*, 35)

As the Biographer expounds upon the way the attentive reader has been able to put together an idea of Orlando's temperament, Woolf's voice is hinting at this ideal method of biographical writing; a perceptive selection of hints and whispers, of impressions rather than hard facts, that reveal the character of the subject. These thoughts are intertwined with those in 'The New Biography', written during the period of *Orlando*'s development, as Woolf wrote of the subtlety inherent in new biography: 'the man himself, the pith and essence of his character, shows itself to the observant eye in the tone of a voice, the turn of a head, some little phrase or anecdote picked up in passage' (*E4* 476). Both quotations express a level of dissatisfaction towards the staid biography style Woolf labelled Victorian. In the

book it is by presenting a form of writing life so different from the fact-based, externally-focused method associated with Victorian biography that it implies a criticism of that traditional style. The essay is more explicit, with Woolf remarking how ‘in two subtle phrases, in one passage of brilliant description, whole chapters of the Victorian volume are synthesized and summed up’ by the writing of new biography (*E4* 476).

Woolf does not include Stephen in this critical dissatisfaction, however, with her (and the Biographer’s) expression of biographical method finding common ground with his consistently-stated belief that carefully written and condensed biography produced the most illustrative form of representation. In the following passage, Stephen explains how the judicious writer could capture the ‘pith and essence’ of the subject’s character through the right selection of facts and anecdotes, and careful composition:

By skilful arrangement of his story, by condensation of the less important parts, by laying stress on the most essential, he should set the little drama of a human life in the right point of view and reveal its most important aspects. [...] [H]e should coax the column of smoke back into the original vase; he should give the very pith and essence of the case, and, like the skilful advocate, appear to be simply relating a plain narrative, when he is really dictating the verdict.⁸²

If Stephen’s concept of biography was more obviously concerned with facts and inevitably with a plainer narrative than *Orlando*’s, the desired outcome – a clear *impression* of the personality – matched Woolf’s exactly. He wrote in that same essay that the biographer must ‘settle all the dates and the skeleton of facts; but to breathe real life into it he must put us into direct communication with the man himself; not tell us simply where he was or what he was seen to do’, before concluding that: ‘Our aim should be to present the human soul, not all its irrelevant bodily trappings’.⁸³ This instruction correlates with the Biographer’s implicit message, of how representing Orlando’s life should be a matter of disclosing her

⁸² *Men, Books, and Mountains*, p. 130.

⁸³ *Ibid*, pp. 140-41.

personality by means of a carefully crafted narrative; the central ethos behind Woolf's wider biographical thesis.

That Woolf is able to use the Biographer to imitate the style of a traditional biographical voice while at the same time adopting and advocating a modern biographical approach reveals a level of parodic complexity. Reading through Hutcheon again, with parody defined as 'a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity', it is useful to consider how she draws attention to the 'tension between the potentially conservative effect of repetition and the potentially revolutionary impact of difference'.⁸⁴ In *Orlando* this tension is realised within the character of the Biographer, who is used by Woolf to act for both repetition and difference, as the previous discussion has shown. The style of the Biographer recalls the narrative of a traditional biography, producing the repetition, but when s/he makes authoritative proclamations on what is acceptable material worthy of recording for biography, and perhaps even more so when declaring what is *not* appropriate, Woolf develops the tone into one laced with irony, thus moving from repetition to difference with this ironic inversion:

Just when we thought to elucidate a secret that has puzzled historians for a hundred years, there was a hole in the manuscript big enough to put your finger through. We have done our best to piece out a meagre summary from the charred fragments that remain; but often it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to use the imagination. (*O*, 58)

The irony in this example is two-fold; first, the genuine historical or biographical reliance upon unadulterated source documentation is mocked here, with a finger-sized hole rendering Orlando's official history during this period 'lamentably incomplete' (*O*, 58). This dependence on recorded facts is, of course, less of an issue for biographical fiction, a point emphasised by the second instance of irony here: the Biographer's regret at the end of the passage at having to resort to imagination. Woolf had, as has been discussed, suggested that a careful mix of fact and fiction was the best recourse for the evolution of biography in her

⁸⁴ Hutcheon, p. xii

essays, explaining how the proponent of the new style ‘synthesises’ the factual and the fictive elements into something else as much as he or she chronicles external events (*E4* 475), and she was applying that method in *Orlando*. So the repetition through the addition of irony becomes difference, and the tension is created, as Hutcheon predicts it would be, here between the Biographer’s judgements on biography and what the text is actually doing with biography.

This effect is increased further still when the Biographer sporadically steps away from irony and moves towards more explicit criticism of the biographical form, and the traditional version in particular. This is more clearly Woolf’s voice that the reader hears when, for instance, s/he questions why, as everything one needs to know about a writer’s soul and mind is clear in their work, do ‘we require critics to explain one and biographers to expound the other’ (*O*, 103). Now the conservative effect of repetition has been replaced with the revolutionary impact of difference as the Biographer queries the need for biography at all. This question runs as an undercurrent through the novel, culminating in the symbolic wild goose flying over Orlando’s and Shelmerdine’s heads. The idea that Woolf can write biography while simultaneously challenging its nature and purpose is symptomatic of *Orlando* as a whole.

While the voice of the Biographer was not necessarily the voice of Stephen, as the following analysis will show, he can be heard clearly in the way in which Woolf writes of Pope and Defoe: The following analysis of her allusions to different writers, pertinently ones about whom Stephen had written, explores Woolf’s intention to confront and conserve through their inclusion in *Orlando*.

Alexander Pope

That explicit remark to the *DNB* apart, the allusions to Stephen in *Orlando* are best described by Fernald’s notion of a ‘secret fount of pleasure’; references deliberately

obscured by Woolf but available to the reader should he or she notice they are there.⁸⁵ While the continued appearance of a coterie of Augustan writers (Addison, Dryden, Pope, and Swift), the brief cameo by Johnson and Boswell, and an ongoing narrative after the style of Defoe provide Woolf with a vehicle to comment on aspects of literature and some of its most esteemed protagonists, it also engages dialogue with Stephen. His *Studies of a Biographer* series features those writers heavily – Pope, Johnson, and Boswell in particular – with at least one of the six writers referred to in almost every chapter across the four volumes of essays. Furthermore, Stephen had written full-length lives of Pope, Swift, and Johnson for Morley’s *English Men of Letters* series, while a chapter on Defoe appears in the first volume of *Hours in a Library*.

The appearance of Pope in *Orlando* is particularly significant for the way in which Woolf alludes to Stephen’s own treatment of him, in his biography and the *DNB*, and demonstrates how Pope connects the two as a subject on the intertextual net. The following is a description of Pope from Stephen’s *DNB* entry: ‘Pope, as described by Reynolds, who once saw him [...], was four feet six inches in height, and much deformed. He had a very fine eye and a well-formed nose. His face was drawn, and the muscles strongly marked’.⁸⁶ Orlando is drawn to ‘the outline of his nose’ during her carriage ride with Pope, before a timely lamp light illuminates them both and she labels him instead as ‘Deformed and weakly’ (*O*, 100-1). The idea that Woolf would refer to her father’s *Dictionary* entry to confirm facts about Pope is not only believable but likely, Woolf having noted that she did exactly that when taking up a particular subject for an essay; that she does so in her parody of biography adds an extra layer of meaning. It is also significant that Woolf is knowingly using the *DNB* here in exactly the way Stephen argued it was most valuable – as a research guide for the historian or the biographer.

⁸⁵ Fernald, ‘Woolf and Intertextuality’, p. 60.

⁸⁶ *DNB Vol. XLVI*, p. 122.

The conversation between Woolf and Stephen on Pope continues from that *DNB* entry and into Stephen's life of Pope, as Orlando lists several features of the poet's life that mark him out as not 'so different from the rest of us' (*O*, 102). Orlando observes that he 'adored grottos', just as Stephen records in his biography:

the picture of Pope amusing himself with his grotto and his plantations, directing old John Searle, his gardener, and conversing with the friends whom he compliments so gracefully, is, perhaps, the pleasantest in his history.⁸⁷

Orlando also remarks on how 'Pope suffered with his head', an ailment which Stephen remarks upon several times in his biography (*O*, 102).⁸⁸ Perhaps most significantly Stephen and Woolf choose to quote the same passage from Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712), the lines including: 'Whether the Nymph shall break Diana's Law / Or some frail China Jar receives a Flaw.'⁸⁹ Woolf has Orlando ponder how much of a writer's character can be deduced through their art and, after quoting those lines from Pope, she concludes that 'biographers and critics might save themselves all their labours' if readers instead simply studied the subject's work (*O*, 103). When this is applied to Pope, however, the reflection of his character is not at all favourable. The quotation from the poem demonstrates an ironic concern with what Pope chooses to list as the vanities that trouble women. Pope's representation in *Orlando* duly replicates the attitude found in his works – he is a misogynist, who, as Jane de Gay has observed, is effectively distanced and then silenced by Woolf in response. De Gay points out that this same method of literal distancing, by means of separating the quotations from the main body of the *Orlando* text, is employed towards Addison's similarly misogynistic quotation from his essay, 'The Trial of the Petticoat'.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *English Men of Letters, Vol. XII: Pope, Johnson, Gray*, ed. by John Morley (London: Macmillan and Co., 1902), p. 188.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *The Rape of the Lock and Other Major Writings* (London: Penguin Classics, 1712; repr. 2011), p. 46.

⁹⁰ Joseph Addison, *Essays of Joseph Addison*, ed. by John Richard Green (London and New York: The Roger de Coverley Club, 1880), p. 62; De Gay, p. 153.

It is significant that Woolf echoes Stephen's choice of quotation from Pope but even more so that her interpretation of the text corresponds to his. Stephen takes issue with Pope for his general attitude towards women in the poem, determining Pope's satire to be ill-judged:

And further, it must be allowed to some hostile critics that Pope has a worse defect. The poem is, in effect, a satire upon feminine frivolity. It continues the strain of mockery against hoops and patches and their wearers, which supplied Addison and his colleagues with the materials of so many *Spectators*. I think that even in Addison there is something which rather jars upon us. His persiflage is full of humour and kindness, but underlying it there is a tone of superiority to women which is sometimes offensive.⁹¹

Stephen's reproval of both Pope and Addison for the misogyny in their work may be unexpected and requires comment. Critical opinion has often taken Stephen to task for failing to write even-handedly of men and women, and it is manifestly true that his criticism and biography unfairly neglects women writers and accords greater attention upon their male counterparts. The discussion of ethics in the previous chapter demonstrated how gender equality separated Woolf and Stephen, with his failure to progress from simply identifying inequality to challenging how it was created and perpetuated by patriarchal society causing Stephen's position to look archaic in comparison to Woolf's. While this criticism of misogyny does not exonerate Stephen from his failure to challenge gender inequality sufficiently, equally it should not be dismissed entirely. Woolf draws attention to Stephen's remarks by alluding to them and the version of her father she imagines in this dialogue is perhaps more progressive and like-minded than the Victorian ethicist found wanting in Woolf's feminist essays.

Stephen is certainly damning in his criticism of the poets' sexism, describing it as a 'defect' in Pope's work and arguing that it revealed a latent hostility towards women:

⁹¹ *Pope*, pp. 40-41.

With Pope this tone becomes harsher, and the merciless satirist begins to show himself. In truth, Pope can be inimitably pungent, but he can never be simply playful. Addison was too condescending with his pretty pupils; but under Pope's courtesy there lurks contempt, and his smile has a disagreeable likeness to a sneer.⁹²

Stephen is drawn to ponder whether Pope's resentment towards women, being as notable and as unpleasant as it is, has its basis in feelings of inadequacy stemming from Pope's 'personal deformity'. This minor fascination with Pope's unusual physical shape is shared by Orlando and in a striking parallel so is Stephen's specific description of Pope's sneer and Addison's condescension:

she was forced to the conclusion that there was something in the sneer of Mr Pope, in the condescension of Mr Addison [...] which took away her relish for the society of wits, deeply though she must continue to respect their works. (*O*, 107)

The intertextual connection between Woolf's and Stephen's work on Pope and Addison is key to understanding how parody is utilised in *Orlando*. Woolf is directly referencing Stephen's biographical studies on Pope in her own version of his life as it appears in *Orlando*; the ironic inversion lies with it being part of a fictional story, one that is fantastical and humorous. This transforms the allusion to parody, but without necessarily criticising Stephen in doing so.

De Gay and other critics have interpreted the book's parody of Stephen as being entirely critical, but while this reading could have potentially explained Woolf's earlier textual references to Stephen's description of Pope and his foibles as forming part of *Orlando*'s parody of biographical style, it is undone here. There is no room in such an interpretation to account for Woolf's allusion to her father's indictment of the poets' misogyny, for that is not in any way emblematic of the Victorian biographical style or ideology that Woolf characterises in 'The New Biography' or in other parts of *Orlando*. In fact, it is an acknowledgement of a more nuanced critical method that Stephen is employing in his biography of Pope, one that that allows for forthright reproach of the subject even

⁹² *Pope*, p. 41.

while upholding his worth as a subject and maintaining a respect of his work. This recalls the earlier discussion of Stephen's belief in integrity in biography ahead of all other concerns, including particularly propriety, and how his principles were distinct from the exemplary lives that were ubiquitous at the time of his writing. Looking again at that final line of the quotation, 'deeply though she must continue to respect their works', it becomes clear that Orlando's feelings towards the poets reflect Woolf's own attitude. Pope and Addison are criticised for their sexism and their position as literary figureheads in a history Woolf finds oppressive and false, and yet this does not entail that their work must be dismissed out of hand. In 'Tchekhov on Pope', an unpublished essay from 1925, Woolf writes:

there is something final in this art; a point <[upon?]> where we can settle, sun ourselves, <& something [essentially?] virtuous in this artist,> and to which we can return. When the Rape of the Lock is shut in the bookcase such lines will burn in memory and lure us back. (*E6* 552)

Not only does Woolf find merit in the poem, it is to a degree that implies an essential virtue in Pope as an author; Pope as a person, however, warranted the same level of disdain as he would receive in *Orlando* three years later, with Woolf describing him as 'Spiteful, lying, mean, his health is his only excuse and the fact that he never enjoyed the discipline of a public school education', before she had an apparent change of heart and drew a line through that passage in the manuscript (*E6* 553). Stephen writes in his *DNB* entry on Pope: 'There is, in fact, no more difficult subject for biography, especially in a compressed form'. This, he explains, was due to the profusion of somewhat repetitive and vindictive feuds that marked Pope's life. Stephen was drawn to remark on the poet's tendency 'to meet persecution by intrigue, feeling the slightest touch like the stroke of a bludgeon'.⁹³ Woolf's observation from *Orlando* could almost complete the *DNB* entry: 'Never was any mortal so ready to suspect an insult or so quick to avenge one as Mr. Pope' (*O*, 105).

⁹³ *DNB Vol. XLVI*, p. 122.

Woolf's unpublished article usefully demonstrates how her admiration for Pope's work was not lessened by her dislike of him as a character. Woolf's essay on Addison presents a similar contrast. She questions his piety and his attitude to women, asking: 'Why was Addison so anxious to insist upon the necessity of a decent and cheerful religious belief? Why did he so constantly, and in the main kindly, lay stress upon the foibles of women and their reform?' (*E4* 109). While Woolf is unable to find satisfactory answers to these inquiries into Addison's rather flawed character, she does include a more definitive judgement on his work, declaring 'that the essays of Addison are perfect essays', alongside a comparison of his work to 'pure silver' (*E4* 115).

This analysis has established that Woolf's approval of Pope's poetry and Addison's writing was not undermined by her concurrent disapproval of their characters and position. The recognition of this adds further weight to the argument for employing Hutcheon's theory as a means of understanding Woolf's parody of biography in *Orlando* and the potential to both confront and conserve. As with Sackville-West and Stephen, the appearance of the Augustan writers can be understood to work on more than one level; their work is critiqued for the instances of misogyny within it, and their characters are subjected to a corresponding disapproval. As Hutcheon's theory explains it, however, there is an interdependence between the parodying text and the parodied text; the *Rape of the Lock* is preserved by its existence in *Orlando*. Woolf is able to draw on Pope as a misogynist and a patriarchal writer but also to remind her readers of the existence of his acclaimed work by directing their attention to an eighteenth-century poem in her revolutionary twentieth-century text. Stephen is similarly contemporarized through Woolf's allusions to him, just as he is in her other work.

Daniel Defoe

Woolf's feelings towards Pope and Addison may have been mixed but Daniel Defoe appears as a more like-minded and likeable influence. She was fulsome in her praise in 'Phases of

Fiction’, describing Defoe as ‘the English chief’ of the ‘great truth-tellers’ of literature,⁹⁴ and she chided E.M. Forster in a diary entry for not having ever read him: ‘I commanded him to read Defoe, & left him, & went & got some more Defoe’ (*DI* 263). What is more, Defoe acts as a significant point on the intertextual net, acting as a literary connection between Woolf and Stephen. Woolf intimates as much in her first essay on Defoe as she establishes ‘the fact that we have all had *Robinson Crusoe* read aloud to us as children’, immediately recalling the literary bond Woolf and Stephen shared during her childhood (*E4* 98). As the following analysis indicates, they write of him in a frequently similar manner causing their textual dialogue to continue through the different texts they produce on Defoe and his novels. Most pertinent of all, to this discussion and the wider debate, is that Defoe joins them together on a crucial point of biographical thought. Woolf and Stephen react to his literature mixing facts with fiction in the same way, seeing it as prompting a rare form of insight within his work and making the case for considering facts of fiction as constituting a kind of truth. This is the fundamental principle of Woolf’s biographical theory and shown here to be something that Stephen could agree with, certainly when reading Defoe.

It is easy to see why Woolf was moved to imitate the form of Defoe’s novels for *Orlando*, an aspect of the novel’s parody other critics have pointed out.⁹⁵ Not only did they offer the appropriate structure for the narrative adventure Woolf wanted to parody, but Defoe’s attitude towards genre in the novel matched her own. It mattered little that Defoe was faced with shaping this new literary form while Woolf herself was resolving to break its conventions two hundred years later, for the end result was the same: both ignored generic distinctions. *Robinson Crusoe* exists as a paradigm of the fictional biography; that it was mistaken for an actual biography by some of its less discerning readers recalls how *Orlando* had been shelved amongst the biographical section of bookshops on its initial publication.

⁹⁴ *Granite and Rainbow*, p. 94.

⁹⁵ De Gay, p. 135.

The influence of Defoe on *Orlando* is stated prominently, with Woolf confessing her literary debt to him in only the second sentence of the book and as the very first writer to be listed there. That these acknowledgements are written with the same sense of tongue-in-cheek that pervades the rest of the book prompts recognition of Woolf's enjoyably complicated use of irony. Defoe's fiction was being parodied in the book and thus he is credited in its parodic acknowledgements, but the irony does not negate the sentiment: Woolf had used Defoe's style of narrative and the acknowledgment of that influence was genuine. Fortunately Woolf's diary on 14 March, 1927, is rather less ambiguous about developing her fictional biography: 'I might write a Defoe narrative for fun' (*D3* 131). Defoe's further significance here begins to become clearer, too, by that remark. A glance at Woolf's work in 1927 indicates that while she was preparing to write *Orlando* under this acknowledged influence of Defoe, and having published her second essay on him only the previous year, Woolf was also writing 'The New Biography'. As the earlier discussion in this chapter has shown, this was a crucial text for it was here that Woolf first elaborated her blueprint for mixing fact with fiction in biography.⁹⁶ Potentially, then, Defoe's presence in *Orlando* spills over into Woolf's theoretical statement on biography and the following discussion examines just how well-matched Defoe's writing style was to Woolf's ideas on blending facts and fiction.

Woolf parodied the structure of Defoe's stories in *Orlando*, from the episodic nature of the plot to the characters and the settings, something that has been acknowledged in previous scholarship. Susan M. Squier argues that *Orlando* 'borrowed the spirit' of *Moll Flanders* (1722), noting too that Woolf's novel 'shared the light picturesque mode and brisk pacing of Defoe's novel.'⁹⁷ Besides this, Defoe's curious disregard of generic boundaries caught Woolf's imagination, with his writing allowing factual accounts and details to inform

⁹⁶ Furthermore, Defoe had been prevalent enough in Woolf's mind in the interim for her to quote and reference him in a letter to Vanessa, during a description of a particularly eventful dinner with Clive Bell: 'Nothing more was said (aint this like a Defoe novel?)' (*L3* 323).

⁹⁷ 'Tradition and revision in Woolf's *Orlando*: Defoe and 'The Jessamy Brides', in *Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Rachel Bowlby (Harlow: Longman, 1992), pp. 121-130 (p. 123).

the fictive elements and vice versa, without acknowledging where one stopped and the other started. Woolf's description of Defoe's background is not dissimilar to something in *Orlando* for want of its exactness, hinting at the idea that she recognised a kindred mind:

The date of Defoe's birth, to begin with, is doubtful – was it 1660 or 1661? Then again, did he spell his name in one word or in two? And who were his ancestors? He is said to have been a hosier; but what, after all, was a hosier in the seventeenth century? (*CR2*, 51)

Woolf playfully queries basic facts about Defoe's life here in the manner of her ambivalent Biographer, and questions over his date of birth and name recall that neither detail is ever verified for Orlando's character.⁹⁸ The inquiry regarding Defoe's name, though, could have been a legitimate one as Daniel Foe had taken to adding the 'De' prefix as an affectation aged 40, and had used numerous aliases before and after that.⁹⁹ Whether or not it was then spelled in two words or one appears to have changed depending on who was writing it or what Defoe's purpose may have been; in his essay, 'De Foe's Novels' (1876), Stephen chose to spell it with two words, perhaps prompting Woolf's question. Defoe's career had given him cause to manipulate the division between facts and fiction on several notable occasions. He spent eight months in Newgate prison for writing *The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters; Or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church* (1702), a pamphlet satirising anti-Protestant rhetoric. Unfortunately for Defoe the judge did not recognise the intended irony in his writing and sentenced him for seditious libel. This turn of events persuaded Defoe to focus his talents on novel writing rather than pamphleteering, though the move did not necessarily entail a much clearer distinction in his work between facts and fiction. Defoe based *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in part on the true story of castaway sailor Alexander Selkirk and in part on his own life, terming it after publication as 'allusive, allegoric history', and just as his pamphlet had been mistaken for actual High Church protest his novels were often

⁹⁸ Woolf's describes her feelings towards Stephen as 'ambivalent' in 'Sketch of the Past' (*MoB*, 108), using this term to capture not uncertainty but strongly contrasting emotions.

⁹⁹ Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 102.

mistaken for genuine accounts of historical events.¹⁰⁰ Stephen refers to this in his essay, remarking on a Mr M'Queen who had named Defoe's *Captain Singleton* (1720) 'as a claimant for the honour of the discovery of the sources of the White Nile'.¹⁰¹

Just as Woolf would do in *Orlando*, Defoe had inserted well-known people into his fiction in order to utilise the immediate implications they would add to his narrative. As Paula R. Backscheider notes of Defoe:

A number of characters besides Crusoe himself have been speculatively identified with actual people in both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Farther Adventures*. As early as *Major Ramkins* Defoe used an actual person for thematic emphasis [...] Characters like Martin are part of the trappings that contributed to the illusion of an authentic memoir or journal, and they also provide an external referent.¹⁰²

Backscheider notes how the Ramkins character in *Memoirs of Major Alexander Ramkins* (1718) allowed Defoe to exploit the debate surrounding Francis Martin, the Irish prebendary who had dropped his support for Jacobitism, as Defoe's readers would have recognised aspects of Martin's retraction in Alexander Ramkins's own change of heart towards the movement.¹⁰³ Woolf's integration of real people, like Pope and Addison, into *Orlando* allowed her to make similar thematic use of their position and reputation.

Woolf contributed two essays on Defoe and his writing: 'The Novels of Defoe' published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1919, and 'Robinson Crusoe' in the *Nation & Athenaeum* in 1926 (the essays later appearing in the first and second volumes of the *Common Reader* respectively), with both featuring an examination of Defoe's concept of truth. Stephen's 'De Foe's Novels' also deals with this, with Stephen asserting that Defoe had 'the most marvellous power ever known of giving verisimilitude to his fictions; or, in other words again, he had the most amazing talent on record for telling lies.' This is a

¹⁰⁰ *Defoe's Footprints: Essays in Honour of Maximillian E. Novak* (ed. by Robert M. Maniquis and Carl Fisher, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 103.

¹⁰¹ 'De Foe's Novels', p. 4.

¹⁰² *Daniel Defoe: His Life*, p. 474.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

significant point as it establishes that Stephen credited fiction with having the potential for being understood in terms of truth, just as Woolf would do. His declaration in ‘Some Early Impressions’ that impressions were in a way facts comes back to mind, as does the not insignificant detail that Woolf later selected and published that essay via the Hogarth Press. In matters of biography, Stephen, in spite of his (undeserved) reputation as chief purveyor of undisputable, verifiable Victorian facts, allowed that fiction could be as truthful as fact, something Woolf not only would have recognised but drew attention to, through the intertextuality between hers and Stephen’s writing on Defoe and the publication of ‘Some Early Impressions’.

In ‘The Novels of Defoe’, Woolf takes a keen interest in Defoe’s attitude towards facts and fiction in his novels, when she writes of his concern that fictive writing was akin to ‘a sort of lying’ and how he had assuaged this worry by presenting *Robinson Crusoe* as a record of factual events (*E4* 99). Woolf praises Defoe’s ability to convert factual inspiration into imaginative but realistic fiction: ‘to have facts thrust upon you by dint of living and accident is one thing; to swallow them voraciously and retain the imprint of them indelibly, is another’ (*E4* 100). Stephen noted this too, remarking in his essay upon Defoe’s ‘voracious appetite for facts and figures’.¹⁰⁴ Defoe’s realist style of writing may have caused Woolf to admit that he was ‘often dull’ and that he could ‘imitate the matter-of-fact precision of a scientific traveller until we wonder that his pen could trace or his brain conceive what has not even the excuse of truth to soften its dryness’, yet this did not jeopardise the value she recognised in his work (*E4* 103). Stephen, again, makes a very similar point, describing Defoe as ‘dull’ and commenting on the ‘dry precision of his mental vision’.¹⁰⁵ What Woolf believed compensated for occasional lapses into excessive detail was Defoe’s talent for creating characters with a natural appeal and stories that dealt with ‘the important and lasting side of things’, often arising almost incidentally through the precise details of the story (*E4* 103). Stephen’s argument corresponds with this to some degree, though for the very reason

¹⁰⁴ ‘De Foe’s Novels’, p. 13.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 14.

of Defoe's style of realism, he believes the novels to be somewhat limited. This was not the case for *Robinson Crusoe*, however, which Stephen considered to be a perfect story for Defoe's writing: 'It is one of the exceptional cases in which the poetical aspect of a position is brought out best by the most prosaic accuracy of detail'.¹⁰⁶ Stephen's description here commends the book for the same reason Woolf praised it, with poetry and prosaic detail corresponding to fiction and fact.

In 'Robinson Crusoe', Woolf commends Defoe's ability to condense so much life into the well-chosen 'facts' of *Robinson Crusoe*, particularly given that his attention is fixed upon the external world: 'he takes the opposite way from the psychologist's' (CR2, 57). Stephen also makes this second point in his essay when he judges *Robinson Crusoe* to be 'one of the most charming of books' but 'singularly wanting as a psychological study'.¹⁰⁷ Stephen actually found this criticism less easy to overlook than Woolf, for he determines that Defoe's work was hindered by the narratives being almost entirely outward-facing: '[Defoe] is generally too anxious to set everything before us in broad daylight; there is too little of the thoughts and emotions which inhabit the twilight of the mind'.¹⁰⁸ Woolf, on the other hand, found that Defoe's ingenuity in producing a style that was believable and yet insightful made up for this:

If you are Defoe, certainly to describe the fact is enough; for the fact is the right fact. By means of this genius for fact Defoe achieves effects that are beyond any but the great masters of descriptive prose. [...] Defoe, by reiterating that nothing but a plain earthenware pot stands in the foreground, persuades us to see remote islands and the solitudes of the human soul (CR2, 57-58).

That Defoe uses facts so expressively is pertinent here. Woolf writes admiringly of his commitment to a certain perspective in *Robinson Crusoe*, one which eschews contemplations of a philosophical or theological nature, or even of a more prosaic every-day kind; instead, Defoe delivers the bare facts confronting his castaway hero. The reader must

¹⁰⁶ *Hours in a Library: Vol. I*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 37.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

therefore abandon any contrary expectations of the novel: 'Reality, fact, substance is going to dominate all that follows' (CR2, 54). Yet Defoe, Woolf argues, adheres so fixedly to this perspective that the reader's mind is bent to it, resulting in a shared experience of Crusoe's ordeals that allows the fiction to seem as real as fact:

We are swallowing monsters that we should have jibbed at if they had been offered us by an imaginative and flamboyant traveller. But anything that this sturdy middle-class man notices can be taken for a fact. (CR2, 56)

Woolf commends Defoe for having blurred the distinction in his writing, successfully creating a level of credibility through the carefully detailed 'factual' exposition which can then be stretched without losing the reader's faith. This recalls how Woolf contemplated mixing the two elements in 'The New Biography', and how she judged Harold Nicolson to have got his mixture wrong in *Some People*:

For though both truths are genuine, they are antagonistic; let them meet and they destroy each other. Even here, where the imagination is not deeply engaged, when we find people whom we know to be real like Lord Oxford or Lady Colefax, mingling with Miss Plimsoll and Marstock, whose reality we doubt, the one casts suspicion on the other. (E4 477-78)

Woolf finds that Nicolson's characters lack depth if considered in earnest, undone by the care required in adding the fiction to the fact. For fear of one element overwhelming the other ('He can only do it by using no more than a pinch of either') Nicolson causes his subjects to 'not have a great deal to show us', losing the reader's credulity in the process (E4 477). Defoe, on the other hand, achieves a more satisfactory balance between his facts and fiction in *Robinson Crusoe*, perhaps helped by the greater freedom afforded to him in dealing with the 'facts' of his story. This is not, however, to say that these facts lacked veracity. Defoe called the book a history and included the following statement in his prologue to the original publication of *Robinson Crusoe*:

The editor believes this narrative to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it: and though he is well aware there are many, who on

account of the very singular preservations the author met with, will give it the name of romance.¹⁰⁹

This preface is written as though by the book's editor (pre-empting Woolf's narrating Biographer in *Orlando*), but despite that artifice the general point being made is not disingenuous. Even if Defoe/the editor understated the amount of fiction included in the book, the idea of its existing as a 'history of fact' still stood. Ruth Mack explains this:

In its claim for truth, Defoe's fiction follows a long line of texts from the seventeenth century that claim to be 'true history' in opposition to 'romance.' As Michael McKeon point out, the claim to be 'true history' is in this period most significant as an epistemological claim, a claim about the way truth is represented, rather than a claim about a text's investment in the representation of a past world.¹¹⁰

This suggests that Defoe considered the truth of what he was writing to be dependent less on reference to the external world and more on whether or not it conveyed a truthful understanding of that world. Stephen recognised this aspect of Defoe's literary method and judged it as his greatest strength as a writer, something born out of his years of journalism:

De Foe, therefore, may be said to have stumbled almost unconsciously into novel-writing. He was merely aiming at true stories, which happened not to be true. But accidentally, or rather unconsciously, he could not help presenting us with a type of curious interest; for he necessarily described himself and the readers whose tastes he understood and shared so thoroughly.¹¹¹

Stephen notes both the epistemological challenge contained in Defoe's work, later commenting on how Defoe's 'narratives were fictitious only in the sense that the facts did not happen', and the insight, which he observes in Defoe's keen understanding of social moods and his talent for reflecting them in his writing.¹¹² Woolf too recognised and lauded

¹⁰⁹ *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: Who Lived Twenty-eight Years in an Uninhabited Island with an Account of His Deliverance, and His Surprising Adventures* (London: Harvey and Darton, 1719; repr. 1831), p. iv.

¹¹⁰ 'History and Literature from Milton to Wollstonecraft', in *A Companion to British Literature, Volume 3: The Long Eighteenth Century, 1660 – 1830*, ed. by Robert DeMaria, Jr., Heesok Chang and Samantha Zacher (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 19-34 (p. 24).

¹¹¹ *Hours in a Library: Vol. I*, p. 44.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Defoe's approach. In a declaration that not only anticipates but potentially informs her ideas on writing biography, *and* draws a connection to how Stephen responds to Defoe's concept of literary truth, Woolf writes how he 'achieves a truth of insight which is far rarer and more enduring than the truth of fact which he professed to make his aim' (*E4* 103). This final comment suggests what it is most of all that draws Woolf to Defoe's writing: his belief in fiction providing a more satisfactory vehicle for biography, and those things Woolf believed should be entailed by biography, such as impressions of life and experience, than that of a purely factual account. Defoe's novels provided a fitting model for *Orlando*, and his attitude towards combining facts with fiction, of finding truth in both, and of ultimately privileging fictive truths over factual ones clearly found favour with Woolf. That Defoe's novels, particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, elicited a similar response from Stephen, causing his own attitude towards the potential truth of fiction to be made evident, is equally noteworthy. Imagining again the intertextual net Woolf creates through her writing, Defoe appears in a prominent position, as he links the way in which father and daughter write about both his novels and his writing method. The idea that texts in the net can modify one another is also relevant here: Woolf appropriates Defoe's work for her modernist approach, and in doing so it becomes possible to read modernist sensibilities in Defoe.

And so the parody of Defoe parallels that of Pope and of Stephen – the implied point of criticism along with the act of preservation implicit in the act of parody.

Conclusion

This chapter established several crucial points about how Woolf and Stephen wrote and wrote about biography, in order that the subsequent reading of *Orlando* as a parody that preserves as much as it criticises could be fully understood and substantiated. These points demonstrated that despite their literary reputations, Woolf and Stephen shared some key ideas about biography. Specifically, both emphasised the importance of and interest in writing more obscure lives, with both arguing that by recording these less celebrated names

history was made more accurate and complete. Moreover, Woolf and Stephen shared the same attitude towards truth, arguing that this was the ultimate and essential aim of biography, overriding concerns of propriety and, in the most significant of these similarities, acknowledging the priority of impressions. Thus eternal facts were not necessarily considered the most important part of a biography; instead, it was creating a true reflection of the subject's person and character. While this was a conspicuous element of Woolf's biographical manifesto, even the chief component of it, demonstrating the same vein of thinking in Stephen's work required closer examination, in no small part due to having first to unpick his reputation as the architect of fact-heavy Victorian biography. Yet without any doubt it is there: when Stephen urges his *Dictionary* contributors to employ 'high literary ability' and construct 'lucid and condensed narrative', and as he contemplates how impressions of people are as valid as facts in his reminiscences.¹¹³

Having evidenced this correlation between Woolf's and Stephen's biographical principles, it has been possible then to see how Woolf herself recognised it too through her references to Stephen's work in her own. And once it is evident that Woolf considered Stephen separate from the idea of traditional Victorian biography that she criticises, and actually sympathetic towards her approach writing biography, the reading of *Orlando* as not simply a critical satire of traditional biography (and Stephen along with it) but in fact a layered parody, capable of fulfilling different functions, becomes more compelling.

For Woolf's use of parody in *Orlando* is not simply to disparage the original source; instead, she repeats with ironic inversion. The inversion involves a level of criticism, the severity depending on its form, but the repetition necessarily brings about conservation. Whether that is an individual personality (like Pope), a theoretical principle (like that of Victorian biography), or a narrative style and structure (like Defoe's), the parody of each in *Orlando* ensures that they are preserved by Woolf's text. And this is a crucial idea, for it acknowledges a fundamental aspect of Woolf's writing: that it seeks to engage and

¹¹³ 'A New "Biographia Britannica"', 850.

encourage thought and conversation, rather than to conclude and end. Woolf does not want to draw a line after Victorian biography, for example, with a criticism so final that there is no longer any point looking back. Just as her allusions to her father create and continue a conversation between Woolf and Stephen, so too does parody in *Orlando*: biography and opinions about biography are sustained through her novel.

Conclusion

When considering Virginia Woolf's relationship with Sir Leslie Stephen, it is easy to do so as though it were separated by a great divide, with both father and daughter being so frequently defined by an allegiance to their respective eras. For many, Woolf was the very epitome of the modernist period, while Stephen has just as readily fallen into place as the paradigmatic Victorian man of letters. Their relationship thus appears split on those same lines: the progressive twentieth-century daughter versus the traditional nineteenth-century father. But this temptation to categorise Woolf and Stephen quite so neatly must be resisted, for, as this thesis has argued throughout, in neither case would it be wholly accurate and nor would the resulting view of their relationship.

As this thesis has shown, Woolf turns to the Victorian era frequently within her work with varied purpose and feeling, much of which is affectionate and respectful. Furthermore, it has demonstrated Stephen to be a more progressive Victorian thinker than his portrayal in Woolfian scholarship has often suggested. This thesis has focused on Woolf and Stephen's textual relationship, looking at how Woolf imagines more than one version of Stephen; how she engages in a textual conversation with him that acts to not only maintain the best version of him but also ensures that he continues to remain as a literary presence; and finally, how this plurality fits with Woolf's wider approach to writing life.

The idea of a dialogue existing between Woolf and Stephen assumes a degree of goodwill on Woolf's part that may not seem likely from the accounts of several prominent biographies, including Hermione Lee's, or be easy to imagine in view of the characterisation of Stephen as Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* or, indeed, in sections of Woolf's autobiographical essay, 'A Sketch of the Past'. Nevertheless, this thesis has evidenced a real and consequential fellowship between them: Woolf the passionate apprentice, an avid and conscientious reader of the almost unlimited books at her disposal; Stephen the encouraging mentor and benevolent librarian. Through Woolf's careful reframing of their roles, this is

developed into a more balanced association of two literary peers; when Woolf wrote that Stephen ‘comes back now more as a contemporary’, it was by her design that he did so (*D3* 208).

How, though, can this be reconciled with *To the Lighthouse*? In some ways the shadow of Mr Ramsay seems to fall over any attempt to interpret Woolf’s relationship with Stephen in a more positive light. The character of an aging, somewhat embittered academic, besotted with his beautiful and indulging wife and permanently startled by his flock of children, appears to have so definitively captured Stephen’s nature that it supersedes any other image of him. The brilliance and popularity of the novel causes any number of issues of the *DNB* or alpine conquests to fall into obscurity, leaving instead the flawed Mr Ramsay as Stephen’s permanent marker in history. Even accepting the other contributing elements that form the character, Woolf poured an unenviable amount of her father’s worse behaviours and attitudes into her creation, including a neurosis over intellectual achievement, the exhausting effect he could have upon women, and an inability to communicate effectively with his children. These were characteristics clearly recognisable in Stephen’s later life, as the combination of *Dictionary*-induced stress and exhaustion and the sudden tragic loss of his wife, Julia, took a heavy toll on his mental capacities and behaviour. This period featured Stephen at his worst, self-absorbed and self-recriminating, demanding much of Stella then Vanessa and unable to offer much to his children in return. Significantly, though, as we have seen, it *was only* a period of his life, something Woolf not only recognised but reflected by presenting different interpretations of Stephen in her writing. If Woolf embodies the worst aspects of Stephen within her Mr Ramsay character, it is at the same time that she causes a different version of him, a better version, to continue to exist through the more implicit allusions to him in her work.

On an intersubjective level, this is the Stephen who provided an intellectual sanctuary away from George Duckworth and his interminable social engagements and with it a library in which Woolf honed her writing skills through an immersion in the literature

she found there. But it is on an intertextual basis that this Stephen, as a fellow writer, really exists. Woolf references his ideas and writing in numerous texts, including, unexpectedly perhaps, ones that defined her modernism, such as her essay 'Modern Fiction' and 'Time Passes' from *To the Lighthouse*. In those works and in others, Woolf constructs a dialogue with Stephen by introducing his voice into the text, often still wrapped in his language. For example, when Woolf depicted the process of consciousness perceiving the world, she wrote of 'an incessant shower of innumerable atoms' (*EA* 160); when Stephen did the same, he described an 'unceasing stream of more or less vivid feelings' (*History*, 44). Not only was there a correspondence in the concepts being explored but also a deliberate equivalence in the words used to do so.

At times Stephen's voice is used to lend support to Woolf's argument, bringing with it a sense of Victorian acumen; at others Woolf disagrees with Stephen, subsequently using his interjection as a basis for a separation of their opinions and ideals. The sense of this being a conversation is encouraged by the manner in which the texts engage with each other. There is reciprocity here, with extra meaning conveyed both on Woolf's text (as addresser) and Stephen's text (as addressee) by the intertextual connection created between them. When, for example, Woolf references *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* in *To the Lighthouse* via not only a floating kitchen table but also the philosophical explanation of why it perhaps might be in a pear tree, she invokes Stephen's discussions on empiricism as well his own dialogue with David Hume. *To the Lighthouse* is thus involved with a debate on the existence of an external world, crafted into the narrative of Woolf's story. At the same time that same debate in Stephen's book now carries with it something new, an echo of the dialogue with Woolf's work now inseparable from the original text and ensuring that Woolf's influence is embedded within a *History of English Thought* as certainly as Stephen's is preserved in *To the Lighthouse*.

Woolf's method can be read through Bakhtin's dialogism, in the way that it utilises separate individual voices within the text; through Kristeva's theoretical language,¹ in the way in which she explains how expressions depend on other, previous expressions in determining their full sense and relevance; and, particularly in the case of *Orlando*, through Hutcheon's definition of parody, which describes 'two voices [that] neither merge nor cancel each other out'.² Each of these techniques is useful in explaining a facet of this complex use of allusion, even if Woolf's method is uniquely her own. Where other modernist writers incorporated a similar level of carefully crafted textual allusion, it was more often than not accompanied with a sense of achievement; Woolf on the other hand seems equally content for her references to be discovered almost incidentally. This is an aspect of Woolf's wider approach, seeking to avoid absoluteness or a single authoritative voice and instead present alternative points of view and open-endedness in her writing. Here she offers, as Anne Fernald so aptly describes it, a 'gift to the text itself, a secret fount of pleasure' that a reader may or may not discover but without any sense of being mistaken if they do not.³

The fluidity of Woolf's writing helps further explain the capacity for including these multiple interpretations of Stephen in her work, for she was not seeking to capture one definitive idea of him. This would have not only represented a manner of thinking and writing about the world that Woolf was attempting to subvert (specifically, a patriarchal one obsessed with verifiable truth) but also one that jarred with her conception of writing life. Woolf may have written that *To the Lighthouse* would have 'father's character done complete in it' (*D3* 18) but she also complained that: 'I don't like being [...] told my people are my mother and father, when, being in a novel, they're not' (*L6* 464). Woolf clearly prickles at the attempt to have her characters categorically defined when she had written them without such specific limitations, whether they were rooted in biographical 'truth' or not. And this was itself a flexible concept in Woolf's hands. Truth in biography

¹ Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, p. 37.

² Hutcheon, p. xiv.

³ Fernald, 'Woolf and Intertextuality', p. 60.

corresponded to the success achieved in capturing the subject's personality, not merely in representing the objective details of the life in question. Her essays recommend a subtle blend of fact and fiction (her granite and rainbow) to best capture the personality of the subject, with the fiction allowing the skilled biographer to offer an insight into their subject's thoughts and feelings.

Woolf's interpretations of Stephen adopt particular variations of this biographical approach, indicating again her intention to represent him differently at different times. The account of him that is seen in her piece for Maitland's *Life and Letters of Sir Leslie Stephen* and reoccurring in her essay, 'Leslie Stephen', is built almost exclusively from facts, and not in the least revealing of his psyche because of that. Mr Ramsay represents the opposite end of the scale: a semi-biographical creation consisting of fictional facts, and some amount of 'real' facts, combined to form an entirely believable and intriguing character. Neither interpretation involves the exact balance of fact and fiction as prescribed by Woolf that would have reflected a more complete representation of Leslie Stephen, but both still are reflections of him.

Mr Ramsay may not have represented the most flattering of legacies for Stephen, but then Woolf had not been interested in producing hagiography. Her *Life of Roger Fry* had contained some uncharacteristic sentimentality (she describes Fry somewhat awkwardly in the final page as being a 'saint who laughed; a saint who enjoyed life to the uttermost'), though that biography had never afforded Woolf the required freedom to write as she had wanted.⁴ The question of propriety had been a more challenging adversary of new biography than might have been expected,⁵ with the influence of Fry's bereaved family and the navigation of old Bloomsbury entanglements proving a handful for Woolf's attempts at

⁴ *Roger Fry*, p. 297.

⁵ John Mepham agrees, describing this passage from *Roger Fry* as 'the most thoroughly conventional moment in [Woolf's] entire oeuvre' (*Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), p. 178).

candour: 'Can I mention erection?' Woolf had asked. 'No you can't,' Maynard Keynes replied, 'I should mind your saying it' (*D5* 256).

Woolf wanted to write of the full complexities of life and that necessarily involved unearthing and recording all aspects of a character, whether they be controversial or undesirable or not. Otherwise the text did no more than her adversary Arnold Bennett's materialist fiction or the exemplary lives form of biography produced by Sidney Lee and his contemporaries. Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past' vividly illustrates this as she peels apart layers of her own experience in an attempt to extract a real likeness, prompting an examination of an instance of childhood sexual abuse by her step-brother, Gerald Duckworth, and a meticulous, almost psychoanalytical, analysis of how her writing process converted powerful moments in life, 'sledge-hammer' blows of shock, into a literary wholeness, removed of the danger to Woolf's own self (*MoB*, 72). It is frequently astonishing introspection. If this is what Woolf believed auto/biography required, it is little wonder she was diametrically opposed to the concept of biography as a form of glorious individual monument. This was the polar opposite: visceral and self-scrutinising. What is more, even in the medium of autobiography where subject and writer are necessarily combined, Woolf rejects the single authoritative voice and finds life best described as a plurality, existing at different moments in time: 'It would be interesting to make the two people, I now, I then, come out in contrast. And further, this past is much affected by the present moment. What I write today I should not write in a year's time' (*MoB*, 75).

Woolf's querying of the autobiographical and authoritative 'I' here recalls her narrator in *A Room of One's Own*:

'I' is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being. Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping. (*ROO*, 30)

Woolf's narrator, who proposes that the reader 'call me [...] by any name you please – it is not a matter of any importance' (*ROO*, 30), rejects the 'I' and the notion of absolute, incontestable truth, bidding her reader to determine where its value may lie for themselves, whether that be in fact, fiction, or in both. Thus several key elements of Woolf's writing are shown to be intertwined, even different aspects of the same idea: the potential multiplicity of truth; the equal validity of truth in fiction with truth in fact; and the plurality of reading and representing life.

It is clear, then, that Woolf's capacity to write and maintain different versions of Stephen is not incongruous with her other ideas but rather an expression of them, and that the image of Stephen as tyrant, and with it 'the breast beating, the groaning, the self-dramatisation' (*MoB*, 145), was neither the only reflection of his person nor the definitive one. If this is acknowledged as being the case, it no longer becomes necessary to attempt to reconcile the brooding melancholic presence with the literary Stephen Woolf returns to repeatedly in her contemplations on literature, philosophy, and biography.

Woolf's writing opens and extends dialogue, with Stephen and between her Victorian past and modernist present. At different points in this ongoing conversation, Woolf queries Stephen's arguments, confirms them, rejects, accepts, or adapts them entirely. In the instance of their literary theorising, Woolf invokes her father's ideas initially, but then steps away from him by transplanting those theories into practice – something he never did. Woolf is therefore able to maintain the connection to Stephen and his Victorian theory on one hand, and separate from him and it on the other. Yet even when Woolf is critical this can have a preservation effect; for example, Woolf's parody of what she broadly labels Victorian biography ensures that the existence of the source texts, and form, is perpetuated through her modernist novel, *Orlando*. For Woolf is not pursuing a resolution here, something which would have been entirely counter-productive to her aims; she wanted the conversations to remain open, allowing Stephen to continue to exist in her work, in the twentieth century, and as part of her rebalanced relationship with him.

This thesis continues the critical debate that has established Stephen as a significant influence on Woolf's work and one that she engages with repeatedly in her writing, which has been led by scholars such as de Gay, Daugherty, and McNees and which new scholars such as Matthew Holliday are now continuing. This thesis also restarts the long dormant critical conversation on Stephen's own life and achievements from where Annan left it with his biography, and which could be continued with a new full-length biography.

This thesis has identified and explained intertextual links between Woolf's work and Stephen's that have not been studied together before now, putting forward a new perspective on their textual relationship. This new point of view is informed by two key points: firstly, the idea that the dialogue between them demonstrates how Woolf was influenced by her father's work, using his ideas to support her own in her different texts, and how at times she used it as a means of separating from his influence. Secondly, the idea that Woolf's different reactions to Stephen's work are able to co-exist and demonstrate that, through her use of intertextual allusion, Woolf ensures a literary permanence for Stephen's work. This perspective opens up a new reading of *Orlando*, one that suggests Woolf's novel sustains Stephen and other writers as much as it parodies them.

Bibliography:

Works by Woolf not listed in the Abbreviations

- , *Monday or Tuesday* (London: Hogarth Press, 1921)
- , *Night and Day* (1919; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)
- , *Jacob's Room* (1922; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)
- , *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924)
- , *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925; repr. London: Alma Classics, 2012)
- , 'David Copperfield', *The Nation & the Athenæum*, August 22 (1925), 620-21
<<http://www.woolfonline.com/?node=content/contextual/transcriptions&project=1&parent=45&taxa=46&content=6157&pos=3>> [Accessed on 02 January 2016]
- , *The Waves* (1931; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2002)
- , *The Years* (1937; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)
- , *Between the Acts* (1941; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2012)
- , *Roger Fry: a Biography* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1940)
- , *Granite and Rainbow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1958)
- , *Collected Essays*, 4 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1966-67)
- , *Books and Portraits: Some Further Selections from the Literary and Biographical Writings of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977)
- , *Women and Writing* (London: The Women's Press, 1979)

–, "Anon" and "The Reader": Virginia Woolf's Last Essays', ed. by Brenda R. Silver, *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 25, No. 3/4, Virginia Woolf Issue (1979), 356-441
<DOI: 10.2307/441326>

–, *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks*, ed. by Brenda Silver (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) <<https://doi.org/10.1349/ddlp.3522>>

Woolf, Virginia, Vanessa Bell, and Thoby Stephen, *Hyde Park Gate News*, ed. by Gill Lowe (London: Hesperus Press, 2005)

–, *The Mark on the Wall and Other Short Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2008)

Works by Stephen not listed in the Abbreviations

Leslie Stephen, *The Times on the American War: and Other Essays* (1865; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

–, 'On the Choice of Representatives by Popular Constituencies', in *Essays on Reform* (London: Macmillan, 1867), pp. 85-126

–, *The Playground of Europe* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1871)

–, *Essays on Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1873; repr. 1907)

–, 'Art and Morality', *The Cornhill Magazine*, 32, no. 187 (1875)

–, *Hours in a Library*, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1874-1892)

–, 'A New "Biographia Britannica"', *Athenaeum*, No. 2878 (23 December 1882), 850.

–, 'The New Biographical Dictionary', *Athenaeum*, No. 2881 (13 January 1883), 54.

–, and Sidney Lee, eds, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 63 vols of 1st edn (London: Macmillan and Co. (1885-1900)

- , *Life of Henry Fawcett* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1885)
- , *The English Utilitarians*, 3 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1900-1902)
- , ‘Biography of Dickens’, in Frank T. Marzials’s *Life of Charles Dickens* (Philadelphia: John D. Morris and Company, 1900), pp. 1-46
- , *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: A Judge of the High Court of Justice* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1895)
- , *Social Rights and Duties: Addresses to Ethical Societies*, 2 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1896)
- , ‘Bishop Butler and his Apologist’, *The Nineteenth Century*, no. 226 (January 1896), 106-22
- , ‘National Biography’, in *National Review*, 157 (1896), 51-65
- , *Studies of a Biographer*, 4 vols (London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1898-1902)
- , ‘The Study of English Literature’, in *The Study of English Literature: Three Essays*, ed. by Albert F Blaisdell (Boston: Willard Small, Publisher, 1902), pp. 71-118
- , ‘Pope’, in *English Men of Letters, Vol. XII: Pope, Johnson, Gray*, ed. by John Morley (London: Macmillan and Co., 1902)
- , ‘Some Early Impressions’, *National Review*, 247 (1903), 130-59; repr. *Some Early Impressions* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924)
- , *Men, Books, and Mountains: Essays by Leslie Stephen* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1956)

All other works

Abel, Elizabeth, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989)

Adams, James Eli, *A History of Victorian Literature* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011)

Addison, Joseph, *Essays of Joseph Addison*, ed. by John Richard Green (London and New York: The Roger de Coverley Club, 1880)

Allen, Graham, *Intertextuality*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2011)

Allott, Kenneth, ed., *Writers and their Background: Matthew Arnold* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976)

Annan, Noel, *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984; repr. 1986)

Aplin, John, *Memory and Legacy: A Thackeray Family Biography, 1876-1919* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2011)

Arnold, Matthew, *Essays by Matthew Arnold* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914)

–, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold: 1871-1878 v. 4 (Victorian Literature & Culture)*, ed. by Cecil Y. Lang (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2000)

Atkinson, Juliette, *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth-Century 'Hidden' Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Backscheider, Paula R., *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1989)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1972; repr. 1984)

- Barry, Peter, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- Beer, Gillian, 'Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in *To the Lighthouse*', *Essays in Criticism XXXIV* (01 January 1984), 33-55 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/eic/XXXIV.1.33>>
- Bell, Quentin, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972; repr. 1990)
- Bennett, Arnold, 'Queen of the High-Brows' in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 258-60 (p. 258) (first publ. in the *Evening Standard*, 28 November (1929), 09)
- Benzel, Kathryn N., 'Reading Readers in Virginia Woolf's "Orlando: A Biography"', *Style*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Fiction (1994), pp. 169-182
- Bicknell, John W., *Selected Letters of Leslie Stephen*, 2 vols (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996)
- Bilan, R.P., *The Literary Criticism of F. R. Leavis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Bogen, Anna, 'Mapping the Ghostly City: Cambridge, *A Room of One's Own* and the University Novel', in *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 1: Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. by Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 37-49
- Bond, Alma H., 'Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen: A Father's Contribution to Psychosis and Genius', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1986), 507-524 <<https://doi.org/10.1521/jaap.1.1986.14.4.507>> [Accessed on 10 July 2018]
- Bowlby, Rachel, ed., *Virginia Woolf* (Harlow: Longman, 1992)
- Bradbrook, M.C., 'Notes on the Style of Mrs Woolf' in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 308-13 (p.313) (first publ. in *Scrutiny*, May (1932), 38-38)

Brake, Laurel, 'Literary Criticism and the Victorian Periodicals', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 16 (1986), 92-116 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3507768>> [Accessed on 14 July 2015]

Brems, Lieselotte, Lobke Ghesquière, and Freek Van de Velde, eds, *Intersubjectivity and Intersubjectification in Grammar and Discourse* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014)

Brontë, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre* (1847; repr. London: Wordsworth Classics, 1999)

Broughton, Trev, *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Literary Auto/biography in the Late-Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1998)

Caramagno, Thomas C., *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic-Depressive Illness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)

Carlisle, Janice, 'Mr J. Stuart Mill, M.P., and the Character of the Working Classes', in *Mill and the Moral Character of Liberalism*, ed. by Eldon J. Eisenach (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 143-168

Carlyle, Thomas, *Life of John Sterling* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1851)

Clark, Ronald, *The Victorian Mountaineers* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1953)

Clements, Patricia and Isobel Grundy, eds, *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays* (London: Vision, 1983)

Collins, H.P., *Criterion* review in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 156-57 (p.156) (first publ. in the *Criterion*, July (1925), 586-88)

Dally, Peter, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: Manic Depression and the Life of Virginia Woolf* (London: St Martin's Press, 2001)

Daugherty, Beth Rigel and Eileen Barrett, eds, *Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Pace University Press, 1996)

Daugherty, Beth Rigel, 'Learning Virginia Woolf: Of Leslie, Libraries and Letters', in *Virginia Woolf and Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by in Jeanette McVicker and Laura Davis (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 10-17.

Defoe, Daniel, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: Who Lived Twenty-eight Years in an Uninhabited Island with an Account of His Deliverance, and His Surprising Adventures* (1719; repr. London: Harvey and Darton, 1831)

De Gay, Jane, *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

–, 'Virginia Woolf's Feminist Historiography in "Orlando"', *Critical Survey*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2007), 62-72 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41556201>> [Accessed on 20 September 2017]

–, *Virginia Woolf and Christian Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018)

DeMaria, Jr., Robert, Heesok Chang and Samantha Zacher, eds, *A Companion to British Literature, Volume 3: The Long Eighteenth Century, 1660 – 1830* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013)

De Mille, Charlotte, 'Sudden gleams of (f)light', in *Creative Writing and Art History*, ed. by Catherine Grant and Patricia Rubin (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)

DeSalvo, Louise A., 'Lighting the Cave: The Relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf', *Signs*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1982), 195-214
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173896>> [Accessed on 13 July 2018]

–, *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Her Life and Work* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989)

Diment, Galya, *The Autobiographical Novel of Co-consciousness: Goncharov, Woolf, and Joyce* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1994)

Dowling, David, 'The Aesthetic Education of Virginia Woolf', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 17, 2 (1983), 71-82 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3332331>> [Accessed on 24 July 2015]

Dunn Jane, *Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell: A Very Close Conspiracy* (London: Virago Press, 2000)

Durham, NC, USA, Duke University, Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Sir Leslie Stephen Papers, 1861-1959. Box 1, C. 1, fol. 1861-1866

Dusinberre, Juliet, *Virginia Woolf's Renaissance: Woman Reader Or Common Reader?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997)

Ellis, Steve, *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Eliot, T.S., 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1920), pp. 42-53.

Faizi, Hamed, 'Dialogism and Carnival in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*: A Bakhtinian Reading', *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2015), 109-114

Farrell, Joseph, 'Intention and Intertext', *Phoenix*, Vol. 59, No. 1/2 (2005), 98-111 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067741>> [Accessed on 17 July 2017]

Fenwick, Gillian, 'The "Athenaeum" and the "Dictionary of National Biography", 1885-1901', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Winter 1990), 180-188

–, *Leslie Stephen's Life in Letters: A Bibliographical Study* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993)

- Fernald, Anne E., 'Woolf and Intertextuality', in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, ed. by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 52-64
- Forster, John, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872-74)
- Fraser, Hilary, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Freud, Sigmund, *Collected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924-25)
- , *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-66)
- Frie, Roger and Bruce Reis, 'Understanding Intersubjectivity: Psychoanalytic Formulations and Their Philosophical Underpinnings', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2001), 297-327 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.2001.10747081>> [Accessed on 4 July 2018]
- Frost, Ginger S., *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class, and Gender in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995)
- Froude, James Anthony, *Thomas Carlyle: a History of his Life in London, 1834-1881* (London: Longman, Greens, and Co., 1882-84)
- Froula, Christine, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005)
- Furlong, E. J., *Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1961; repr. 2004)
- Garnett, Henrietta, *Anny: A Life of Anne Thackeray Ritchie* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2004)
- Gillespie, Diane F, 'Introduction', in *Roger Fry: A Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell-Shakespeare Head, 1995), pp. xi-l

- , ‘The Biographer and the Self in *Roger Fry*’, in *Virginia Woolf: Texts and Contexts: Selected Papers from the Fifth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Beth Rigel Daugherty and Eileen Barrett (New York: Pace University Press, 1996), pp. 198–203
- , ‘Virginia Woolf and Libraries’, *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalog*, ed. by Julia King and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic (Washington: Washington State UP, 2004) Online
<<http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/onlinebooks/woolflibrary/woolflibraryonline.htm>>
[Accessed on 21 March 2016]
- Gladstone, William, ‘Bishop Butler and his Censors’, *The Nineteenth Century*, no. 225 (November 1895), 715-39
- , ‘Bishop Butler and his Censors’, *The Nineteenth Century*, no. 226 (December 1895), 1056-74
- Goldman, Jane, *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Goldman, Lawrence, *The Blind Victorian: Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; repr. 2003)
- Gordon, Eleanor and Gwyneth Nair, ‘Domestic Fathers and the Victorian Parental Role’, *Women's History Review*, Volume 15, Issue 4 (2006), 551-559
- Gordon, Lyndall, *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* (London: Virago Press, 2006)
- Gosse, Edmund, *The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's* (London: William Heinemann, 1899)
- Gualtieri, Elena, ‘The Impossible Art: Virginia Woolf on Modern Biography’, *The Cambridge Quarterly Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (2000) 349-361

<<https://academic.oup.com/camqtly/article-abstract/XXIX/4/349/366359>> [Accessed on 02 November 2017]

Haac, Oscar A., ed., *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994)

Hall, Donald, 'Who Else Is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?', *The New York Times Book Review*, 24 December 24 1967

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/17/specials/woolf-essays67.html?_r=1> [Accessed 20 May 2018]

Hankins, Leslie Kathleen, 'Orlando: "A Precipice Marked V": Between "A Miracle of Discretion" and "Lovemaking Unbelievable: Indiscretions Incredible"', in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, ed. by Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 180-202

Harris, Alexandra, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011)

Harrison, Frederic, *Realities and Ideals* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1908)

Hazlitt, William, *The Spirit of the Age: Or, Contemporary Portraits* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1825; repr. 1886)

Henderson, Philip, *The Novel of To-day*, in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 351-55 (p. 353) (first publ. *The Novel of To-day* (1936), 23-28, 87-91)

Hill, George Birkbeck Norman, *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897)

Hill, Katherine, 'Virginia Woolf and Leslie Stephen: History and Literary Revolution', *PMLA*, 96, 3, (1981), 351-62 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/461911>> [Accessed on 12 March 2015]

- Hollis, Catherine W., *Bloomsbury Heritage Series No. 56: Leslie Stephen as Mountaineer: 'Where does Mont Blanc end, and where do I begin?'*, Cecil Woolf Publishers: London (2010)
- Hough, Walter E., ed., *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900: Volume II* (London: Routledge, 1972)
- Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (1738-40; repr. London: Penguin Classics, 1985)
- , *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1758; repr. Charleston: CreateSpace, 2015)
- Humm, Maggie, *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: The Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006)
- Hussey, Mark, 'Review: *Virginia Woolf and the Nineteenth-Century Domestic Novel*', *Victorian Studies*, 51 (2008) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20537377>> [Accessed on 16 July 2015]
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Parody* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985; repr. 2000)
- Hutton, R. H., 'The Metaphysical Society: a reminiscence', *The Nineteenth Century* (1885), 177–196 <<http://aleph0.clarku.edu/huxley/comm/Hutton/Hut-Meta.html>> [Accessed on 28 March 2016]
- Huxley, Leonard, *The House of Smith Elder* (London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd., 1923)
- 'Hyde Park Gate and Kensington Gate', in *Survey of London: Volume 38, South Kensington Museums Area*, ed. F H W Sheppard (London, 1975), pp. 26-38 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol38/pp26-38>> [Accessed 22 August 2016]

Hyman, Virginia R., 'Reflections in the Looking-Glass: Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1983), 197-216

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831121>> [Accessed on 12 October 2015]

Ingelbien, Raphaël, 'Intertextuality, Critical Politics and the Modernist Canon: The Case of Virginia Woolf', *Paragraph*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Nov 1999), 278-292

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43263573>> [Accessed on 28 July 2017]

Jaggard, Alison M., 'Feminist Ethics', in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 2nd edn, ed. by Lawrence C. Becker and Charlotte B. Becker (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 528 – 539

Jensen, Margaret M., *The Open Book: Creative Misreading in the Works of Selected Modern Writers: Writers as Readers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

Johnson, Stephanie, 'Review: *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians*', *Victorian Studies*, 51 (2008) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20537377>> [Accessed on 16 July 2015]

Jolly, Margaret, ed., *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (London & Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001)

Kaplan, Cora, *Victoriana – Histories, Fictions, Criticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007)

Karenberg, Axel, 'Retrospective Diagnosis: Use and Abuse in Medical Historiography', *Prague Medical Report*, Vol. 110, No. 2 (2009), 140–145

<http://www.lf1.cuni.cz/Data/Files/PragueMedicalReport/pmr_110_2009_02/pmr2009a0016.pdf> [Accessed on 22 November 2015]

Khayyám, Omar, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: Rendered Into English Quatrains by E. Fitzgerald*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (Boston, MA: L.C. Page and Company, 1859; repr. 1899)

King, Julia and Laila Miletic-Vejzovic, eds, *The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Short-title Catalog* (Washington: Washington State University Press, 2004)

Kristeva, Julia, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980)

Leavis, Q.D., *Scrutiny* review in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 409-14 (first publ. in *Scrutiny*, September (1938), 203-14)

Lee, Hermione, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Random House, 1996)

–, *Body Parts: Essays on Life-Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2005)

–, ‘Virginia Woolf’s essays’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 89-106

Lee, Sidney, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898; repr. 1901)

–, George Smith, and Leslie Stephen, *George Smith: A Memoir with Some Pages of Autobiography* (1902; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

–, *Queen Victoria: A Biography*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1904)

–, *Principles of Biography; the Leslie Stephen lecture delivered in the Senate House, Cambridge, on 13 May 1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911)

Levy, Paul, *G.E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Litz, A. Walton, Louis Menand, and Lawrence Rainey, eds, *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume 7, Modernism and the New Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Lockhart, J.G., *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 7 vols (London: John Murray and Whittaker and Co., 1837-38; 2nd edn, 10 vols, 1839)

'London, Thursday, May 21, 1863,' *The Times*, 21 May 1863 <The Times Digital Archive, Web> [Accessed on 26 July 2016]

Lowell, James Russell, *The Biglow Papers* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1848; repr. 1859)

Lubenow, William C., *"Only Connect": Learned Societies in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015)

Lyons, Sarah, *Algernon Swinburne and Walter Pater: Victorian Aestheticism, Doubt and Secularisation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015)

MacCarthy, Desmond, *Leslie Stephen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937; repr. 2013)

Mander, W.J., ed., *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Maniquis, Robert M. and Carl Fisher, eds, *Defoe's Footprints: Essays in Honour of Maximillian E. Novak* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009)

Marcus, Laura, *Auto/biographical Discourse: Criticism, Theory, Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994)

Matthew, H. C. G., 'Leslie Stephen and the *New DNB*', Leslie Stephen Lecture (1995), <<https://global.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/freeodnb/shelves/lslecture1/lslecture2/>> [Accessed on 04 May 2016]

Mauer, Oscar, 'Leslie Stephen and the Cornhill Magazine, 1871-82', *The University of Texas: Studies in English*, Vol. 32 (1953), 67-95 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20776063>> [Accessed on 27 May 2016]

McNees, Eleanor, 'The Stephen Inheritance: Virginia Woolf and the Burden of the Arnoldian Critic', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 44, Issue 2 (2015), 119-145
<https://doi.org/10.1093/camqtly/bfv012>

McVicker, Jeannette and Laura Davis, eds, *Virginia Woolf & Communities: Selected Papers from the Eighth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (New York: Pace University Press, 1999)

Meisel, Perry and Walter Kendrick, eds, *Bloomsbury/Freud: The Letters of James and Alix Strachey, 1924 – 1925* (New York: Basic Books, 1986)

Mepham, J., *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991)

Mill, John Stuart, *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., 1891)

Moi, Toril, ed., *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

Moore, G. E., *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903; repr. 1922)

–, *Philosophical Studies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922)

Morley, John, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1903)

Nadel, Ira B., *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984; repr. 2014)

Nelson, Claudia, *Family Ties in Victorian England: Victorian Life and Times* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000)

Newman, Hilary, 'Attitude to American Slavery: Leslie and Minny Stephen', *Virginia Woolf Bulletin*, No. 38 (2011), 37-45

Nicolson, Harold, *Some People* (1927; repr. London: Faber and Faber, 2011)

Nicolson, Nigel, *Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Bantam, 1974)

- Knopp, Sherron E., ““If I Saw You Would You Kiss Me?”: Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*”, *PMLA*, Vol. 103, No. 1 (1988), 24-34
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/462459> [Accessed on 13 July 2018]
- O'Neill, Martin, ‘On Leslie Stephen’s “Social Equality”’, *Ethics*, Vol. 125, No. 1 (October 2014), 214-216 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/677011>> [Accessed on 04 August 2018]
- Orel, Harold, *Victorian Literary Critics: George Henry Lewes, Walter Bagehot, Richard Holt Hutton, Leslie Stephen, Andrew Lang, George Saintsbury and Edmund Gosse* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984; repr. 2014)
- Orr, Douglass W., ‘Virginia Woolf and Freud’, *Virginia Woolf International Monographic Series*, 1-13 <http://www.clemson.edu/cedp/press/scr/woolf/woolf_freud.pdf> [Accessed on 25 November 2015]
- Parkes, Adam, *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Perkins, David, *Theoretical Issues in Literary History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Pickering, Mary, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography, Volume III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Polkey, Pauline and Alison Donnell, eds, *Representing Lives: Women and Auto/Biography* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000)
- Poole, Roger, *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)
- Pope, Alexander, *The Rape of the Lock and Other Major Writings* (1712; repr. London: Penguin Classics, 2011)

- Porter, James E., 'Intertextuality and the Discourse Community', *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 34-47
- Raitt, Suzanne, *Vita & Virginia: The Work and Friendship of V. Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)
- Regan, Tom, *Bloomsbury's Prophet: G. E. Moore and the Development of His Moral Philosophy* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1986; repr. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012)
- Reid, Panthea, *Art and Affection: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- 'Review of the *Common Reader (First Series)*', Anon., *Times Literary Supplement* review in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 148-50 (first publ. in *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 May (1925), 313)
- Rich, Adrienne, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision', *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1972), 18-30 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/375215>> [Accessed on 5 July 2018]
- Richter, Yvonne Nicole, 'A Critic in Her Own Right: Taking Virginia Woolf's Literary Criticism Seriously', Georgia State University, 2009
<http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_theses?utm_source=scholarworks.gsu.edu%2Fenglish_theses%2F56&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages> [Accessed on 18 June 2015]
- Riehl, Joseph E, *That Dangerous Figure: Charles Lamb and the Critics* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1996)
- Robertson, George Croom, 'English Thought in the 18th Century', *Mind*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (July 1877), 352-366 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2246911>> [Accessed on 22 June 18]

Rosenbaum, S. P., 'An Educated Man's Daughter: Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group', in *Virginia Woolf: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy, London: Vision (1983), pp. 32-56

–, ed., *A Bloomsbury Group Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993)

–, 'The Philosophical Realism of Virginia Woolf', in *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History*, New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc. (1998), 1-36

–, *Aspects of Bloomsbury: Studies in Modern English Literary and Intellectual History: Studies in Modern English Literature and Intellectual History* (New York, St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998)

Rosenfeld, Natania, 'Monstrous Conjugations: Images of the Dictatorship in the Anti-Fascist Writings of Virginia and Leonard Woolf', in *Virginia Woolf and Fascism: Resisting the Dictators' Seduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) pp. 122-136

Rubenstein, Roberta, *Virginia Woolf and the Russian Point of View* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Ryan, Derek and Stella Bolaki, eds, *Contradictory Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-first International Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012)

Sala, George Augustus, *Charles Dickens* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1870)

Saunders, Max, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Scarre, Geoffrey, *Logic and Reality in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1989)

Schlack, Beverly Ann, *Continuing Presences: Virginia Woolf's Use of Literary Allusion* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980)

Sellers, Susan, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Shankman, Lillian F., *Anne Thackeray Ritchie: Journals and Letters*, ed. by Abigail Burnham Bloom and John Maynard (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994)

Silver, Brenda R, *Virginia Woolf Icon (Women in Culture and Society Series)*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Skabarnicki, Anne M., 'The Life of John Sterling', in *The Carlyle Encyclopedia*, ed. by Mark Cumming (Madison and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), pp. 287-88

Smith, K. J. M., *James Fitzjames Stephen: Portrait of a Victorian Rationalist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Snaith, Anna, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000)

Squire, J.C., 'Prose-de-Societe' in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 227-29 (p. 229) (first publ. in the *Observer*, 21 October (1928), 06)

Stanley, Arthur, *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D.*, 2 vols (London: B. Fellowes, Ludgate Street, 1844)

Steele, Elizabeth, *Virginia Woolf's Literary Sources and Allusions: A Guide to the Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1983)

Steinberg, Erwin R., 'G. E. Moore's Table and Chair in "To the Lighthouse"', *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1988), 161-168 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831540>>

[Accessed on 10 October 2016]

Stephen, Julia, *Notes from Sick Rooms* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1883)

Swinnerton, Frank, *Bookman* review in *Virginia Woolf: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Robin Majumdar and Allen McLaurin (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 130-32 (p.131) (first publ. in the *Bookman*, October (1924), 193-95)

Tennyson, Hallam, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1897)

‘THE PLAYGROUND OF EUROPE by Leslie Stephens’ [sic], *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (22 July 1909), 105 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42813841>> [Accessed on 21 April 2016]

Tomkins, Stephen Michael, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce’s circle changed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010)

Trilling, Diana, ‘Virginia Woolf’s Special Realm’, *The New York Times Book Review*, 21 March 1948, p. 28

<<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/17/specials/woolf-moment.html>> [Accessed 20 May 2018]

Vice, Sue, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)

Von Arx, Jeffrey Paul, *Progress and Pessimism: Religion, Politics and History in Late Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985)

Weaver, William N., ‘“A School-Boy’s Story”: Writing the Victorian Public Schoolboy Subject’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2004), 455-487

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3829669>> [Accessed on 25 February 2018]

Wernick, Andrew, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity: The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Whitridge, Arnold, ed., *Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923)

–, ‘Matthew Arnold and Sainte-Beuve’, *PMLA*, 53, 1 (1938), 303-313

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/458416>> [Accessed on 14 July 2015]

White, Carolyn W., ‘The Biographer and Edward VII: Sir Sidney Lee and the Embarrassments of Royal Biography’, *Victorian Studies*, 27 (1984), 301-319

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3826855>> [Accessed on 20 May 2016]

Wilson, David, *Mr. Froude and Carlyle* (1898; repr. New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1970)

Winterhalter, Teresa, “‘What Else Can I Do but Write?’ Discursive Disruption and the Ethics of Style in Virginia Woolf’s “Three Guineas””, *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Women, Art, and Aesthetics (Autumn - Winter, 2003), 236-257 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810982>> [Accessed on 25 August 2017]

Woolf, Leonard and James Strachey, eds, *Virginia Woolf & Lytton Strachey: Letters* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1956)

Woolf, Leonard, *Sowing: an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904* (New York: New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1960)

Wunderlich, Roger, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992)

Wussow, Helen and Mary Ann Gillies, eds, *Virginia Woolf and the Common(wealth) Reader: Selected Papers from the Twenty-third Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2014)