Notes

Introduction: Screening desire in the Sapphic modernist roman à clef

1. Djuna Barnes to Emily Holmes Coleman, undated letter, July–August 1935, Emily Holmes Coleman Papers, University of Delaware, Newark.
3. Many of Eliot's editorial decisions reveal a concern with the potentially ‘obscene’ contained in the text. For Eliot's excisions from the original manuscript, see Cheryl Plumb (ed.), Nightwood: The Original Version and Related Drafts, by Djuna Barnes (Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995).
4. Barnes to Coleman, 8 November 1935, Emily Holmes Coleman Papers.
5. Eliot's introduction appeared for the first time in the first American edition of Nightwood, published in 1937. Barnes had already attracted the attention of the United States Postal Service and US Customs with Ryder and Ladies Almanack, which might explain why this introduction was added to the second edition of the novel, although it was not included in the original British edition.
7. Sedgwick, The Epistemology of the Closet, 8.
8. See Sir Chartres Biron, ‘Judgment’, in Palatable Poison, eds Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 49. When Chief Justice Biron ruled to ban The Well of Loneliness in the Bow Street Police Court, London, in 1928, he stated that he had ‘no hesitation in saying that it [was] an obscene libel, that it would tend to corrupt those into whose hands it should fall’. Biron had no trouble producing evidence of obscenity in spite of the fact that the novel is explicit about love and attraction between women, but not about their sexual practices – he cited passages from the novel at length as though their obscenity was self-evident.


21. Dr Serrell Cooke, quoted in Lucy Bland, ‘Trial by Sexology?’, 188.


24. Trudi Tate and Suzanne Raitt make the point that ‘censorship, propaganda, and the sheer scale and complexity of the war made it ‘impossible to grasp what was happening at any particular moment’ (‘Introduction’, in *Womens Fiction and the Great War*, eds Suzanne Raitt and Trudi Tate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1. In a discussion of Bloomsbury’s response to the war, Christine Froula discusses the lengths authorities went to in order to suppress opposition to, and explanations of, the war. See *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 4–16.

25. English sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter were, of course, of less interest to the defence than European sexologists like the Austro-German Richard von Krafft-Ebing and German, Iwan Bloch. Although
Allan claimed not to recognize the names of these sexologists, Alfred Douglas took the stand to testify that Wilde was passionate about Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and that he drew many of his ‘perverted’ ideas from that work.


27. See Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*. Doan points out that for some ‘writers, artists and other professionals’, sexology ‘offer[ed] modern conceptualizations of sexual relations between women that they could in turn accept or reject’ (130). Education is clearly significant here – Doan suggests that these texts were not readily accessible, but for those who did have access to them, and to the kind of education that would enable them to either ‘accept or reject’ the theories they presented, sexology was a sign of ‘progress’ in the public discourse surrounding homosexuality.

28. See Sigmund Freud, ‘The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (1920; repr., London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 6:145–72; and *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hystaria* (1905; repr., New York: Collier Books, 1963). Both of the case studies in which Freud considers female homosexuality were unfinished – in each case, the analysis was incomplete due to the analysand’s rejection of Freud’s approach. In ‘The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman’, Freud argues that his patient’s turn away from heterosexuality was precipitated by the birth of a brother, which interrupted her working through of the Oedipus complex. In ‘Dora’, Freud briefly discusses his patient’s affection for the wife of ‘Herr K’, who has made sexual advances to her, arguing that Dora harbours an erotic attachment to her father, and jealousy of her father’s attachment to Frau K, with whom he is having an affair.

29. Barnes and Woolf referenced and critiqued psychoanalysis in their work.


31. Waters, ‘Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and the State’, 169. Waters argues that psychoanalytic language grew in popularity amongst reformers and homosexuals themselves after World War II, and that this was largely due to the campaigns of Interwar criminologists, who were interested in penal reform and advocated a psychoanalytic approach to the ‘convicted homosexuals’ sent to them for treatment (167–8).

32. Suzanne Raitt discusses the relationship between ‘love’ and the sexual sciences in her article, ‘Sex, Love and the Homosexual Body in Early Sexology’, *Sexology in Culture: Labeling Bodies and Desires*, eds Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 150–64. It is worth noting that Carpenter’s ‘urning’ was attributed a *greater* capacity to love than the heterosexual, while for Ellis, homosexual love was real but was nevertheless symptomatic of a congenital abnormality.

35. See ‘Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), Criminal Law Amendment Bill’, 4 August 1921, reproduced in *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: Love and Sex between Women in Britain from 1780 to 1970*, eds Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 166. The Acts of Indecency by Females clause of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (1921) proposed that ‘any act of gross indecency between female persons shall be a misdemeanour and punishable in the same manner as any such act committed by male persons under … the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885’.
38. A Colonel Wedgwood was horrified at the idea that the House would pass the Clause, because it was ‘a beastly subject’ and was ‘being better advertised by the moving of this clause than in any other way’ (Oram and Turnbull [eds], ‘Parliamentary Debates [House of Commons] Criminal Law Amendment Bill’, 167).
39. The first argument was put forward by Lord Desart; the second by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Birkenhead. Cited in Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams, *Sexualities in Victorian Britain* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 74. Other arguments against the clause included the difficulties of enforcement and the opportunities it would provide for blackmail. See Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*, 37–8.
40. The particular use of sexology at the parliamentary hearings is discussed at length by Doan, “Acts of Female Indecency”, 199–213.
42. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 120.
45. David R. Shumway argues that the very idea of ‘intimacy’ as a discourse that structures romantic relationships is a product of social shifts that took place in and after the 1960s. Yet Shumway also observes that one shift that occurred in the 1960s was the emergence of ‘relationship’ as a term that encompassed ‘the new variety of commonly practiced, erotically invested bonds between individuals. Marriage was now only one alternative … in which intimacy may occur’. The role of a discourse that could be retrospectively described as intimate, within relationships between women struggling to establish community, cannot be summarily dismissed. It would, however, require a broader project than this one to accommodate it (*Modern Love: Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crisis* [New York and London: New York University Press, 2003], 24–5).

50. Authors like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound imbued modernism with ‘legitimacy’ by insisting upon ‘highly antisubjectivist or impersonal poetics’, in spite of the fact that modernism’s reaction against classic realism was apparently grounded in subjectivism (see Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990], 27). The associations that emerged between rational impersonality, masculinity and serious writing were the consequences of this approach.


67. See Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 11–12. Here, Warner argues that ‘the notion of a public enables a reflexivity in the circulation of texts among strangers who become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity’. He goes on to explain that the ‘making of publics is the metapragmatic work taken up by every text in every reading’.

1 ‘Moral poison’: Radclyffe Hall and *The Well of Loneliness*

1. Lady Una Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond and Hammond, 1961), 81–2. Hall was prepared for the attention the publication of *The Well of Loneliness* was likely to draw to her own sexual orientation. According to Una Troubridge, Hall consulted her on whether she was willing
to be subject to the public scrutiny such a novel would bring to their private lives. Troubridge responded that she was ‘sick to death of ambiguities and only wished to be known for what [she] was’. See Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, 82.


30. Hall, Well, 303.
31. Hall, Well, 316.
32. Hall, Well, 446.
33. Hall, Well, 446.
34. Hall, Well, 447.
35. Hall, Well, 447.
38. See Hemmings, ‘All My Life I’ve Been Waiting for Something’, 194. Hemmings argues that ‘we have no way of knowing which way Mary went’ when she left Stephen, especially given that the femme is always interpreted by the male gaze as passive, regardless of the agency she exercises within the relationship.
41. Jagose, Inconsequence, 2.
42. Jagose, Inconsequence, 3.
44. Hall, Well, 304.
45. Hall, Well, 217.
46. Hall, Well, 431.
48. O’Rourke, Reflecting on The Well of Loneliness, 25.
49. Hall, Well, 44.
50. Hall, Well, 44.
52. Hall, Well, 325.
53. Hall, Well, 428.
54. Hall, Well, 438.
55. Hall, Well, 357. Here, Hall is referring to Barbara, the companion of poverty-stricken composer, Jamie.
56. Hall, Well, 302. ‘They attracted too, that was the irony of it, she herself had attracted Mary Llewellyn …’
57. Hall’s belief in God’s role in creating the ‘invert’ is apparent throughout The Well and in Hall’s extra-textual discussion of the topic. At the wedding of Violet Antrim and ‘her Alec’, the narrator refers to the fact that ‘God, in a thoughtless moment, had created in His turn those pitiful thousands who must stand for ever outside His blessing’ (Well, 188); in the letter Stephen Gordon writes expressing her love for Angela Crossby she declares, ‘I’m some awful mistake – God’s mistake’ (Well, 199); and in the final lines of the novel, Stephen pleads with the God who made homosexuals to ‘[a]cknowledge us
before the whole world’ (Well, 437). Similarly, in her notes for a lecture she
was to give to Southend Young Socialists (during her brief dalliance with
socialism following her trial) Hall was insistent upon not only the ‘natural-
ness’ of homosexuality, but also its sanctity (although she does run into
some confusion when it comes to God’s intentions). Cited in Souhami, The
Trials of Radclyffe Hall, 155.

58. Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet, 1.
59. Hall was not the only writer to articulate her belief that homosexuality could
only be expressed in English literature via tragedy. E.M. Forster shelved his
homosexual novel, Maurice, in 1915, and it was not published until after his
death in 1970. Maurice ended happily, and Forster expressed his opinion, as
late as 1960 that it would have been publishable if it had ended with misery
and suicide. Yet Hall’s tragic frame obviously did not go far enough, the novel’s
banning occurring in spite of her attempt to pre-empt censorship. The fail-
ure of Hall’s attempt to buy into a culture that insisted upon the lesbian’s
failure points to the central problem of an approach to homosexuality that
is invested in the paradigm that excludes it.

60. Havelock Ellis, Commentary on The Well of Loneliness, by Radclyffe Hall
61. Havelock Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Volume II, Sexual Inversion
62. Hall, Well, 9, 70, 164 (‘People stared at the masculine looking girl …’).
63. Hall, Well, 22, 98, 302.
64. Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, v.
65. Hall, Well, 217.
67. Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, 325.
68. See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis (1886; repr., New York:
G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 83–4, my emphasis.
70. Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis, 415.
71. Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis, 41.
72. Hall, Well, 207.
73. Hall, Well, 207.
74. See Hall, Well, 207–8, 303 for examples of Hall’s use of ‘the mark of Cain’ as
a symbol of the congenital basis of Stephen’s affliction.
75. Hall’s personal conception of her own sexuality was undoubtedly informed
by sexology, but it is important to note that it was less fixed than that
manifested in the character of Stephen Gordon. A number of critics have
commented upon the distinctions that need to be drawn between Hall’s
life and that of her most famous protagonist. Particular attention has been
paid to the stylishness of Hall’s female masculinity, which did not equate to
‘inversion’ at the time (see Doan, Fashioning Sapphism, 111–12); her sense
of humour (see Terry Castle, Noël Coward and Radclyffe Hall: Kindred Spirits
[New York: Columbia University Press, 1996]); and the fact that she had
many great friends, both heterosexual and homosexual, and lived a life of
‘privilege, seduction, freedom and fun’, rather than of isolated anguish (see
Souhami, The Trials of Radclyffe Hall, 160).
76. For a more detailed discussion of Hall’s mobilization of Carpenter’s work see Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*, 143, 146.
80. For a detailed discussion of this process, see Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism*.
84. Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, 125, 163.
86. For one of few relatively recent critical works on *The Unlit Lamp*, see Trevor Hope, ‘Mother, Don’t You See I’m Burning? Between Female Homosexuality and Homosociality in Radclyffe Hall’s *The Unlit Lamp*, in *Coming out of Feminism*, eds Mandy Merck, Naomi Segal and Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 123–53. Hope performs a psychoanalytic reading of the novel, and is particularly preoccupied with its mother–daughter relationship. This relationship is undoubtedly the most significant in the book, yet I would argue, in opposition to Hope, that in spite of Joan’s mother’s success in transforming her daughter from a feminist lesbian to a copy of herself, the novel sets out possibilities for same-sex affect that are not present in *The Well*.
87. This argument is made by Hope, ‘Mother, Don’t You See I’m Burning’, 123; and Newton, ‘The Mythic Mannish Lesbian’, 283.
88. Radclyffe Hall to Gorham Munson, cited in Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall*, 151, my emphasis.
92. Leonard Woolf, review of *The Well of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall, *Nation and Athenaeum*, 4 August 1928, in *Palatable Poison*, eds Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 53–4. Hall strongly objected to the tenor of these reviews, for she insisted – to the point of paranoia – that she be taken seriously as an artist.
93. Douglas’ editorial carried an inch-high headline, and ran for five columns.
96. For more detail, see Cline, *Radclyffe Hall*, 248–9.
Notes

100. Many of the Bloomsbury group were themselves homosexual, or had engaged in homosexual affairs, and their reticence about revealing this to the general public (in spite of their openness within left-leaning intellectual society) provided them with a motivation for focusing their support for Hall upon artistic freedom, while ignoring the issue of whether the literary representation of lesbian desire was ‘obscene’ and homosexuality itself deserving of greater tolerance.
105. I will discuss the sexual identifications of Woolf and Barnes in the following chapters.
112. Whitlock has suggested that through the characters of Stephen, Jamie and Wanda, Hall makes a case that the ‘tools and modes of artistic expression speak of heterosexual norms and values that need to be deconstructed and rethought by the lesbian writer’, or the lesbian artist more generally (Whitlock, ‘Everything Is Out of Place’, 576). Yet as I demonstrate here, it is almost impossible for the invert to ‘deconstruct’ the restrictions upon her self-expression, in spite of the fact that the success of her artistic endeavours requires her to do so.

2 ‘On her lips you kiss your own’: Theorizing desire in Djuna Barnes’ *Nightwood*


7. T.S. Eliot edited some sexually explicit passages out of *Nightwood*, but it is likely that Barnes also limited her elaboration on such themes, for her hope was that *Nightwood* would find a wide audience.

8. All references to this text will be taken from Djuna Barnes, *Ladies Almanack* (Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1928).


14. Barnes, *Ladies Almanack*, 7. That the description of Musset emerging from the 'Womb' an 'Inch or so less' than the boy she was intended to be is clearly 'tongue in cheek' (see Susan Snaider Lanser, 'Speaking in Tongues: *Ladies Almanack* and the Discourse of Desire', in *Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991], 159), is further supported by Barney's repeated claim that she was a born lesbian, and her refusal to accept that the necessary corollary of this was an inherent 'mannishness'. See Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 178.


38. The unsigned review of *Nightwood* published in the *Newstatesman and Nation* on the 17th of October, 1936, describes *Nightwood* as ‘extremely moral’ and states that ‘had I a daughter whose passions for mistresses and older girls were beginning to cause scandal and alarm, I should certainly insist that she read Night Wood’. (Review cited at length in Jane Marcus, *Mousemeat: Contemporary Reviews of Nightwood* in Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes, ed. Mary Lynn Broe [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991], 198.) More recently, Susan S. Martins has suggested that ‘it is the ambiguity of Barnes’ position on political issues in *Nightwood* – namely, her treatment of Jews, blacks, lesbians, gay men, prostitutes – that her readers have found most unsettling’. See ‘Gender Trouble and Lesbian Desire in Djuna Barnes’ *Nightwood*, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 20.3 (1999): 109.
48. Emily Holmes Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 5 November 1935, Djuna Barnes papers, The University of Maryland.
49. Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 10 July 1935.
50. Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 27 August 1935.
51. Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 27 August 1935.
52. Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 27 August 1935.
56. Herring, *Djuna*, 162.
57. Barnes’ membership of this circle was somewhat tenuous at times, and she is thought to have been closer to fellow journalists Janet Flanner and Solita Solano and their friends, than to her one-time lover Natalie Barney and her wealthier associates (see Frances Doughty, ‘Gilt on Cardboard: Djuna Barnes as Illustrator of her Life and Work’, in Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes, ed. Mary Lynn Broe [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991], 151). Karla Jay suggests that Barnes’ satire
is motivated by the bitterness of poverty, yet this argument is difficult to support unless the humourous element of the text’s parody is refused, its tongue-in-cheek aspects ignored. Nevertheless, Jay does make some interesting observations with regard to Barnes’ self-imposed distance from the women whose financial assistance she required (‘The Outsider among the Expatriates: Djuna Barnes’ Satire on the Ladies of the Almanac’, in Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes, ed. Mary Lynn Broe [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991], 184–93).


59. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 18. Una Troubridge’s relationship with Radclyffe Hall was cemented by her willingness to document Hall’s (somewhat obsessive) visits to a medium in order to contact her dead lover, Mabel Batten. Hall often said she would have married Troubridge if she had been born the man she felt she was. See Diana Souhami, The Trials of Radclyffe Hall (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998).


61. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 46.

62. Dianne Chisholm, ‘Obscene Modernism: Eros Noir and the Profane Illumination of Djuna Barnes’, American Literature 69.1 (1997): 173. Chisholm’s article on Nightwood appropriates Benjamin’s writing on French Surrealism in terms of its ‘profane’ juxtapositions, which shock the reader to a “nihilistic” awareness of capitalism’s devastating progress’ (172). In her later work, Queer Constellations, she discusses Sarah Schulman’s late twentieth-century ‘nihilism’ in terms of ‘Benjamin’s conceptualization of history as dialectics without progress’.


64. Barnes, Nightwood, 89.


66. Barnes, Nightwood, 178.

67. Barnes, Nightwood, 179.

68. Barnes, Nightwood, 177.

69. Hedvig Volkbein dies giving birth to Felix, while for Robin, pregnancy raises her awareness of a ‘lost land in herself’, and birth results in physical pain, fury and probably depression. It is certainly clear that procreation in Nightwood is the result of a male desire ‘to pay homage to our past’ with a ‘gesture that also includes the future’: that is, to shore up one’s own lineage, however tenuous (Barnes, Nightwood, 63).

70. Barnes, Nightwood, 174.


72. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 27.


74. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 28.

75. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 28.

76. Barnes, Ladies Almanack, 29.
80. The ‘womanly woman’s’ inability to find a husband and her exposure to more women than men are explanations proffered by Ellis. Yet such theories are far from scientific: impossible to quantify, they could be applied to any woman.
81. Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981), 365. For Faderman, *Nightwood* represents Barnes’ internalized homophobia, and her inability to transcend dominant literary images of lesbians. She uses Matthew’s assertion that ‘love of woman for woman’ is an ‘insane passion for unmitigated anguish’ as evidence that this is *Nightwood*’s message: apparently only happy lesbians have the potential to subvert the dominant paradigm.
82. Barnes, *Nightwood*, 16.
86. As I discussed in the introduction, Barnes wrote to her friend Emily Coleman that she had married Robin to Felix because otherwise people would say “‘Well of course those two women would never have been in love with each other if they had been normal, if any man had slept with them, if they had been well f---- and had born a child.’ Which is ignorance and utterly false’. See Barnes to Coleman, 8 November 1935, Emily Holmes Coleman Papers.
95. Barnes, *Nightwood*, 64.

102. See Janet Flanner, Paris Was Yesterday, 1925–1939 (London: Angus and Robertson, 1973), 156. In a ‘Letter from Paris’ drafted in 1935, Flanner criticizes the lack of French resolve to combat Fascist aggression (more specifically, Mussolini’s aggression in Ethiopia), as the Right press criticizes the call for sanctions and the Left ‘says nothing’. That political conservatism was not restricted to countries under Fascist rule is a point worth noting in relation to Nightwood.

103. Kaivola, All Contraries Confounded, 71.


105. Barnes, Nightwood, 194.

106. Barnes, Nightwood, 72, my emphasis.

107. Barnes, Nightwood, 84, my emphasis.

108. Barnes, Nightwood, 203.

109. Barnes, Nightwood, 220.

110. Barnes, Nightwood, 207.

111. Barnes, Nightwood, 207.

112. Barnes, Nightwood, 207.

113. Barnes, Nightwood, 71.

114. Barnes, Nightwood, 71.

115. Barnes, Nightwood, 72–3.

116. Barnes, Nightwood, 83.

117. Barnes, Nightwood, 83.

118. Barnes, Nightwood, 199.

119. Barnes, Nightwood, 199.

120. Barnes, Nightwood, 206.

121. Djuna Barnes to Emily Holmes Coleman, undated letter, July–August 1935, Emily Holmes Coleman Papers, University of Delaware, Newark.

122. Barnes, Nightwood, 142.

123. Barnes, Nightwood, 103.

124. Barnes, Nightwood, 112.

125. Barnes, Nightwood, 113.

126. Barnes, Nightwood, 113.

127. Barnes, Nightwood, 114.


130. Laurel Brake, Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 142. Brake is referring specifically to the means by which Oscar Wilde transformed The Woman’s World when he edited the journal in the 1890s.

3 ‘Truth & fantasy’: Virginia Woolf’s Orlando as Sapphic roman à clef


6. In her excellent article on the way in which Woolf ‘move[s]’, in *Orlando*, ‘between the real and its representation’ in order to ‘foreground the doubleness that is needed to produce the self as woman in language and in culture’ (58), Victoria Smith argues that *Orlando* has been ‘described as a roman à clef a kunstlerroman, an anti-novel, metafiction, an autobiography …, and a biography’ (60). She argues that the most apt descriptions of the novel are ‘fairy tale à clef’ and Nigel Nicolson’s “‘the longest and most charming love letter in literature’”, for ‘both play the line between the real and its representation, and both neatly encompass the idea that Woolf’s public, Sapphic love letter to Sackville-West necessarily had to be a fairy tale, necessarily had to turn fact into “fiction”’ (60–1). Smith’s differentiation between the roman à clef and the fairy tale à clef relies upon the definition of the roman à clef as representing ‘actual persons presented in a realistic world under fictitious names’ (61). Smith’s reading emphasizes the complexity of *Orlando* – the extent of the work it is doing, and the negotiations required to represent a same-sex relationship in a public text – yet she underestimates the complexity of the roman à clef genre, which I would argue enabled the encryption of same-sex desire in this period in unexpected ways. Smith argues that *Orlando* produces ‘not only Sackville-West’s “biography” but Woolf’s own story of the inadequacy of language and the inadequacy of representation for women’ (59), while for the purposes of this study, I am more interested in its production of an encrypted story of same-sex desire for the consumption of an ideal reader – a story which evidences an original understanding, produced by same-sex desire itself, of the place of homosexuality in psycho-sexual development and in society. (See “‘Ransacking the Language”: Finding the Missing Goods in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*,’ *Journal of Modern Literature* 29.4 (2006): 57–75.)

7. In the same year that *Orlando* was published, Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* was banned by Chief Magistrate Sir Chartres Biron. The suggestion that Woolf constructed *Orlando* with the specific intention of confounding the censors is not a new one, and critics who take this approach include Shari Benstock, who suggests that the ‘style and tone’ of *Orlando* obscured its subject matter (‘Expatriate Sapphic Modernism: Entering Literary History’, in *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions*, eds Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow [New York and London: New York University Press, 1990]: 192); and Louise DeSalvo, who suggests that Woolf solved the problem of not being able to ‘deal overtly with lesbian love at this time in English history’ by ‘creating the form of *Orlando* to contain her love for Sackville-West’ (‘Lighting the Cave: The Relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf’, *Signs* 8.2 [1982]: 206). On the other hand, Sherron Knopp points out that Quentin Bell ‘attribut[ed]’ the ‘success’ of *Orlando* to the ‘sudden ‘topicality’ of its ‘sexual theme’ following the Hall trial (“‘If I saw you would you kiss me?’ Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*,” *PMLA* 103.1 [1988]: 28). Woolf was undoubtedly wary of revealing too much, but she was also interested in highlighting the effects of censorship.
15. She supposedly ‘fled with a certain lady to the Low Countries where the lady’s husband followed them’, to which Woolf adds ‘but of the truth or otherwise of these stories we express no opinion’, ironically invoking the biographer’s claim to ‘truth’ in a ‘biography’ in which truth is impossible to determine (Woolf, *Orlando*, 153).
17. This sentiment is expressed in a letter to Sackville-West, in which she argued that there were some advantages to being a ‘eunuch’ rather than one of ‘you blazing beauties’, for ‘women confide in one’ (Woolf to Vita Sackville-West, 31 January 1927, *The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*, 186.)
21. Woolf, *Orlando*, 148–9. According to note 45, the line Woolf had in mind was probably ‘Nothing so true as what you once let fall,/Most women have no Characters at all’ (Brenda Lyons, ed., *Orlando*, 254).
31. Woolf referred to Sackville-West’s sexual interest in women in this manner on the 30th of August, 1928, when she wrote to Sackville-West about the impending trial of *The Well of Loneliness*, advising her not to sign the petition against its censorship because her ‘proclivities [were] too well known’ (Woolf cited in Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998], 185).

33. As I noted in Chapter 1, the furore over the *Well of Loneliness*, which erupted in August of 1928, also provides examples of the particular constructions of lesbianism being established by those men with the social or judicial power to determine mainstream terms of reference: James Douglas’ famous statement, published in the *Sunday Express*, that he ‘would rather give a healthy boy or a healthy girl a phial of Prussic Acid’ than the *Well* (‘A Book that Must Be Suppressed’, in *Palatable Poison*, eds Jay Prosser and Laura Doan [New York: Columbia University Press, 2001], 38) was echoed by less hysterical authorities like Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir George Stephenson, who argued that ‘this book would tend to corrupt the minds of young persons’ (Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall*, 180), and ultimately, by Sir Chartres Biron in his final ruling (Biron, ‘Judgment’, in *Palatable Poison*, eds Jay Prosser and Laura Doan [New York: Columbia University Press, 2001], 39–49). In each of these cases, the power of suggestion is deemed to be so strong that exposure to the very *concept* of lesbianism is potentially disastrous.


35. Woolf, *Orlando*, 97. This quote is taken from the passages that frame Orlando’s sex change, during which ‘Our Lady of Purity’, ‘Our Lady of Chastity’ and ‘Our Lady of Modesty’ enter and attempt to redirect the narrative away from ‘THE TRUTH’.


37. It was rumoured that the Labouchère Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 excluded female homosexuality because Queen Victoria refused to legislate against a practice she did not believe could possibly exist.


39. In the nineteenth century, sexual shame is associated even with procreative sex within marriage. Thus, Orlando’s housekeeper weeps because weeping is appropriate and pleasurable for a woman, and asks: ‘Were they not all of them weak women? wearing crinolines the better to conceal the fact; the great fact; the only fact; but, nevertheless, the deplorable fact; which every modest woman did her best to deny until denial was impossible; the fact that she was about to bear a child?’ (Woolf, *Orlando*, 161–2).


42. Woolf, *Orlando*, 169, my emphasis.


45. Woolf, *Orlando*, 183. This poem is taken from ‘Spring’ in Sackville-West’s *The Land*.


49. Woolf, *Orlando*, 183, my emphasis.

52. Woolf, *Orlando*, 175.
55. Woolf, *Orlando*, 115, my emphasis.
56. The poststructuralist resonance of this argument cannot go unmentioned.
   D.A. Boxwell has argued that with *Orlando*, Woolf demonstrates an ‘astute understanding of gender identity as a performative “act”’ (*[Dis]orienting Spectacle: The Politics of Orlando’s Sapphic Camp*, *Twentieth Century Literature* 44.3[1998]: 323). Woolf prefigures Judith Butler’s argument that ‘acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause’ (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [1990; repr., New York and London: Routledge, 1999], 173). In a sense, Orlando is the impossible subject who proves Butler’s theory, for she has come into being outside of the discursive realm that establishes the effect of a gendered organizing core.
60. Somewhat ironically, Sackville-West’s many female lovers included BBC producer Hilda Matheson, who introduced Sackville-West to the airwaves in the late 1920s, providing her with a forum from which to publicly extol the virtues of marriage, along with her husband, almost two decades later.
61. Sackville-West’s significance as *Orlando*’s inspiration has received much critical attention, from critics including Blanche Wiesen Cook, ‘“Women Alone Stir my Imagination”’; DeSalvo, ‘Lighting the Cave’; Knopp, ‘“If I saw you would you kiss me?”’; and Elizabeth Meese, ‘When Virginia Looked at Vita, What Did She See; Or, Lesbian: Feminist: Woman – What’s the Differ(e/a)nce?’, *Feminist Studies* 18.1 (1992): 99–117.
62. Louise DeSalvo and Mitchell A. Leaska (eds) note that a ‘specially bound copy’ of *Orlando* was presented to Sackville-West (*The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf*, n. 1, 306).
70. Woolf, *Orlando*, 56.
75. Woolf, Orlando, 75.
76. See Vita Sackville-West, Knole and the Sackvilles (1922; repr., London and Tonbridge: Ernest Benn Limited, 1958), 100–2. Items that are listed in Knole and the Sackvilles and correspond to those listed above include: ‘a fustian down bed, bolster and a pair of pillows, a pair of Spanish blankets, 5 curtains of crimson and white taffeta, the valence to it of white satin embroidered with crimson and white silk and a deep fringe suitable; a test and tester of white satin suitable to the valence. A white rug. All these first packed up in 2 sheets and then packed in a white and black rug and an old blanket.’ Later in the list: ‘There goes a yellow satin chair and 3 stools, suitable with their buckram covers to them’ and ‘2 walnut tree tables to draw out at both ends with their frames of the same’.
77. Woolf, Orlando, 73.
78. This is evidenced by Woolf's surprise at her husband Leonard's response to Orlando. She wrote in her diary ‘L. takes Orlando more seriously than I had expected’, revealing that she anticipated a relatively unenthusiastic response from those who were used to her serious style and subject matter (31 May 1928, Diary, 3:185).
79. This entry apparently followed a discussion with Forster over the trial of The Well of Loneliness (Woolf, 31 August 1928, Diary, 3:193). Although the tone here is one of personal rather than ideological distaste (a distinction which Forster recognized) it is indicative of the limited exposure the Bloomsbury set had to ‘Sapphism’. It would appear that his views on Sapphism were representative of many of Bloomsbury’s men, who emerged from the male culture of the Cambridge Apostles (see Marcus, Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987], 79–80).
80. Woolf to Vita Sackville-West, 5 April 1929, The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf, 351.
81. Woolf to Sackville-West, 9 October 1927, The Letters of Virginia Woolf, eds Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977), 3:429. Sherron Knopp suggests that this warning was motivated by Woolf's intention that Orlando be a 'public proclamation' of her relationship with Vita, described as the novel's 'private inspiration', yet this is, perhaps, an oversimplification of the relations between public and private implied by Woolf's statement, which is far more concerned with the reactions of friends than with that of the general public (Knopp, “If I saw you would you kiss me?”, 27).
85. Forster and Woolf were close in age (Forster was three years older), yet thanks to educational opportunities and relative health, Forster had published four novels by the time Woolf published her first, The Voyage Out, in 1915. Forster's fourth novel, Howards End, had been published in 1910.
86. Woolf, 15 September 1924, Diary, 2:313.
87. Woolf, 1 November 1924, Diary, 2:320. This statement is made with reference to a meeting the mistress of Woolf's brother-in-law, Clive Bell.
100. Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 27, my emphasis.
102. Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 28–9, my emphasis.
104. Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 27
108. Eileen Barrett makes the point that with her reflections upon Miss Kilman, Clarissa ‘constructs the other, just as the sexologists do’ in order to ‘contain her own sexuality within acceptable private boundaries’. She adds that ‘Clarissa half acknowledges what she is doing’ when she reflects that it is the ‘idea’ of Doris Kilman, rather than the woman herself, that she imagines as vampiric spectre. See Eileen Barrett, ‘Unmasking Lesbian Passion: The Inverted World of *Mrs. Dalloway’*, in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings*, eds Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer (New York and London: New York University Press), 161,

4 ‘Gertrude, the world is a theatre for you’: Staging the self in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*

3. See Ulla E. Dydo, *Gertrude Stein, The Language that Rises*, 1923–1934 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 546. Dydo points out that the acceptance of the *Autobiography* by Harcourt Brace marked a new ‘phase’ in Stein's career, which was characterized by ‘the marketing of the *Autobiography*, [and] of Stein herself’.
5. Janet Flanner, *Paris Was Yesterday*, 90, my emphasis.
12. The critics discussed above are not the only ones who make note of Stein’s manipulation of the autobiographical ‘I’: others include Leigh Gilmore, who argues that Stein ‘displaces the function of the autobiographical signature and the autobiographical “I”’ (Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women’s Self-Representation [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994], 200), and Sidonie Smith, who argues that Stein was dissatisfied with the ‘I’, which could not ‘do the textual work she wanted to do’ (Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body: Women’s Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993], 65, see also 67–8).


16. Stimpson points out that the reference to ‘Ada’ brings lesbian eroticism into the Autobiography, providing a ‘trail’ for readers who ‘know the score’ and those ‘trying to learn the score’ (see Stimpson, ‘Gertrude Stein and the Lesbian Lie’, 159).

17. This ‘misunderstanding’ was almost certainly very deliberately constructed in order to avenge past grudges, for Jolas had long been critical of Stein’s work and of her supporters.

18. Leo Stein wrote to Weeks: ‘It’s the first time I ever read an autobiography of which I knew the authentic facts, and to me it seems sheerly incredible’ (cited in Diana Souhami, Gertrude and Alice [San Francisco and London: Pandora, 1991], 194).


23. Toklas narrates ‘only three times in my life have I met a genius and each time a bell within me rang … The three geniuses of whom I wish to speak are Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso and Alfred Whitehead’ (Stein, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, 5).


26. Dubnick, Pizer and DeKoven appear to agree on this very general point: Dubnick argues that in ‘eliminating memory from perception’ Stein’s portraits ‘paralleled Picasso’s’ (The Structure of Obscurity, 20); Pizer argues that both Cubist painting and Stein’s writing ‘bring various angles of perceiving an object into a single simultaneous vision’ (American Expatriate Writing and the Paris Moment, 35); and DeKoven argues that Cubism and Stein’s work ‘both shatter or fragment perception’ and ‘render multiple perspectives’ (‘Gertrude Stein and Modern Painting’, 81).


30. The authenticity of autobiography has been repeatedly called into question since the genre was first identified. Most pertinently, in this case, Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey had demonstrated an interest, in the 1920s, in rebelling against the Victorian perception of biography as ‘scientific’ (an idea promoted and emphasized by Woolf’s father, Sir Leslie Stephen, editor of the Dictionary of National Biography). On the basis of his theory of biography Strachey published Eminent Victorians (1918), Queen Victoria (1921) and Elizabeth and Essex (1928). Woolf published the pseudo-biography Orlando, originally subtitled A Biography, in 1928. Their generic play was characteristic of the period (and of Woolf’s and Strachey’s breaks with Victorian ‘certainties’), and although Stein’s experimentation is distinct from Bloomsbury’s, there is little doubt that her take on biography is connected to a similar questioning of authorial subjectivity.

31. Caramello, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act, 141.

32. Caramello, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act, 35. Stein published this study along with her undergraduate research partner, Leon Solomons.


35. James, Psychology, 145.

36. James, Psychology, 141.


39. James, Psychology, 140, 146.


41. See, for example, Robert S. Lubar, ‘Unmasking Pablo’s Gertrude: Queer Desire and the Subject of Portraiture’, The Art Bulletin 79.1 (1997), 68; Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 2:250–1; Smith, Subjectivity, Identity and the Body, 77; and Blanche Wiesen Cook, “Women Alone Stir my Imagination”, 730–1. Cook does not actually refer to the Autobiography, but hers is an interesting early critique of the heterosexism and misogyny that she perceived as grounding the relationship between Stein and Toklas.
42. So, for example, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar explore the importance the *Autobiography* attributes to wives of geniuses (*No Man’s Land*, pp. 250–1); Catharine R. Stimpson insists that the *Autobiography* institutes a heterosexual division between the ‘husband’ who is the ‘male-identified woman’ and the ‘wife’ who is ‘the lady’ (*Gertrude Stein and the Lesbian Lie*, p. 158); Leigh Gilmore argues that Stein establishes a division between ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ that is nevertheless ‘ironic’ and ultimately ‘short-circuits the compulsory four-square equivalences between man/woman, husband/wife’ (*Autobiographies*, p. 210); and Sidonie Smith suggests that ‘Stein reinforces the relationship of self-sacrifice to femaleness and genius to maleness’, although she adds that the conventionality of the relationship is in some ways parodic (*Subectivity, Identity and the Body*, p. 77).


44. For example, when Toklas states, in reference to a meeting between Sherwood Anderson and Stein, that ‘[f]or some reason or other I was not present on this occasion, some domestic complication in all probability’, she gestures towards their constant togetherness, but also to the distinction between the roles they played in their shared life. See Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 197.


48. The autobiography states that Louis Bromfield was ‘at the house’ on the evening Stein found *Q.E.D.*, and she handed it to him saying ‘you read it’ (Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 84).

49. Leo Stein was consistently and publicly critical of his sister’s work, and although there is no record of his appraisal of *Q.E.D.*, it is unlikely that he would have encouraged her to publish it, or to continue writing. Benstock discusses *Q.E.D.* and Leo Stein’s response to it in *Women of the Left Bank*, 152.


57. Stein had a very close relationship with collaborator Bernard Fäy, who protected Stein and Toklas during the Second World War, in spite of his anti-Semitism, and she sided with the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War (see Janet Malcolm, *Two Lives*, 51–2).

58. Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity*, 20. Dubnick discusses Stein’s portraits in relation to Picasso’s, arguing that ‘both wanted to preserve each individual present moment of perception before those moments are synthesized by intellectual knowledge of reality’.

67. Although Leonard Woolf, and not Virginia, wrote to Stein following her successful lecture at Cambridge in 1926 and asked to publish ‘Composition as Explanation’, there is no implication, in his request, that he, and not Virginia, was the interested party. He wrote ‘We should very much like, if possible, to publish the address which you delivered at Christchurch in our Hogarth Essay series. Would you allow us to consider it?’ (Leonard Woolf to Gertrude Stein, 11 June 1926, Gertrude Stein papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT).
68. Woolf had written to Roger Fry that she was unsure whether Stein’s ‘con-tortions [were] genuine and fruitful’ or only ‘spasms’ (cited in J.H. Willis, *Leonard and Virginia as Publishers: The Hogarth Press, 1917–41* [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992], 126).
70. Woolf, 22 November 1938, *Diary*, 5:188.
80. Of Hemingway, the *Autobiography* states ‘Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson are very funny on the subject of Hemingway …. Hemingway had been formed by the two of them and they were both a little proud and a little ashamed of the work of their minds’ (Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 216). Of Pound, Stein writes: ‘Gertrude Stein liked [Ezra Pound] but did not find him amusing’ (Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 200). In these cases, Stein’s claim to intellectual superiority is clear, and although the *Autobiography* did not make the same kind of claim in relation to Joyce, she clearly believed that he was her rival in the field of experimental literature, and she justified her lack of success in comparison with him with the argument that ‘it is the people who generally smell of museums who are accepted and it is the new who are not accepted’ (cited in Souhami, *Gertrude and Alice*, 149).
81. Toklas narrates that Kate Buss had ‘brought lots of people to the house’ including ‘Djuna Barnes and Mina Loy’ who had ‘wanted to bring James Joyce but they didn’t’; and she goes on to state that she and Stein were ‘glad to see Mina’, while nothing more is said of Barnes (Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 200).
83. Stein ceased to patronize Beach’s lending library after Beach published *Ulysses* in 1922.
87. Letters from Jane Heap to Gertrude Stein 1923–1928, Gertrude Stein papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
89. Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 229. Stein probably did not take Barney’s promotion of her work terribly seriously: Barney’s feminism, her blatant enjoyment of the re-enactment of Sapphic rituals, her seemingly frivolous refusal to commit to any one partner and her failure to take her own writing seriously would have been anathema to Stein, and although the women were friends, their approaches to literature and lesbianism were widely divergent.
100. Leo Stein to Mabel Weeks, cited in Souhami, *Gertrude and Alice*, 194.

5 Conclusion: ‘Two alert and vivid bodies’: Desire and salvation in H.D.’s *HER*

3. Friedman and DuPlessis, ‘“I had two loves separate”’, 215.
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