‘The Second Sex’: The Female Body and Mind in 20th and 21st Century Women’s Writing

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of MLitt English Literature

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June 2019

Abstract

'Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world' - Simone de Beauvoir [1]

This thesis will use works by two Modernist and two contemporary authors - Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, and Jeanette Winterson and Ali Smith respectively - to test Simone de Beauvoir's hypothesis. Each chapter will focus upon one of these authors, and will explore representations of the interior and exterior worlds of female characters to see whether these elements can ever be separated, and what the implications of this would be. I will also examine gender, sexuality, femininity, and the differing ways in which a body can be presented, as well as the multiplicity of self. The texts used in this thesis are *Orlando*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Between the Acts* by Woolf; 'Prelude', 'Bliss', and 'Pictures' by Mansfield; *Lighthousekeeping* and *Written on the Body* by Winterson; and 'The ex-wife' and 'The human claim' by Smith, both of which were published in *Public Library and Other Stories*.

[1] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (published as *Le deuxième sexe: Les faits et les mythes* (volume 1) and *L'experience venue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949) (repr. London: Vintage, 2009; repr. London: Vintage, 2011) (trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier) (2nd edn.)), p. 24

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Key:

- An asterisk at the beginning of a paragraph denotes that it has been separated from the paragraph before it.

Introduction

Thesis Aims

This thesis will use works by two modernist and two contemporary authors - Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, and Jeanette Winterson and Ali Smith respectively - to test Simone de Beauvoir's above statement. I have taken the decision to split my thesis into four separate chapters, which interlink in terms of the themes and authors discussed. The chosen structure of chapters within this thesis is distinct, and each focuses upon a single author in turn. Throughout, I will discuss the implications of Beauvoir's above quotation, and explore whether representations of select female characters depicted in selected books by Woolf, Mansfield, Smith, and Winterson exist as 'both a thing of the world, and a point of view on this world'. Each chapter will be devoted to exploring the interior and corporeal bodies of selected female characters, ultimately testing whether Beauvoir's quotation runs true in these works of literature, or whether these elements can be separated. The ideas of literary relevance which are so prevalent in *The Second Sex* can be found in each of my chosen texts. I will look variously at gender, sexuality, femininity, and the differing ways in which a body can be viewed throughout my chosen primary texts.

The continual focus of this thesis will be Beauvoir's statement, and consequently, I will be looking at the body as a physical object, as well as the variety of 'point[s] of view' which are demonstrated in my chosen texts. I will constantly keep in mind the idea of 'both' of these things coexisting in each particular character I focus upon, and will consequently examine and argue whether the body and mind can be portrayed as separate things, or whether they are largely reliant upon one another.

Whilst Beauvoir's quotation does not relate to one particular sex, it was important to limit what I was looking at within this thesis. If I had included books by male authors as well as female, and discussed male characters alongside female ones, the scope would arguably have been too broad, and I would not have been able to give each separate work the attention which it deserves in such a discussion. As *The Second Sex* considers female experience, a female focused project thus seemed fitting. I will focus solely upon female characters, written by female authors, in order to explore female experience. I identify female as those characters who are clearly biologically gendered, as well as those who identify as female. I have also identified a genderless character whom I will discuss in depth, the protagonist of Winterson's *Written on the Body*. The gender fluidity of Woolf's Orlando will also be discussed.

I shall analyse the work of these authors, exploring the ways in which they promote female material embodiment. I will concentrate upon identifying and exploring instances in which the physical body and point of view are shown as both acting simultaneously with one another, as in Beauvoir's quotation, as well as ways in which they are separated, however briefly, and thus go against her statement. I have chosen to explore the material body and materiality of the body, as per Beauvoir's statement, and the many ways in which this is presented. I will also be exploring the differences and overlap between 'point of view' and the mind, or interior world. All of these terms demonstrate the interconnectivity of one's inner, hidden life, and will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis. They have different connotations, of course, but 'point of view' and perspective are manifested in one's mind, and thus I feel that the decision to use all three terms can be substantiated.

I wish to examine, if Beauvoir's hypothesis is true, how literature and literary language confront this. Do my selected texts portray the quite complex relation between the mind and the body, and if so, how is this expressed?

Bound up with my exploration of the female-gendered mind and perspective is, as per Beauvoir's quotation, the exterior body. I will discuss ways in which the tangible body is presented in my chosen texts, and how, if at all, it relates to the mind of a given female character. Interiority is arguably more truthful, given that the exterior expression of feelings can be obscured or hidden by the performer. The mind and perspective are intrinsically linked to the exterior body, although I am fully expecting there to be instances in the literary texts which I am discussing which go against this, providing a different exposure entirely to what might be expected. I will provide evidence of the ways in which the female body and point of view cooperate, or not, in my chosen texts.

The books which I have chosen to discuss are *Orlando* (1928), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *Between the Acts* (1941) by Woolf; 'Prelude' (1918), 'Pictures (1917), and 'Bliss' (1918) by Mansfield; *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) and *Written on the Body* (1992) by Winterson; and 'The ex-wife' and 'The human claim' by Smith, both of which were published in *The Public Library and Other Stories* in 2015. I will examine the ways in which my contemporary authors echo and extend the work of my chosen modernists, as well as the effects of autofiction, and the notions of selfhood, the reclamation of self, transformation, 'Other'ness, and dream states. I will focus upon different representations of the body, and discuss the different ways in which the female body is shown. I will also explore depictions of the animal body in works by Woolf and Winterson, and the ways in which both authors compare animal physicality to the bodies of their female characters. I will discuss gender and sexuality, particularly in the likes of *Orlando* and *Written on the Body*, where conventions are subverted. I will look at all of these in relation both to the corporeal body, and to mind and perspective, and will argue that, in order to be fully present in the world, a character's material body and point of view do have to work in tandem.

I will argue and explore that whilst there is occasionally a separation of the material body and 'point of view on the world' in the work of Woolf, her novels largely support the existence of both being present at once within her female characters. Mansfield's work begins to challenge Beauvoir's statement; her female characters all have material bodies and points of view, but there is more of a visible separation between the two within her stories. This is particularly the case in the extended 'Prelude' (1920), and its first incarnation as 'The Aloe' (1918). The work of my chosen contemporary authors, Winterson and Smith is, like that of Woolf's and Mansfield's, experimental in distinctive ways. Their characters can largely be seen as being more together in body and mind, arguably, than Mansfield's are. For Smith and Winterson, there is more of an elasticity between body and mind, and mind and perspective. However much body and mind appear to be separated in particular narrative passages, there is still an apparent intrinsic connection between them still. In their work, bodies are not tethered to each other in quite the same way as in the earlier works which I wish to explore. The relationship between human bodies is a further element which I will explore. I will research instances in which mind and body always connected to one another in the work of Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson, and Smith, as well as those occasions when there is a separation.

With regard to the terminology which will be used throughout this thesis, I have aligned myself with the language and definitions used by critics including Judith Butler and Rom Harré. Harré succinctly distinguishes the differences between sex and gender as follows: 'Since the real sex of a human being is defined on the basis of hidden differences in body form and equipment, an illusion of sexual category is easily created by the use of emblematic clothing and the appropriate hair style.' [1] In this definition, sex is biological, and gender is socially and culturally constructed. Gender can therefore be

[1] Rom Harré, 'Man and Woman' (in Welton, Donn (ed.), *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991, 2nd ed.)), p. 12

revealed by the wearing of feminine or masculine clothing, and androgynous clothing can be used to mask gender. I will also use Harré's widely accepted definitions of 'male' and 'female' to denote the biologically defined sex, and 'masculine' and 'feminine' with regard to 'the psychological and social distinction of gender.' [2]

Embodiment: A History

The human body, which is the focus of this discussion, contains two clearly defined, yet interrelated elements - the seen exterior body, which can be viewed and touched, and the hidden interior body, bound up with the mind, which allows one to establish a unique set of perspectives and attitudes toward the world.

Theories of embodiment are vital to this project. These have shifted over time, and have been focused in recent years, as Justin E. Smith notes, upon 'the extent to which subjectivity is determined by embodiment — that is, the extent to which one's own subjective experience of the world is forged or inflected by the particular sort of body one has.' [3] He goes on to write that subjectivity reflects our differences, encompassing 'race, gender, and physical and cognitive ability', [4] and also affects the ways in which these elements can affect how we interact with the world around us. Nick Watson and Sarah Cunningham-Bailey believe that 'the body has now become central to the

[2] Rom Harré, 'Man and Woman', in *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical* Reader, ed. by Donn Welton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991, 2nd ed.)), p. 13

[3] Justin E. Smith, *Embodiment: A History* (Oxford: Oxford Philosophical Concepts, 2017), p. 5

[4] Smith, p. 5

sociological project', [5] driven by the far-reaching influence of feminism, the work of Foucault, and developments of other theories, such as postmodernism.

It is necessary to include Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler in a discussion about foundational theories of the body. Both Freud's psychological theories and work about the body are highly sexualised; he placed much emphasis upon infantile sexuality, and the way in which young children develop sexually. His most famous theories are the Oedipus complex, in which young boys want to have sexual relations with their biological mothers, and the idea of 'penis envy', in which young girls feel bereft that they lack such a visible biological organ. Of his work, Harré notes: 'Freud's account of the conceptualisation of male and female bodies as kinds, the origin of the masculine/feminine distinction, is based on the assumption of the absolute salience of genitalia.' [6]

Foucault's considers the body within an institutionalised setting in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, [7] and explores how this environment in turn impacts upon its subjects. Foucault, writes Lisa Blackman:

> argued that disciplinary power works most effectively in hierarchical institutions, such as the prison system… [and that] the organization of power within an institutional practice such as the prison system, works through transforming people's relationships to their own bodies and sense of selfhood. [8]

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[5] Nick Watson and Sarah Cunningham-Bailey (eds.), *Reframing the Body* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1

[6] Harré, p. 20

[7] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Pantheon Books, 1977)

[8] Lisa Blackman, *The Body: The Key Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), p. 25

This focus on the physical human body within the wider body of the institution, and the ideas of power and control, became a central focus of Foucault's work. In his book, he examines the shift from historical corporal punishment to the regulations and lack of personal freedoms widespread within the prison system in Europe and the United States. By critically examining the prison institution, Foucault was able to consider how such conditions affect the body.

Butler's work on the gendered body is epochal, and she has written extensively about *The Second Sex*. Much of her work focuses upon notions of gender, and challenging the stereotypes which surround it. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco define the philosophical outlook of the body 'as something we *have* (the body as object), as something we *are* (the body as subject), and as something we *become* (the body as process and performativity).' [9] Butler, who was instrumental in the creation of the theory of performativity, stresses that it '… must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act," but rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.' [10] This notion of performativity is applicable particularly to Woolf's *Orlando* and Winterson's *Written on the Body*, both of which will be discussed in this thesis.

Of course, the notion of dualism within the body is also invaluable in my study. Fraser and Greco note that Descartes '… radicalised the distinction between the mind and the body (the mental and the material, soul and nature) and… privileged the former over the latter.' [11] His work on what would become known as Cartesian dualism 'clearly constitutes a powerful set of ideas regarding the nature of bodies, the nature of knowl-

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[9] Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco (eds.), *The Body: A Reader* (Oxfordshire: Rutledge, 2005; repr. 2007 (twice)), p. 4

[10] Judith Butler, 'Bodies That Matter' (from Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), repr. Fraser, Mariam and Monica Greco (eds.), *The Body: A Reader* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2005; repr. 2007 (twice)), p. 62

[11] Fraser and Greco, p. 6

edge, and the relationships between the two terms.' [12] Elisabeth Grosz defines Cartesian dualism as '… the assumption that there are two distinct mutually exclusive and mutually exhaustive substances, mind and body, each of which inhabits its own self-contained sphere.' [13] She discounts, however, that this is possible, disagreeing with the compatibility of mind and body which Descartes promotes. Blackman explores this idea of dualism, coming to the conclusion that:

> This distinction between what is taken to be involuntary (and therefore fixed), and what is taken to be voluntary (and therefore subject to change) produces the mind and body as distinct entities. The mind is the location of thought and the body the location of a fixed set of physiological processes. [14]

There are, Blackman believes, many more parallels of dualism which can be applied to the body: '… the voluntary and involuntary, the natural and the cultural and the individual and the social. The very concept of dualism… relies upon a notion of separation.' [15] This concept is one which I will be exploring at length in this thesis, asking whether mind and body can ever really be separated, through the lens of selected fiction books.

Fraser and Greco also draw out different ways of viewing bodies, reiterating ideas explored by both Beauvoir and Butler:

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[12] Fraser and Greco, p. 6

[13] Elisabeth Grosz, 'Refiguring Bodies' (from Elisabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), repr. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco (eds.), *The Body: A Reader* (Oxfordshire: Rutledge, 2005; repr. 2007 (twice)), p. 48

[14] Blackman, p. 4

[15] Blackman, p. 8

> The "cultural body" 'takes place for the most part on its *surface*, on the skin, and in other visible places. In this respect, the distinction between (cultural) bodies that can change and (biological) bodies that cannot redoubles the division between the interior and exterior, whereby the "interior" body remains largely as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries left it: closed and impenetrable [16]

Fraser and Greco thus reinforce the core idea of both Butler and Harré, in which biological sex and socially and culturally constructed gender are separate. The links which they draw between this separation and the use of interior and exterior will be examined at length within this thesis.

Literary Lineage and Justifications

The experimental work of each of the chosen authors in this project is justification enough for looking at selected texts with Beauvoir's quotation as their centre. However, it feels right to note that there is a real sense of resurgence which goes hand in hand with my project, and a clear trajectory between texts. I have employed the idea of literary lineage in order to trace the similarities and differences in portrayals of female characters, with regard to depictions of both their bodies and minds. I wished to include books by authors with commonalities, either in their elements of focus - for instance, the exploration of gender and sexuality, and of the female psyche - or in the way in which they approach their stories through the use of experimental literary techniques, such as stream-of-consciousness. Each of these writers engage with the existential, that mainstay of Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. They place emphasis upon the Carte-

[16] Fraser and Greco, p. 9

sian dualistic nature of the body, and show representations of the physical human body, and how it can sometimes exist at odds with the mind. All four authors play around with conventions and expectations, and explore, in different ways, what it means both to exist in the world, and to exist as a woman. The chosen texts within this thesis thus tie together well, I feel, and are all interconnected.

With regard to literary criticism, critics touching upon different ideas found within their work have produced a wealth of approaches, and the breadth of the critical field is vast. I have chosen to include Woolf, whose prose has influenced much contemporary literature, as she greatly influenced Beauvoir herself, along with a whole host of other leading and persuasive feminist writers:

> She had, for example, read all of Virginia Woolf's work, and she refers to a wide variety of women writers in *The Second Sex*, including Madame de Staehl, Mary Wollstonecraft, Christine de Pisan, Emily Dickinson, Isadora Duncan, and Clara Zetkin. [17]

Thus, identifying continuations of the work of Woolf and Mansfield in that of Winterson and Smith maintains this idea of influence. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir writes the following, recognising the significance of the work of both of my chosen modernist authors: 'All sincere women writers have noted this melancholy that inhabits the heart of "thirty year old" women; this is a characteristic common to the heroines of Katherine Mansfield, Dorothy Parker and Virginia Woolf'. [18]

Woolf and Mansfield had a challenging and rather competitive relationship; the Katherine Mansfield society deem it 'an extraordinary blend of intimacy, rivalry and mu-

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[17] Barbara S. Andrew, 'Beauvoir's place in philosophical thought' (in *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir,* ed. Cordelia Card (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 38

[18] *The Second Sex*, p. 531

tual admiration'. [19] They were both aware of, and in Woolf's case jealous of, one another's work. Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney speak of their 'mutual literary envy', but also recognise how the antagonisms between them actually went on to shape their work. [20] Thus, it could be argued that their rivalry was quite a healthy one, pushing them both to achieve more in their writing lives. There is a strong awareness of one another's presence between the authors in this project. Ali Smith writes of Mansfield: 'She dunted Virginia Woolf, with a good sharp elbow, into the kind of experimental writing for which Woolf is revered.' [21]

I have chosen to focus upon two authors writing in the early-twentieth century alongside two writing in the late-twentieth and throughout the twenty-first, in order to compare and contrast their presentations of female bodies and perspectives. Beauvoir's text was published in French in 1949, and in its first English translation by H.M. Parshley in 1953, and its publication comes between the periods in which Woolf and Mansfield, and Smith and Winterson respectively were writing. All four of my chosen authors probe incredibly important issues - gender, androgyny, and the interior self, to name but the three which relate the most to this project. These are all still prevalent discussion topics within today's society, and are discussed by many modern authors.

* Smith and Winterson seemed relevant choices to include in such a discussion, as literary techniques in Woolf and Mansfield's work are found in theirs. Another reason for their inclusion is with regard to the approaches which they take with regard to present-

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[19] Anon., 'Virginia Woolf' (The Katherine Mansfield Society) <http://www.katherinemansfield.org.uk/virginiawoolf.htm> [accessed: 07/08/2018]

[20] Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney, 'Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and the Benefits of Jealous Friends' (in *The Paris Review* (16/10/2017), <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/10/16/katherine-mansfield-virginia-woolf-benefits-jealous-friends/> [accessed: 07/08/2018]

[21] Ali Smith, 'So many afterlives from one short life' (*The Telegraph*, 7th April 2007) [https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3664280/So-many-afterlives-from-one-short-life.html <accessed: 25/05/2018>]

ing mind and body. Smith and Winterson are interested particularly in gender fluidity, and the ways in which one can obscure one's biological sex - as, indeed, was Woolf, particularly in *Orlando*. I will examine this when discussing, with regard to Beauvoir's above quotation, what gender actually is. As in modernism, interiority is also a mainstay of much contemporary fiction, in which free indirect discourse is often used to gain a deep understanding of our given protagonist(s). Woolf evokes interiority largely with the use of the stream-of-consciousness narrative technique, and Mansfield does so by using the third person perspective and focusing upon a single protagonist. Smith and Winterson use various techniques in order to present interiority, but most focus is placed on their work upon the first person narrative perspective, which reveals the thoughts and perspectives of the narrator. This distinctive shift from third to first person still encapsulates the interiority and point of view of the protagonist, but enables this to be done in a more direct and urgent manner.

There are many continuations which can be drawn between the work of Woolf and Mansfield, and Winterson and Smith. In terms of their prose alone, there are echoes of Woolf's writing within Winterson's, but it really goes further than that for Winterson. She has proclaimed herself the 'natural heir' of Woolf [22]: 'On a *Late Show* special in 1994, Winterson, filmed striding around Highgate Cemetery, named herself the heir to Virginia Woolf, essentially Shakespeare's sister of *A Room of One's Own*.' [23] Merja Makinen writes that this is the crux of 'Winterson's outrageously arrogant public persona…'. [24] This cult of personality aside, with regard to the literary inheritance of Woolf within

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[22] Libby Brooks, 'Power Surge' (*The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/sep/02/fiction.jeanettewinterson>, accessed: 10/07/2017)

[23] Stephanie Harzewski, 'Weighting Jeanette Winterson' (in *Contemporary Women's Writing*, 2008), Volume 2, Issue 1, pp. 70-76) <https://academic-oup-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/cww/article/2/1/70/455226/Weighting-Jeanette-Winterson>, accessed: 19/06/2017), p. 70

[24] Merja Makinen, *The Novels of Jeanette Winterson* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 118

Winterson's writing, both focus on similar themes within their bodies of work. Van der Weil elaborates upon this, believing that the way in which Woolf and Winterson's work converges is through their 'personal and literary concern with maternal loss, rejection or death…', [25] thus adding a biological element to proceedings. There is an obvious interlinking between the authors named here; Smith recognises that Mansfield's presence, as well as her fiction, 'run throughout Simone de Beauvoir's seminal feminist work, *The Second Sex*, like an undercurrent musical theme.' [26] In a way, this adds a cyclical element to this project; the awareness of each of the authors of the presence of the others is strong, and often has influence.

Many have discussed Smith's work in relation to Woolf's - Patrick Flanery, for instance, positions her 'among Virginia Woolf's most gifted inheritors'. [27] Whilst Smith has cited Woolf as one of her influences on occasion, [28] she has written and talked extensively about Mansfield as a highly influential figure in her own writing. She has used Woolf quotations as epigraphs in her published work, [29] and if one examines their output together, a continuation and perhaps a modernisation of Woolf's technique and focus is evident in Smith's, from the more obvious use of the stream-of-consciousness, to the emphasis which she places upon the minutiae of life and one's surroundings. This continuation is particularly visible with regard to the continued approach of free indirect discourse which Smith uses, as well as her focus upon fluid gender boundaries.

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[25] Reina van der Weil, Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 4

[26] Smith, 'So many afterlives…'

[27] Patrick Flanery, 'How to Be Both by Ali Smith, review: 'brimming with pain and joy'', *The Telegraph* (2014) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/11061768/How-to-Be-Both-by-Ali-Smith-review-brimming-with-pain-and-joy.html> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[28] Ali Smith, "Getting Virginia Woolf's Goat" (National Portrait Gallery, London, 23/10/2014) <https://soundcloud.com/npglondon/getting-virginia-woolfs-goat-a-lecture-by-ali-smith> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[29] Ali Smith, *Shire* (Suffolk: Full Circle Editions Ltd., 2013)

Whilst the connection between Mansfield and Smith is perhaps not as explicitly one of inheritance, there is a similar reasoning. 'Writers ought to have a real claim on each other.' So wrote Katherine Mansfield on a postcard to William Gerhardi in 1921. This supports the connection of the claim between Mansfield and Smith, demonstrating as it does the awareness of a continuation from one generation to another. Smith's work is undoubtedly weighted by Mansfield's short stories; she is the author of the introduction to a volume of Mansfield's work, [30] in which she 'explores the complexity and magical quality of the stories', [31] along with the themes of duplicity and truth. In a talk entitled 'Inventing the Modern Novel', which was given at King's College London in November 2015, [32] Smith referenced Mansfield several times whilst discussing those modernist authors who have had an impact upon her personal work.

* Smith has also discussed Mansfield extensively on different media outlets - for instance, on Radio 4's Open Book programme [33] - and has written in the *Telegraph* about the inspiration which Mansfield's short life left behind for the next generation of short story writers, [34] from Willa Cather to Christopher Isherwood. This legacy continues; unpicking Smith's central thought from the aforementioned *Telegraph* article, one can say that one of Mansfield's "afterlives" is certainly wrought within the work of Smith. Germana and Horton reiterate this, writing in the introduction to *Ali Smith: A Critical Perspective* that '… Mansfield is one of the literary revenants that frequently return to

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[30] Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories* (London: Penguin Classics, 2007)

[31] Ibid., p. i

[32] Ali Smith and Vesna Goldsworthy, "Inventing The Modern Novel" (King's College London, 09/11/2015) <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/ahri/eventrecords/2015-2016/CMLC/inventingmodernnovel.aspx> [accessed: 13/02/2017]

[33] Ali Smith, Open Book (18/03/2007) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00775jt> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[34] Ali Smith, 'So many afterlives from one short life', *The Telegraph* (07/04/2007) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3664280/So-many-afterlives-from-one-short-life.html> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

haunt Smith's writing, as she does in *Artful*… In the section on time, for instance, Mansfield stands, once again, to represent the short story…'. [35] She thus becomes a figurehead of the short story, and Germana and Horton imply that in this sense, Mansfield is ever-present in Smith's shorter work. For example, one of her earliest biographers, Antony Alpers, recognised that in her writing, Mansfield established '… a pattern that was to become characteristic: a private crisis in a woman's life, where blissful expectations are shattered at one touch of reality' [36].

* This is certainly a focus of a lot of Smith's shorter work, where she explores both the interiority and exteriority of transformative events in the lives of her female protagonists, ranging from the narrator being turned into a tree in her short story 'The beholder', to Smith's interpretation of the Classic myth of Iphis - in which the sex of a newborn daughter is disguised as that of a son in order to protect her life, and is later transformed into a man - in her novel *Girl Meets Boy*.

The idea of the 'claim' which Mansfield professes can be applied to the way in which Smith's writing both echoes Mansfield's, and develops it. Whilst this 'claim', or influence of modernist authors, is clearly a strand which I will be exploring to some extent between the modernist and contemporary authors I have chosen, this thesis will not be an influence study. There is a clear continuation of literary techniques between texts - for example, reflections upon and worries about ageing in the work of Mansfield and Smith, and, on a more basic level, the stream-of-consciousness narrative style which both Woolf and Winterson employ. To define stream-of-consciousness is rather more difficult than it at first appears, as critics have interpreted it in varying ways. In this thesis, I have used the definition found in Encyclopaedia Britannica, which denotes 'stream-of-consciousness' as a narrative technique which is:

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[35] Monica Germana and Emily Horton, 'Introduction' (in *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Monica Germana and Emily Horton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 5

[36] Antony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1954)

> intended to render the flow of myriad impressions - visual, auditory, physical, associative, and subliminal - that impinge on the consciousness of an individual and form part of his awareness along with the trend of his rational thoughts. [37]

Patricia Moran states: 'Mansfield and Woolf use the female body as a metaphorical vehicle for tenors of subjectivity and creativity'. [38] This could just as easily be applied to the work of Smith and Winterson.

* It is important to address the notions of inheritance and continuation to justify my choices for my primary authors and selected texts, but I do not wish my thesis to take the shape solely of an influence study. Instead, I will examine ways in which representations of the physical body and mind in their work, and particular imagery, seems to be continued from one author to the next.

Those who have written works of criticism about Mansfield, however, tend to agree that the sphere of influence which she had was multicausal; as much as she was influencing younger writers than herself, she was, in turn, influenced by her forebears. Of course, the same could be said for any writer, but Ailwood and Harvey elaborate with the following in Mansfield's case: 'Throughout her reading and writing life she engaged in a rich and unabashed dialogue with her literary predecessors not only in her fiction but also in her correspondence and personal writing', [39] with writers as diverse as Evelyn

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[37] Anon., *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/art/stream-of-consciousness <accessed: 25/03/2019>

[38] Patricia Moran, *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1996), p. 25

[39] Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (eds.), '"Like a thousand reflections of my own hands in a dark mirror": Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), p. 6

Waugh, [40] Colette, [41] and Charles Dickens. [42] As explored above, Smith has discussed Mansfield as an inspiration to her own work in various settings. In this vein, the inclusion of both Mansfield and Smith in this thesis seems a further continuation of such influence. Woolf and Winterson too have a kind of 'claim' between them; there are nods throughout Winterson's fiction which echo motifs in Woolf's, from the elusive nature of gender between *Orlando* and *Written on the Body*, to the title of *Lighthousekeeping* resembling *To the Lighthouse*.

Of course, there are many other contemporary authors who have been discussed alongside Woolf and Mansfield, and who could have been chosen for this thesis. In Kathryn Stelmach Artuso's book of edited essays, *Virginia Woolf & 20th Century Women Writers*, she is compared variously to Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Sylvia Plath, amongst others, [43] and Donna J. Lazenby discusses elements of Woolf's work alongside Iris Murdoch's. [44] The period in which these writers were working is not modern enough for my particular purposes here; I wanted to focus on two authors who are more contemporary, which will allow me to examine the influence of both Woolf and Mansfield in the twenty-first century.

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[40] Naomi Milthorpe, '"The Twilight of Language": The Young Evelyn Waugh on "Catherine" Mansfield' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 21-34

[41] Deborah Pike, '"Objectless Love": The Vagabondage of Colette and Katherine Mansfield' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 105-118

[42] Michael Hollington, 'Mansfield eats Dickens' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 155-167

[43] Kathryn Stelmach Artuso (ed)., *Virginia Woolf & 20th Century Women Writers* (Massachusetts: Salem Press/Grey House Publishing, 2014)

[44] Donna J. Lazenby, *A Mystical Philosophy: Transcendence and Immanence in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

* With regard to other contemporary female authors, Woolf has been compared at length to Rachel Cusk, whose novel *Arlington Park* was influenced by *Mrs Dalloway*. [45] Comparisons have also been drawn between Mansfield and Northern Irish writer Bernard MacLaverty. Whilst this would have been an interesting connection to explore, it clearly does not fit within this female-centred study. Other critics have discussed Woolf alongside Winterson - for instance, Reina van der Weil, [46] Justyna Kostkowska, [47] and Catherine M. Lord. [48] Whilst there are fewer published works which discuss the work of Mansfield and Smith together, Smith, as mentioned, has spoken at length about the influence which Mansfield's work has had upon her own, and has also written a story which features Mansfield as a character. [49]

Summary

In this thesis, I wish to explore Beauvoir's hypothesis, that 'Presence in the world vigorously implies the presence of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world.' I will examine Beauvoir's quote through the lens of four authors, and will look at selected female characters in work by Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson and Smith, to see whether they exist as both material bodies and perspectives, or whether

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[45] Monica Latham, '*Arlington Park*: Variations on Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*' (in *Woolf Studies Annual*, Volume 19 (2013)), pp. 195-213

[46] Reina van der Weil, *Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

[47] Justyna Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism and Women Writers: Environmentalist Poetics of Virginia Woolf, Jeanette Winterson, and Ali Smith* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

[48] Catherine M. Lord, 'Rapturing the Text: The Paraliterary Between Works of Derrida, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson' (in *Oxford Literary Review*, Volume 25, Issue 1 (2003))

[49] Ali Smith, 'The Ex-Wife' (*Public Library and Other Stories* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2015)), pp. 99-120

these elements are split from one another. I will ask what happens to the representation of a character when their physical body and perspective are presented as separated from one another?

The backbone of this thesis will look at the female perspective and exterior body, and analyse the different ways in which the tangible body and interiority are presented. I will provide evidence of this in the close readings which will follow. I argue that Woolf's characters support Beauvoir's quote, demonstrating through her female characters that the existence of both the body and point of view are present at once. Mansfield's work begins to challenge Beauvoir's statement, as there is sometimes a visible separation between the body and mind in her stories.

* In their fiction, Winterson and Smith are experimental in different ways to Woolf and Mansfield. In terms of the togetherness of material bodies and perspectives, the work of both contemporary authors either demonstrates a shift away from Beauvoir's hypothesis, or reinforces it. In the work of all four authors, I will research instances in which the point of view and body are both connected and separated, and the implications which this has. Overall, I believe that for anyone to be fully present and engaged in the world, their material body and point of view have to work in tandem. The separation of these elements both occurs in, and leads to, moments of crisis, and this is apparent in some of my chosen texts. Instances in which the material body and point of view are split in the chapters which follow arise almost exclusively when the characters are undergoing turmoil.

Whilst I am going to explore female experience in this thesis, I have also chosen to include two characters - Orlando in Woolf's *Orlando*, and the genderless narrator of Winterson's *Written on the Body* - in order to examine gender boundaries, and gender fluidity. Beauvoir's proposition is not a gendered one, although the body of text which it has been drawn from, *The Second Sex*, relates solely to female experience. I have ex-

plained above the reasoning for limiting the focus of this thesis, and for including two genderless, or gender fluid, characters alongside those who identify as female. I have pointed out that the experimental qualities of all four authors justifies why I have chosen to write about their work together, and have argued that the sense of resurgence and notion of influence between the world of Woolf and Mansfield, and Winterson and Smith respectively, is another line of reasoning for including their work in this thesis.

The first chapter in this thesis will be focused upon Beauvoir. I will justify why I have selected this particular quote and not, for instance, Beauvoir's axiom 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.' I will situate the quote within the context of *The Second Sex*. I will then examine the relevance of Beauvoir's work in the twenty-first century, and argue why it is so important to revisit. The chapter will include a wealth of criticisms of *The Second Sex*, and how it has been received since its publication. I keep in mind the body-mind duality which is the core of this thesis, and finally, discuss the implications of different translations of Beauvoir's seminal text.

My examination of my four selected authors will follow the chapter on Beauvoir, and I will begin with a discussion of Woolf. I have selected *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse* as two of my primary texts in this chapter, and will provide an extended discussion on her posthumous novel *Between the Acts*. As well as looking at representations of the female body and point of view, I have included non-binary characters in my discussion, with gender-fluid Orlando, and the characters of Miss La Trobe and William Dodge in *Between the Acts*. I will address Orlando's bodily shift from man to woman, and the implications which this has, both societally and for the individual. In *To the Lighthouse*, I will focus upon protagonist Mrs Ramsay, and secondary character Lily Briscoe, who are, like Orlando, surrounded by gendered expectations. I will explore their interior thoughts, and mark the ways in which these are at odds with what they articulate. I will open my discussion of *Between the Acts* with an examination of the novel's overtly fem-

inine and masculine characters, and then move on to look at non-binary characters, focusing particularly on representations of sexuality, and the body. I will demonstrate in this chapter that whilst body and mind in Woolf's work can be disconnected, they very quickly reconnect; they are, almost entirely, shown as being intrinsically linked - and vitally so - with one another.

The third chapter in this thesis will focus purely upon selected female characters [removed: who are gendered as female] in Mansfield's short stories. Focus will be placed upon Linda Burnell, a troubled mother, in 'Prelude', as well as her daughter Kezia and sister Beryl. I will probe notions of heredity with regard to these related characters, and observe those instances in which a character's body and mind appear to be separated. I will also explore representations of femininity and self, as well as notions of thought and perspective, with the characters of Bertha Young in 'Bliss' and Ada Moss in 'Pictures'.

In the fourth chapter, I will look at Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping*, and will then provide an extended discussion of *Written on the Body*, which is narrated by a genderless character. Differing portrayals of mind and body will be explored in this chapter. In *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver is in her formative years, and there is a real sense of discovering her self, and her changing body. Winterson scrutinises the multiplicity of self in *Written on the Body*. In this novel, we learn next to nothing of the narrator's physical body, or their sex, but a lot about their interior world. In contrast, their lover Louise is manifested almost entirely in terms of her physical body, and very little of her perspective is exhibited.

The fifth and final chapter in this thesis is on selected short stories by Smith. The multiplicity of self is, as in Winterson's work, a major trope in Smith's. In this chapter, I explore presentations of sex and gender fluidity in Smith's work, as well as the idea of bodily transformation. The stories which I will look at in detail in this chapter are 'The

ex-wife', in which a facsimile of Mansfield the author is presented, and 'The human claim', in which Smith herself is the main character.

Chapter One: Simone de Beauvoir

Justifications

An obvious choice for a Simone de Beauvoir quotation to use in a thesis such as this would have been the seminal 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman'. [1] This particular phrase has been discussed by a whole slew of feminists from many different angles. Debra Bergoffen believes the quotation to be 'central to the feminist critique of patriarchy'. [2] Rosi Braidotti, however, declares the phrase problematic: 'Accepting Beauvoir's axiom that one is not born, rather, one becomes a woman, feminists concentrated on showing that woman was constituted and produced by established social norms which made her into man's eternal mirror.' [3] Braidotti critiques Beauvoir's position by noting the limitations which it placed upon womanhood; one could only become a woman if she adhered to these prescribed 'social norms'. Women were viewed through the male gaze. In this way, rather than an ally who allows a woman to express herself, and to embody her body, he becomes something of an enemy. Barbara S. Andrew believes that 'Femininity can be understood as an aspect of human reality but not as natural or innate. Beauvoir is clear about this interaction between self and world, between bodily experience and one's understanding of it'. [4] Andrew goes on to say that this distinct separation of sex and gender which Beauvoir offers is a critical foundation to Butler's seminal *Gender Trouble*. This struggle for equality in such a patriarchal world has,

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[1] *The Second Sex*, p. 293

[2] Debra Bergoffen, 'Simone de Beauvoir: (Re)counting the sexual difference' (in Cordelia Card (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 248

[3] Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 127

[4] Barbara S. Andrew, 'Beauvoir's place in philosophical thought', in Cordelia Card (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 31

of course, been the focus of feminist thinkers before and since *The Second Sex* was published.

The debate which has sprung up around the seminal message of *The Second Sex* has, however, been written about so often, and from such a range of perspectives, that I felt there was very little which was new that I could add to the discussion. I have instead chosen to use another hypothesis from the same work: 'Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. [5] I argue that this is a key quotation in *The Second Sex*, demonstrating, as it does, a notion of complex personhood, and carrying much weight. This quotation struck me as something worthwhile which I could explore through the lens of my chosen texts, suggesting as it does the existence of a body-mind dualism. The body, as Beauvoir views it, has two distinct but interlinked components. The first is the physical body, that which can be seen and touched. The second is to do with interiority, with shaping one's own opinions, and presenting a distinctive point of view, or set of perspectives, toward the world. The quotation also encapsulates Beauvoir's theory of ambiguity: 'that we are both subject and object, body and mind.' [6]

The quotation which will form the backbone of this thesis is situated in the 'Biological Data' chapter of *The Second Sex*. Here, Beauvoir examines the biological differences between men and women, and the all-too-simplistic gendering of women due to their physical makeup. Reproduction is given focus, and Beauvoir pays attention to the maternal role which a woman is expected to fill. She writes: 'the mother has the closest connection to her offspring, whereas the father is more uninterested; the whole organism of the female is adapted to and determined by the servitude of maternity, while

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[5] *The Second Sex*, p. 24

[6] Andrew, p. 41

the sexual initiative is the prerogative of the male.' [7] This disparity is something which has been historically accepted within society. Historically in most societies it has been women rather than men who have had to give up other elements of their life, such as work - at least temporarily - to fulfil their maternal role.

To unpack Beauvoir's quotation, 'presence' embodies consciousness, as well as an awareness of oneself in the world. 'Vigorously' suggests an unerring strength, determination, and a rigidity of self. 'Positing' could be said to refer to the positioning of the physical body in this instance, but it is of course difficult to say so unequivocally due to the translated nature of the work. As with the material aspect of the body, 'thing' implies a tangible object, and 'point of view', of course, is one's perspective. Beauvoir's quotation implies an exploration both of body and mind, of one's interiority and exteriority, and an awareness of consciousness. It is intrinsically linked with personhood, and how women particularly are portrayed.

The final clause in the sentence which contains Beauvoir's idea is 'but this body need not possess this or that particular structure'. [8] There is therefore no gender specificity intended, and the idea of being a body and point of view in the world is promoted as something which applies to every single person. It assumes in this manner that all bodies are both physical 'things' and points of view on this world. In the chosen quotation, Beauvoir speaks about the body, and its place within the world. The body itself, she says, which can essentially be seen to have two forms, is split into a physical being and a perspective, which are dependent on one another to exist, but can also be displayed independently. Whilst, of course, referring to different cognitive elements, the materiality of the body and the 'point of view on this world' are intrinsically linked to one another in Beauvoir's critique. Without the ability of the mind to think and reason,

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[7] *The Second Sex*, p. 35

[8] *The Second Sex*, p. 24

it would be an impossibility to have a point of view about anything. Whilst I will be mindful in this thesis of not confusing the terms, I wish to demonstrate that one cannot be had without the other; a non-cognitive being cannot hold a point of view about anything. I have chosen my primary texts with this in mind. Thus, I will be exploring the representations of interiority which my chosen authors display, always in relation to Beauvoir's hypothesis.

As my primary Beauvoir quotation has been taken from *The Second Sex*, it seemed rather obvious to focus upon the 'second sex' with regard to both selecting female writers and characters. My choice of female writers will, I hope, narrow the field of study which I am writing within, allowing me to key in on specific points and techniques displayed in the various novels and short stories which I have chosen. I wish to examine notions of female experience, and the varied ways in which these experiences have been represented in different works of literature. Given the lack of gender definition in the chosen Beauvoir hypothesis, I will also write at length about the gender fluidity and obscuring of biological sex [removed: gender obscurity] which Smith and Winterson construct in some of their work. I will examine the interconnectivity between the body and mind as shown in my selected texts, and the awareness of consciousness which the characters demonstrate with regard to both their physical bodies and perspectives about their worlds, as implied by Beauvoir's quotation.

Another way in which my chosen texts will come together is with regard to the time in which all were written. Beauvoir was writing between the two periods of the other authors chosen for this thesis - Mansfield between 1908 and 1923, and Woolf between 1915 and 1941, and Winterson's and Smith's first works published in 1985 and 1997 respectively. This resonates with regard to the ideas of continuation and influence. Beauvoir mentions both Mansfield and Woolf in *The Second Sex*, and her work was un-

doubtedly radical, as theirs was. In *The Prime of Life*, Beauvoir expresses that she had read all of Woolf's books, and was influenced by her work. [9]

In her own way, Beauvoir has helped to revolutionise and alter the ways in which society sees women. That the majority of women in Beauvoir's day were unable to fulfil their potential was a major concern in *The Second Sex*: 'The wife shut up in her home cannot establish her existence on her own; she does not have the means to affirm herself in her singularity: and this singularity is consequently not acknowledged.' [10] Beauvoir's concerns are still prevalent, and relevant, to our world, despite the time which has elapsed since she wrote *The Second Sex*. Rather than merely inhabiting the domestic sphere as they have done historically, many women in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries are able to have powerful careers, at least in the Western world. Whilst equality with male counterparts has not been reached in many ways, there is now a consciousness in many developed countries which strives towards such an achievement. Many females, [removed: with the inclusion of their sex within] living in the same world as men, have therefore been able to 'affirm' themselves within society. Another justification for this project, and the inclusion of Beauvoir within it, is that she was a pioneering figure in bringing the oppression of women to light, and in sparking the consequent women's movement. She allowed women a platform on which to build, and on which to fight for, and to gain, their own freedom.

Context of *The Second Sex*

Beauvoir recognised that such archetypal female stereotypes in society, and those traits associated with femininity which women were expected to embody, were constructed by

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[9] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life: The Autobiography of Simone de Beauvoir* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1940), p.37, p.46

[10] *The Second Sex*, p. 584

men. This adds another layer of complication onto the idea of one being able to organically 'become' a woman. In Beauvoir's analysis, there is an overriding acceptance that women are the weaker sex, which detracts from the things which she is able to do:

> Added to that are the instability, lack of control and fragility… these are facts. Her grasp of the world is thus more limited; she has less firmness and perseverance in projects that she is also less able to carry out. This means that her individual life is not as rich as man's. [11]

Beauvoir observes here that women are prohibited from occupying the same space in the world as men, largely due to the societally feminised attributes such as 'instability, lack of control and fragility' which women were said to possess. One of the central questions for Beauvoir is 'why is woman the *Other*?', something which she firmly believes 'biology alone cannot provide an answer to'. [12] The question is how, in her, nature has been taken on in the course of history; the question is what humanity has made of the human female.' [13]

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir notes both the difficulty of defining what a woman is, and of what is denoted by femininity:

> So not every female human being is necessarily a woman; she must take part in this mysterious and endangered reality known as femininity. … Although some women strive to embody it, the model has never been patented. It is typically

[11] *The Second Sex*, pp. 46-47

[12] *The Second Sex*, p. 49

[13] *The Second Sex*, p. 49

> described in vague and shimmering terms borrowed from a clairvoyant's vocabulary. [14]

There is, she says, no accepted definition of either construct, and exactly what it signifies varies from one group of people to another. This lack of a universal definition goes some way to suggest that there is a real difficulty in understand quite what 'femininity' embodies; what one person views as feminine, someone else may not. There is a real issue, too, for Beauvoir with what society believes a woman to be. This is bound up with biological sex, and is problematic:

> Woman? Very simple, say those who like simple answers: she is a womb, an ovary; she is female: this word is enough to define her… The term "female" is pejorative not because it roots woman in nature, but because it confines her in her sex, and if this sex, even in an innocent animal, seems despicable and an enemy to man, it is obviously because of the disquieting hostility woman triggers in him. [15]

Beauvoir perceived the naiveté of defining anything using only biological markers. It 'Other's woman, allowing her to be viewed in society as a vessel used only for reproduction. Signalling that all women are is 'a womb, an ovary' is highly limiting, and takes into account no individuality. 'Woman' and 'female', are used as exact and universal, and therefore limiting, terms. This categorisation of woman with regard only to her medical body is, says Beauvoir, something which can be used to explain the lack of equality within society. The perception of woman as something alien is a societal con-

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[14] *The Second Sex*, p. 3

[15] *The Second Sex*, p. 21

struct which Beauvoir recognises has been in existence since early history. Throughout *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir sees woman 'defined as a human being in search of values within a world of values, a world where it is indispensable to understand the economic and social structure'. [16] This 'economic and social structure' was often obscured from the woman who spent much of her time shut away at home, with little access to the outside world, and is therefore something which could only exclude her.

With its core themes in mind, *The Second Sex* is a utopian text. Toril Moi writes: 'Beauvoir's voice was that of a left-wing intellectual, deeply critical of the bourgeoisie in her own country and firmly committed to the socialist idea of a just, classless society without exploitation, oppression, violence and hunger.' [17]

The Second Sex has become a landmark for feminist studies, and for feminism as a movement. Indeed, Beauvoir recognised the lack of discussion in both philosophical and scientific works about the female experience. As Heinamaa points out, she:

> … makes it clear that the special character of women's experience of embodiment has remained unrecognized in the traditions of science and philosophy. When men have generalized and theorized about human experience, they have assumed either that women live their bodies in the same way as men or else that the feminine mode of experience can be described as a deviant form of the masculine. [18]

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[16] *The Second Sex*, p. 62

[17] Toril Moi, *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman* (2nd edition; Blackwell Publishers, 1994; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 207

[18] Sara Heinamaa, 'The body as instrument and as expression' (in *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir,* ed. Cordelia Card (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 82

Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, effectively rejected this idea of similarity between the sexes, believing that men and women are both distinct and different groups, whose experiences are not comparable. Moi highlights this:

> The specific contradiction of women's situation is caused by the conflict between their status as free and autonomous human beings and the fact that they are socialized in a world in which men consistently cast them as Other, as objects to their subject. [19]

She goes on to write that the majority of feminist critics of Beauvoir's work agree on one point; that she has effectively 'fail[ed] to value women's difference'. [20] Moi suggests that whilst Beauvoir sees females as a group separate from males, she does not distinguish that the female group is made up of a range of diverse individuals from a variety of backgrounds, subscribing to different sexual groups, and expecting a wealth of different things from life. Butler, however, views Beauvoir's ideology as far more encompassing of different kinds of people:

> Her theory of gender, then, entails a reinterpretation of the existential doctrine of choice whereby "choosing" a gender is understood as the embodiment of possibilities within a network of deeply entrenched cultural norms. [21]

Choosing to become, and organically becoming are, of course, core ideas throughout *The Second Sex*, and Beauvoir writes against the notion of expected personality traits sup-

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[19] Moi, *The Making...*, p. 175

[20] Moi, *The Making...*, p. 202

[21] Judith Butler, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*' (*Yale French Studies*, No. 42 (1986)), p. 37

posed to encompass everybody. Butler also recognises the differing meanings of 'female' and 'woman' throughout *The Second Sex*. She identifies:

> … the term "female" designates a fixed and self-identical set of natural corporeal facts… and the term "woman" designates a variety of modes through which those facts acquire cultural naming. One *is* female, then, to the extent that the copula asserts a fixed and self-identical relation, i.e. one is female and therefore not some other sex. [22]

Beauvoir took an existential approach in *The Second Sex*, which many believe was influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre, her partner of many years. Sartre began his construction of existentialist philosophy by refining phenomenology, focusing upon the human condition. [23] Phenomenology is the philosophical notion of lived experience, and of belonging in the world. Sartre believed that humans are constantly evolving throughout their lives, and that 'existence comes before essence'. [24] Beauvoir herself acknowledges the influence of Sartre and other phenomenologists upon her work, writing: 'However, one might say, in the position I adopt - that of Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty - that if the body is not a *thing*, it is a situation: it is our grasp on the work and the outline for her projects.' [25]

Existentialism, a philosophical theory which many attribute to Kierkegaard, was explored by Beauvoir and two of her contemporaries, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, all of whom helped to popularise the concept. Each drew very different conclusions to the

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[22] Butler, 'Sex and Gender…', p. 36

[23] Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

[24] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 26

[25] *The Second Sex*, p. 46

definition of existentialism, and how it relates to the wider world. Joseph Mahon believes that Beauvoir's 'philosophical thought differs extensively, and even profoundly, from that contained in contemporaneous works by Sartre', [26] and goes on to champion her 'role in the major debates concerning existentialist ethics in the immediate post-war period'. [27] Essentially, Beauvoir goes further in her exploration of existentialism than did Sartre. Whilst both thinkers focused upon the idea of freedom, and the 'burden of responsibility' [28] which it comes with, Beauvoir went further. She, writes Mahon, 'recognizes and discusses a range of philosophical problems raised by the principle of freedom, such as the problem of conflicting freedoms, whether all uses of freedom are permitted, and, if not, on what basis are we justified in curtailing oppressive uses of freedom.' [29] Kate and Edward Fullbrook acknowledge that '… by the middle of 1939 a large gap had opened up between Sartre's and Beauvoir's philosophical development.' [30]

Mahon has also identified differences in the ways in which Sartre and Beauvoir addressed, and tried to move away from, Marxism in their work:

> Beauvoir rejects the Marxist theory of history, which she perceives as determinist and therefore as incapable of attaching true significance to human freedom and human projects. Marxism as presented by Sartre emphasizes class solidarity as essential to the liberation of the individual. [31]

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26 Joseph Mahon, *Existentialism, Feminism and Simone de Beauvoir* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), p. x

27 Mahon, p. ix

28 Mahon, p. 76

29 Mahon, p. 76

30 Kate Fullbrook and Edward Fullbrook, *Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Twentieth Century Legend* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 109

31 Mahon, p. 81

Sartre and Beauvoir also differ in their views on the morality of violence, and what constitutes evil. [32]

Merleau-Ponty was more concerned than Beauvoir and Sartre with the experience of the body in his form of existential theory. Fraser and Greco write that his 'contribution is essential' to theories of embodiment, as 'he exploits the concepts of experience and perception in order to illustrate that the body is never *either* a subject *or* an object, mind *or* body, transcendental *or* immanent.' [33] Donn Welton points out that the conceptual "lived-body" underwent significant changes with regard to the thought surrounding them; this concept was introduced by Husserl, and 'vigorously analyzed' by Merleau-Ponty. [34] Mahon recognises that Beauvoir's work 'has interesting affinities with some of the views expressed by Merleau-Ponty during the mid-1940s, and that it diverges from just about everything that Sartre said…'. [35] With all of this evidence, it is clear that Beauvoir's views and interests with regard to existentialist theories diverged quite radically from those of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty.

* Beauvoir states that in her work, woman will be studied 'from an existential point of view, taking into account her total situation.' [36] Beauvoir believed that existentialism encompassed many components of living as a woman. She also recognised that one can hardly understand another person without 'taking into account her total situation', something which validates the existence of the individual. It is contended that a lot of Sartre's ideas were actually collaborations with Beauvoir, [37] and a 'more recent

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32 Mahon, pp. 83-85

33 Fraser and Greco, p. 43

34 Donn Welton (ed.), *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991, 2nd ed.), p. 3

35 Mahon, p. 186

36 *The Second Sex*, p. 62

37 Edward Fullbrook and Kate Fullbrook, *Sex and Philosophy: Rethinking De Beauvoir and Sartre* (New York: Continuum, 2008)

counter-movement', alluded to by Sarah Bakewell, goes further, believing 'that Sartre stole all his ideas from her.' [38] Sartrean influence has been widely criticised in feminist circles. British sociologist Mary Evans, for instance, argues that 'Beauvoir's dogmatic dependence on Sartre's individualist voluntarism renders her incapable of recognizing the social constraints of freedom,' [39] thus greatly limiting her argument. Other critics, such as Jean Leighton, criticised Beauvoir solely for allowing herself to be influenced by a male. [40] In *Feminist Theory & Simone de Beauvoir*, Moi discusses Terry Keefe, a critic who 'laments the fact that too much emphasis on Beauvoir's feminism and her relationship with Sartre "has often resulted in a distorted picture of Beauvoir as a writer"'. [41] Heinamaa recognises that:

> Several interpreters claim that Beauvoir presents the female body as a mere obstacle: being dominated by the cycles of menstruation, pregnancies, and nursing, the female body severely limits the free choice and self-fulfillment of the woman. Critics argue further that such a view of the female body is partial, and worse, biased by a male - Sartrean or Cartesian - point of view. [42]

Moi identifies a monumental shift occurring between the ontology of Sartre's work and the emphasis upon sociology and politics within Beauvoir's, arguing that *The Second Sex*

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[38] John Walsh, 'Existentialism: Author Sarah Bakewell on the lives and legacy of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir (*Independent*, 28/02/2016) <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/existentialism-sarah-bakewell-jean-paul-sartre-simone-de-beauvoir-a6901501.html> [accessed: 11/09/2018]

[39] Moi, *The Making…*, p. 201

[40] Jean Leighton, *Simone de Beauvoir on Woman* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975)

[41] Toril Moi, *Feminist Theory & Simone de Beauvoir* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), p. 41

[42] Heinamaa, p. 66

could not have been written without Sartre's influence. [43] Sonia Kruks, on the other hand, recognises the similarities between the doctrines of Beauvoir and Sartre, but argues that Beauvoir goes further in her ideology:

> However, Beauvoir's version of existentialism pays far greater attention than Sartre's to the ambiguities that arise from the *embodied* qualities of freedom. She examines the body as our point of inherence in the world, thus as at once material and cultural, at once the site of both freedom and constraint. [44]

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir counters Hegel's notion of the Other to show how women are affected by, and placed within, a patriarchal world. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir explores female freedom and its limitations, and the cultural beliefs which exist surrounding femininity. She does this by examining aspects of biology; psychoanalysis; historical depictions of women; 'the feminine myth' [45] in various sources, most notably the Bible, and touching upon the likes of Greek mythology and fairytale; 'childhood', the section which begins with her seminal sentence 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman' [46]; sexuality and lesbianism; marriage and motherhood; prostitution; love; and independence. She charts the progression of womanhood from earliest childhood, and looks at cultural contexts which both compromise and exaggerate it. Moi also points out that Beauvoir rejects traditional elements of femininity in *The Second Sex*, writing that she:

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[43] Moi, *The Making…*, p. 171

[44] Sonia Kruks, *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 5

[45] *The Second Sex*, p. 221

[46] *The Second Sex*, p. 293

> … attacks "femininity" in the sense of patriarchal or normative femininity. To her, a "feminine" woman is one who accepts herself as Other; "femininity" is the badge of the unfree. For women to be free, "femininity" must disappear. [47]

This writing against the traits which a woman in society was supposed to exhibit is fascinating. Beauvoir, in refusing to accept femininity as the norm, is exhibiting something quite groundbreaking. She refuses, throughout *The Second Sex*, to accept that one should become a woman in a particular mould; rather, she sees the importance of freedom and individuality with regard to the second sex, and femininity itself as a subordination of women.

Gail Weiss writes that Beauvoir's ultimate aim was to show that women are just as valid as men, and that their positions in society should reflect this. She writes:

> … Beauvoir's call to recognize women's equality to men is based upon the following two claims: (1) both men and women possess the same transcendent consciousness and (2) their bodies, while differently sexed, are equally immanent. [48]

This recognition of an equality which did not - and still does not - exist in the Western world is another important facet of *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir demonstrates that she was a forward thinker, and that fundamental rights should be identical, regardless of biological sex or social standing. This rather utopian idea of every human being treated in the same way is threaded through *The Second Sex*; never does Beauvoir lose sight of this ultimate, if difficult to realise, goal.

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[47] Moi, 'The Adulteress Wife', p.105

[48] Gail Weiss, 'A Genealogy of Women's (Un)ethical Bodies' (in Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal (eds.), *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)), p. 23

The Relevance of Simone de Beauvoir in the 21st Century

A pertinent question raised within my thesis statement is whether Beauvoir is still relevant in the field of feminist studies. Beauvoir's work was foundational to the sex/gender dichotomy which began to emerge, and became so pivotal, during the 1970s. Of course, the passage of time means that some of what Beauvoir argued in *The Second Sex* is not immediately relevant today; sixty years have passed since its first translation into English, in which [removed: gender] relations between the sexes have improved somewhat. Reading her text in the twenty-first century, however, it is perhaps surprising to realise how many of her arguments are still valid, particularly those with regard to gender politics and inequality. In her introduction to the Borde and Malovany-Chevalier translation, Sheila Rowbotham writes:

> Beauvoir's work retains its relevance, despite the changes that have occurred in women's position since the first publication in 1949. Moreover, she illuminates an ongoing process of exploration, resistance and creation, which is as exciting now as it ever was. [49]

There is also another piece of rationale for revisiting Beauvoir's work, which has been pointed out by Fishwick. She writes that: 'A substantial amount of critical space has been devoted to detailed evaluations of Beauvoir's account, in *Le Deuxième Sexe*, of female corporeality.' [50] Whilst this is not the absolute aim of my project, it does interlink with the quotation of Beauvoir's which I have selected as the backbone of my dis-

[49] Sheila Rowbotham, Foreword to *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage, 2009; repr. London: Vintage, 2011 (2nd ed.)), p. xviii

[50] Sarah Fishwick, *The Body in the Work of Simone de Beauvoir* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002) p. 11

cussion. Female corporeality is an element which I will be exploring at length within my thesis, and although, as Fishwick says, a lot of critical attention has been given to this within Beauvoir's work proper, and it is discussed at length within *The Second Sex*, I wish to discuss it through the lens of my chosen texts by Woolf, Mansfield, Smith, and Winterson, exploring ideas of influence. Barbara S. Andrew points to Beauvoir's recognition of the distinction of multiple selves, a motif which is explored at length in the work of my chosen authors. She believes that:

> There may be moments in her writing where mind-body dualism slips in, but what Beauvoir attempts to accomplish is a phenomenological description of embodied consciousness in which we experience ourselves as willed bodies, passionate bodies, and thoughtful bodies, both at union with and in contradiction to the natural and the social worlds. [51]

For Beauvoir, a woman's 'embodied consciousness' is embedded within many different selves. This is expressed through the structure of *The Second Sex*, in which the collective woman is followed through her life, from earliest existence in 'Childhood' to the chapter entitled 'From Maturity to Old Age'. At any period in a woman's life, she is constructed of different selves. For example, the sexually gratified self is often hidden, or buried: 'Many women, indeed, become mothers and grandmothers without ever having experienced pleasure or even arousal'. [52] Marriage too is problematic, and catapults a woman from one self to another. On her honeymoon, Beauvoir determines that 'the young woman was no longer situated in space, in time, in reality', [53] thus compromising

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[51] Andrew, p. 35

[52] *The Second Sex*, p. 475

[53] *The Second Sex*, p. 498

her sense of self. Immediately following the marriage ceremony, the woman is thrown back into a previous self, as she 'finds many of the same reactions she had on her first menstruation; she often experiences disgust at this supreme revelation of her femininity, horror at the idea that this experience will be renewed.' [54] This 'last step' [55] into adulthood which Beauvoir identifies is crucial. The woman, having sexually become an adult, is thrown into a state of turmoil, not knowing what is going to come next, and having to hide her most anxious self inside.

Upon its publication, Moi recognises that during the 1950s and 60s:

> *The Second Sex* was the *only* book women could turn to for a nonconformist analysis of their situation. Paradoxically, the repressive social context in which *The Second Sex* first appeared help to turn it into a symbol of hope for thousands of women. [56]

The Second Sex was therefore seen as a tool of emancipation, allowing women to actively seek different paths to those promoted in society. I also believe that Beauvoir is a valid choice with regard to the theoretical foundations of an argument such as mine. Even when critics began to take her work seriously, the approach of some towards Beauvoir's work was problematic:

> In the years before the women's movement, *The Second Sex* was a source of inspiration and insight for countless women. "It changed my life!" is a refrain one often hears. Yet feminist responses to *The Second Sex* have been surprisingly ambiva-

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[54] *The Second Sex*, p. 498

[55] *The Second Sex*, p. 498

[56] Moi, *The Making...*, p. 199

> lent. In their breakthrough books, major writers of the women's movement - Betty Friedan, Kate Millett and Germaine Greer - barely mention Beauvoir, as if to deny the influence of a threatening mother figure. [57]

Kruks agrees, noting in her rationalisation of the relevance of Beauvoir's framework that she has 'long been regarded, even by a great many feminists, as a quaint relic rather than as a resource for future thinking'. [58] Elaine Marks, too, has recognised 'this hostile trend in the reception of Beauvoir's works'. [59] Ursula Tidd opposes these views to an extent, believing that Beauvoir was influencing feminist critics as early as

> … the late 1960s, with key figures of the US Women's Liberation Movement such as Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett become [sic] interested in the materialist analysis of women's oppression in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. [60]

In her introduction to *The Legacy of Simone de Beauvoir*, Emily Grosholz calls for renewed attention to the author's work. [61]

With these viewpoints alone in mind, there is a lot which can still be accessed and discussed within Beauvoir's work. Writing about the place of the female body within the world, and its division into the physical and interior bodies, is a mainstay of her work, and is thus what I have chosen to focus upon in my discussion. I wish to make a recla-

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[57] Toril Moi, '"It changed my life!": Everyone should read Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, argues Toril Moi' (*The Guardian*, 12/01/2008) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jan/12/society.simonedebeauvoir> [accessed: 13/11/2017]

[58] Kruks, p. 4

[59] Moi, *Feminist Theory…*, p. 27

[60] Ursula Tidd, *Simone de Beauvoir: Gender and Testimony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2

[61] Emily R. Grosholz (ed.), *The Legacy of Simone de Beauvoir* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. xxxii

mation of Beauvoir's view. Moi touches upon the way in which other 'Comparable French women writers are not treated in this way', [62] citing Simone Weil, Nathalie Sarraute, and Marguerite Duras amongst her examples. This is just as curious as the omission of Beauvoir, in my opinion. On reflection, however, it does seem as though the focus upon Beauvoir's work which has occurred since the 1990s has largely been from an American and British group of feminist critics. Moi says that before the 1980s, the predominant critics of Beauvoir's work were French, but by 1990, when *Feminist Theory & Simone de Beauvoir* was written, 'intellectual interest in Simone de Beauvoir in France now seems almost non-existent.' [63] This is largely due to a shift in French philosophical theory, which has very little room for Beauvoir's existential humanist perspective. There is also opposition with regard to political stance; those on the far left or right of the political spectrum have raised criticisms of Beauvoir's ideas. [64] This, of course, could be said for the majority of feminist theorists, as politics can never truly be extracted from the core values of feminism. Indeed, Tidd highlights three main reasons for the rejection of Beauvoir in French philosophical thought:

> In France, there appears to be less critical interest in the range of Beauvoir's work. This relative 'phénomène de rejet' may be explained by several factors: first, the prevailing masculinism of French intellectual life and of the frustration of the French philosophical tradition, noted by Toril Moi. Second, the predominance of psychoanalytically inspired feminism in France which, with its concern for psycho-sexual difference, is incompatible with Beauvoir's materialist and anti-essentialist approach to gendered identity in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. The third factor

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[62] Moi, *Feminist Theory...*, p. 23

[63] Moi, *Feminist Theory...*, p. 25

[64] Moi, *Feminist Theory...*, p. 33

> is her lifelong partnership with Jean-Paul Sartre which has, until recently, obscured her independent contribution to twentieth-century French culture. [65]

Nancy Bauer is of a similar view; in her essay 'Must We Read Simone de Beauvoir?', [66] she highlights that upon publication of *The Second Sex*, there was no such thing as a feminist scholar, and that once such a group had established itself, members took 'intellectual nourishment, at least initially, primarily from Marxism rather than from Beauvoir'. [67] Her own personal view is as follows:

> In the opinion of a growing number of feminist philosophers and literary scholars, the widespread neglect of Beauvoir is a loss to both feminist theory and philosophy in general. My own view is even stronger: I see this neglect at the heart of various stalemates that continuously paralyze academic feminists in our attempts to improve the lot of women… [68]

As Moi writes:

> Perhaps the greatest paradox of all is the fact that feminists inspired by the so-called French feminist theory developed in the 1970s tend either to ignore Beauvoir, or to dismiss her as a theoretical dinosaur. [69]

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[65] Tidd, p. 3

[66] Bauer, pp. 115-135

[67] Bauer, p. 115

[68] Bauer, p. 116

[69] Moi, *The Making...* p. 201

This complete erasure of Beauvoir's work seems rather strange to the twenty-first century critic, and the omission of Beauvoir in a number of consequent works by other French feminists cannot be explained away solely by the influence of Sartre upon her work. Moi states that Beauvoir was not taken seriously solely due to the 'very fact of her femaleness [which] blocks any further discussion of the issues at stake, be they literary, theoretical or political.' [70] Moi also points out that:

> Equally striking is the way in which well-intentioned or ostensibly "neutral" writers, while willingly declaring their admiration for Beauvoir's work, almost imperceptibly and in spite of themselves move into a position of critical superiority. [71]

In this introductory discussion, I will focus upon three groups of critics: those who agree with and support Beauvoir's theoretical ideas, those who have built upon her work in their own, and those who actively disagree with what she posits. I have primarily taken Toril Moi as the mainstay of support, but there are also feminist thinkers such as Genevieve Lloyd, Michele Le Doeuff, Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, Ti-Grace Atkinson, and Betty Friedan who can be included in this category. The primary critic who has expanded upon her ideas is Butler, who writes of Beauvoir's ideas within *Gender Trouble*, and who will be the main focus of this particular group. Those who disagree with, or challenge her ideas include Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Antoinette Fouque, Mary Evans, Renee Winegarten, and Elaine Marks. I will examine briefly what each of these critics has written about Beauvoir, and for those who have disagreed with what she set out in *The Second Sex* to whatever degree, I will ask why, upon which grounds they have challenged her, and what they propose instead.

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[70] *Feminist Theory...*, p. 27

[71] Moi, *Feminist Theory...*, pp. 22-23

Reception and Critiques of *The Second Sex*

The first critical work on Beauvoir was Genevieve Gennari's *Simone de Beauvoir*, published in 1958, [72] which Moi calls 'warm and admiring'. [73] Barbara S. Andrew, in her essay 'Beauvoir's place in philosophical thought' states unequivocally that '*The Second Sex* influenced all subsequent feminist philosophy' [74], going on to argue:

> Beauvoir takes up many of the central problems for feminist philosophy today: equality and difference; developing a postcolonial feminism; ethics for morally corrupt times; embodied consciousness; and a theory of the self that is both free and socially constructed. [75]

Heinamaa suggests that those critics who have commented upon Beauvoir's work from the 1980s onward have largely misunderstood it: ''This common reading of *The Second Sex* is mistaken. Beauvoir's negative comments regarding the female body do not disclose her fundamental concept of feminine embodiment.' [76] She stresses the importance of viewing Beauvoir's work as a whole, encompassing all of the philosophical foundations, rather than discarding the framework and making use of parts of the book.

The foundations which Beauvoir sets out in *The Second Sex* have been carried through to [removed: myriad] texts which explore feminist ideals. In Andrew's opinion,

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[72] Genevieve Gennari, *Simone de Beauvoir* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1958)

[73] Moi, *Feminist Theory…*, p. 24

[74] Andrew, p. 37

[75] Andrew, p. 38

[76] Heinamaa, p. 66

The Second Sex has perhaps had a more unifying effect upon later feminism than a dividing one. She writes: 'Liberal, socialist, and radical feminists as diverse as Kate Millett, Betty Friedan, and Shulamuth Firestone each acknowledge Beauvoir's influence on their own work.' [77] In *The New York Times* review of the Borde-Malovany-Chevalier translation, Francine du Plessix Gray writes that Parshley's interpretation of *The Second Sex* 'ushered two generations of women into the universe of feminist thought', [78] thus recognising just how significant the book is. Michele Le Doeuff tellingly calls one of her essays 'Towards a Friendly, Transatlantic Critique of *The Second Sex*'. [79] Amongst others who have championed Beauvoir's work in their own are Genevieve Lloyd and radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson, who built upon Beauvoir's foundations 'in order to respond to the question of why, if women were not naturally inferior, our oppression had continued fundamentally unchanged.' [80]

Tidd writes of the effect which Beauvoir's work had upon Butler's: 'The social constructionist account of gender in *Le Deuxième Sexe* was also a starting point for Butler, in her ground-breaking *Gender Trouble, Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (1990).' [81] Braidotti recognises that in her critique of Beauvoir's work, Butler:

> … distinguishes the issue of the wilful choice of gender roles from the ontological and founding function of sexuality as a pillar of identity. On these grounds, Butler

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[77] Andrew, p. 38

[78] Francine Du Plessix Gray, 'Dispatches from the Other' (*The New York Times*, 27/05/2010) <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/30/books/review/Gray-t.html> [accessed: 03/08/2018]

[79] Michele Le Doeuff,'Towards a Friendly, Transatlantic Critique of The Second Sex' (in Grosholz, Emily R. (ed.), *The Legacy of Simone de Beauvoir* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004)), pp. 22-36

[80] Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "male" and "female" in Western philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993); Ti-Grace Atkinson, 'The Descent from Radical Feminism to Postmodernism' (Speech, Boston University, March 27-29 2014) <https://www.bu.edu/wgs/files/2013/10/Atkinson-The-Descent-from-Radical-Feminism-to-Postmodernism.pdf> [accessed: 09/08/2018]

[81] Tidd, p. 3

> calls for a redefinition of gender as a philosophy of embodiment that is radically non-Cartesian in its rejection of dualism. [82]

As with Beauvoir's, Butler's work on sex and notions of femininity and masculinity have been groundbreaking. Butler steers away from Cartesian values, and understands, in her striving for this 'redefinition' of what gender is, and what it means, just how important *The Second Sex* was with regard to the idea of 'becoming' one's gender.

Of course, those who have gone against Beauvoir's core ideas in their own work have done so for different reasons. However, one of the common threads for those who have challenged Beauvoir's views over the years seem to culminate in issues with the way in which she views and presents women:

> Denouncing their precursor for hating the female body, glorifying maleness, lacking any sympathy with or understanding of traditional female pursuits including marriage and motherhood, such feminists resent her for not being *positive* enough in her representation of women. [83]

Moi reflects with this criticism that '…a surprising number of critics must have invested considerable time and energy in a writer they plainly detest.' [84] She also writes that 'Dominant French theorists such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray were openly hostile to Beauvoir, whom they cast as a champion of "male" notions of equality as opposed to their own sinuous celebrations of feminine difference.' [85] Irigaray, throughout her work,

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[82] Braidotti, p. 263

[83] Moi, *The Making…*, p. 200

[84] Moi, *Feminist Theory…*, p. 22

[85] Moi, '"It changed my life!"'

rallies against Beauvoir's. Irigaray found *The Second Sex* limiting, with its focus upon 'white, Eurocentric Western culture', [86] and her belief that one was born a woman, rather than had to become one. [87] Butler recognises that Irigaray:

> … complicates the discussion further, [by arguing] that women constitute a paradox, if not a contradiction, within the discourse of identity itself. Women are the "sex" which is not "one." Within a language pervasively masculinist, a phallogocentric language, women constitute the *unrepresentable*. In other words, women represent the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity. [88]

Moi recognises that Beauvoir was not mentioned once in Cixous' *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976), [89] and was similarly ignored in Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974). Julia Kristeva does not mention Beauvoir until 1990; Moi notes that it was only when she turned 'away from theory and towards fiction that she feels free to declare her admiration for her great intellectual precursor'. [90] This alteration of framework seems to allow Kristeva to recognise the importance of Beauvoir's work. According to Andrew, Beauvoir's work was 'foundational' [91] with regard to Cixous and Irigaray creating theories of their own. Beauvoir provided a platform upon which they could build their own ideas.

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[86] Emily Anne Parker and Anne van Leeuwen, *Differences: Re-reading Beauvoir and Irigaray* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 6

[87] Parker, p. 6

[88] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 9

[89] Moi, *The Making…,* p. 201

[90] Moi, *The Making…*, p. 202

[91] Andrew, p. 38

* Regardless of Cixous and Irigaray's ideations, which often came to the detriment of Beauvoir's own, it is irrefutable that Beauvoir brought women's lives into societal consciousness. The approach of Irigaray toward Beauvoir's work is problematic too; despite her criticisms, her work still relied upon Beauvoir's feminism. Irigaray's focus upon a wider group than that of 'white, Eurocentric Western culture' aimed to provide an expansion of Beauvoir's work. Whilst Irigaray came to different conclusions about the position of women in the world, and the state of their consciousness, without Beauvoir's articulate ideas, would she have had such a firm platform to build from? It seems peculiar, therefore, that when Irigaray admitted in the 1990s that she had read *The Second Sex*, she did so solely to 'represent Beauvoir as a disappointingly frustrating figure, an "older sister" who inexplicably enough remained remote in relation to Irigaray…'. [92] Irigaray's vehement commentary on Beauvoir's work demonstrates the core values of her work, which differ entirely from what Beauvoir promotes. Irigaray believed that feminist theorists, like Beauvoir, who wish to see the social equality of the sexes 'seek to eradicate sexual difference.' [93]

Renee Winegarten published rather a disparaging account of *The Second Sex* in *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View*. [94] Whilst she does concede that:

> Simone de Beauvoir - novelist, autobiographer, moral and political essayist, permanent rebel and Leftist, fellow-traveller, witness of contemporary affairs and events, student of social problems, indefatigable protester against injustice, pio-

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[92] Moi, *The Making…*, pp. 201-202

[93] Moi, *The Making…*, p. 202

[94] Renee Winegarten, *Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View* (Berg Women's Series) (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1988)

> neer of modern feminism - stands as one of the most influential and controversial writers of the twentieth century [95]

she then goes on to strike up what feels like a personal quarrel with Beauvoir. Moi writes that in her criticism, Winegarten presents 'Beauvoir as domineering and narrow-minded'. [96] Another critic who has belittled Beauvoir is Antoinette Fouque, a psychoanalyst who was involved in the women's liberation movement in France. Upon Beauvoir's death in 1986, Fouque accused her of promoting 'an intolerant, assimilating, vicious universalism, which sterilises and is reductive of otherness'. [97] She found Beauvoir's theories limiting and self-defeating. Similarly, Elaine Marks and Mary Evans have expressed distaste toward Beauvoir's work, for the markedly different reasons which follow. Moi writes '… that Marks's distaste for Simone de Beauvoir is not simply idiosyncratic or coincidental, but a logical consequence of her unswerving locality to an unusually purified and abstract form of humanism.' [98] As mentioned above, Evans believes that the scope of *The Second Sex* has been drastically limited by Beauvoir's reliance upon Sartrean theories.

<u>The Body and Embodiment</u>

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[95] Winegarten, p. 1

[96] Moi, *Feminist Theory…*, p. 34

[97] Catherine Rodgers, 'Elle et Elle: Antoinette Fouque et Simone de Beauvoir' (in *MLN*, September 2000 (Vol. 115, No. 4) <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/22649/summary> [Accessed: 08/12/2017], pp. 741-760. Original reads - 'universalisme intolérant, assimilateur, haineux, stérilisant, réducteur de tout autre'; my translation.

[98] Moi, *Feminist Theory…*, p. 44

Of course, the body can be viewed in different ways through a variety of different lenses - for instance, the medicalised body, the cultural body, the psychological body, the sociological body, the anthropological body, and the religious body. These are examples which I will take into account when examining my chosen texts.

On a more literal level, *The Second Sex* itself, as well as the rest of Beauvoir's oeuvre, is a body of work, and a body of evidence, which demonstrates the workings of Beauvoir's mind. This material body, like a human body, is tangible too, but works of course in a different sense. Tying this into literature is a core idea in this project. I am focusing upon female bodies in selected literary works.

* Of course, it must be stated that the body is always absent in literature; there is a kind of hollowness to it, which works against the material element of the body of the book. All bodies in fiction are constructed. Even those bodies which are intended to convey the material bodies of real people, and which appear in memoirs and biographical works, are facsimiles. It is impossible to fully capture a corporeal body on the page; something so three-dimensional inevitably becomes two-dimensional. An author has the ability to mirror the human material body, but this representation can never be tangible; rather, the portrayed body is always immaterial, false, and copied.

* Beauvoir's attitude toward embodiment makes thoughtful and important points about what it means both to be, and to have, a body. Beauvoir is the backbone for the entire body of text in this thesis; she supports the whole; she gives strength and foundation. Her work will thus be the central organising feature of this project.

A current interest in scholarship exists with regard to the reclaiming of the material body in theory. Indeed, Julie Taylor writes in *Modernism and Affect*, that:

> In the context of affect in particular, theory's apparent return to the body can also be viewed as a divergence from the dominant trend in the philosophy of

> emotions, which is to view emotions as forms of cognition and judgement rather than corporeal sensations. [99]

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the body-mind duality which is posited in Beauvoir's quotation is not focus upon a particular biological sex. Regardless, *The Second Sex*, of course, focuses almost entirely on the female and her experience in the world. Kathleen Lennon notes that:

> What is central to her account is that such bodily existence and the point of view it provided, is lived differently for men and women. Beauvoir's attitude to embodiment has been the subject of much controversy for later feminists. Nonetheless her account still provides the starting point for contemporary work on the relation between bodies and selves, and it has recently been revisited as providing a complex and non reductive account of the intertwining of the material and the cultural in the formation of our embodied selves. [100]

This notion of difference between male and female has, of course, been explored by many critics. Carmen Lopez Saenz notes that Beauvoir 'gives as evidence a phenomenology intentionally directed at life, and from which follows a conception of woman as a human being open to the meaning of multiple dimensions of existence.' [101] This multiplicity of self, and the 'multiple dimensions of existence' which Saenz pinpoints, are key

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[99] Julie Taylor, *Modernism and Affect* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 7

[100] Kathleen Lennon, 'Feminist Perspectives on the Body' (September 2014; <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-body/>, [accessed: 03/05/2018])

[101] Carmen Lopez Saenz, 'The Phenomenal Body is Not Born: It Comes to Be a Body-Subject: Interpreting The Second Sex' (translated from the Spanish by Bonnie Mann, Martina Ferrari, and Jon LaRochelle) (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), pp. 177-178

ideas within *The Second Sex*. The philosophy of phenomenology allowed Beauvoir to present women as individuals, and as valid beings within the world. She was thus able to refine previously held beliefs about women which were prevalent within male-constructed society, in which a woman was felt to trespass.

Of course, other issues which Beauvoir explores, including the notion of what a woman is, the proposed roles which she was supposed to slot into, and the 'Other'ing of the entire sex throughout history, will also influence my discussion, particularly when I look at texts by my chosen authors.

The Second Sex: Translations

The nature of translation dictates that a copy entirely true to the original cannot exist. Any translation, regardless of genre, and despite the meticulous work of the translator, is always a facsimile of its original; a true original can never be reproduced. There is an impossibility in creating an exact copy; different layers of meaning, interpretations, and cultural markers exist. There are cultural differences to contend with, as well as vocabulary choices which may not encompass the breadth of meaning in the original book.

In its English translations, *The Second Sex* has never been printed in full; it is always partially abridged. Beauvoir therefore has a disembodied voice; we can never hear her original intent, or understand her voice, unless we read her in the original French which she wrote in. Nancy Bauer agrees, writing: 'The upshot is that you really cannot read the English translation of *The Second Sex* and get a full or fully accurate understanding of what Beauvoir is doing philosophically.' [102]

[102] Nancy Bauer, 'Must We Read Simone de Beauvoir?' (in Emily R. Grosholz (ed.), *The Legacy of Simone de Beauvoir* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004)), p. 120

The Second Sex was first published in France in 1949, and in its first English translation by H.M. Parshley, in 1953. This translation is 'heavily edited and widely regarded as scandalously poor by scholars', [103] and has been widely criticised. Nancy Bauer writes that it 'was commissioned by Alfred Knopf essentially to ratchet down the difficulty of *The Second Sex* for a mainstream American audience and to squeeze its two volumes into one book'. [104] She alludes to a study undertaken by Margaret A. Simons, which states that 75 pages of original text were left out of this particular translation. [105] Simons has collated the thorough research which she has done on the Parshley's interpretation of *The Second Sex*, finding glaring omissions - for instance, the removal of 'the names of 78 women'. [106] Rather alarmingly, Bauer then goes on to write that:

> Parshley often adds words to the book: he misrepresents or omits Beauvoir's philosophical terminology and substitutes his own understanding of what she means to say in formulations that are often greatly misleading or even philosophically incoherent. [107]

Parshley's translation is clearly quite far removed from Beauvoir's original. It is an interpretation, and is not as accurate as a work of this stature and influence should be. Whilst not attributing the misinterpretation of Beauvoir's main messages to the translation, Barbara S. Andrew construes the following argument: 'From the 1980s to early

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[103] Bonnie Mann, 'Introduction' (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), p. 1

[104] Bauer, p. 119

[105] Bauer, p. 119

[106] Margaret A. Simons, 'The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What's Missing from *The Second Sex*' (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), p. 60

[107] Bauer, p. 120

1990s many feminists understood Beauvoir simply to advocate that women, like men, could be free if they would only take up their freedom.' [108] Whilst this is one of the core ideas of Beauvoir's text, her personal analysis within *The Second Sex* goes much further. In *The Second Sex*, she constructs a text which argues that nobody is entirely free, and argues that some choices are not available to particular groups of women. Beauvoir observes that social constructs and place in the world both impede upon physical and mental freedom. A motif which runs throughout *The Second Sex* relates to the historical position of women as bound up with societal change:

> The evolution of the feminine condition was not a continual process. With the great invasions, all of civilisation is put into question… The economic, social and political situation is overturned; and women's situation suffers the consequences. [109]

The structure of *The Second Sex,* and Beauvoir's ability to distinguish different sectors of womanhood within it is pivotal. She was able to become both observed and observer, and this is demonstrated by her clear focus upon different age groups, and women both collectively, and as individuals. Interpreting her ideas in different ways is, of course, an element which a translator must grapple with, but to deliberately omit some of her ideas serves only to belittle Beauvoir's ideologies.

The edition which I will be using throughout this thesis is less controversial than Parshley's translation; it is the Vintage publication of 2010, which has been jointly translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. Although some critics have pointed out mistakes in its translation, as I discuss below, I argue that it is far less

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[108] Andrew, p. 39

[109] *The Second Sex*, p. 107

flawed than Parshley's translation. Borde and Malovany-Chevalier have not removed whole chunks of text, or failed to explain key terms; rather, they serve to make de Beauvoir's work accessible to an English-speaking audience, trying to keep the text as true to the original as is possible.

Whilst this newer translation did solve many of the problems that Parshley's translation brought to the fore, and presents the first 'complete' [110] edition of Beauvoir's original text, Borde and Malovany-Chevalier have 'generated considerable controversy'. [111] Mann writes this, whilst still recognising 'the impossibility of a seamless transition from one language to another, or one time to another, or one context to another.' [112] The reception of this translation is conflicted; while some see the necessity of a new translation, they are still aware of a wide array of flaws. Firstly, there were doubts as to whether the translators were the right choice for such a seminal text; they worked as English teachers in Paris at the time of the translation, and had done no translation work on this scale before. [113] Whilst praising the translation of Borde and Malovany-Chevalier as an 'act of responsibility' as well as an 'act of love', Mann goes on to say: 'But I think their translation swings toward objectivism.' [114]

* One of the main sticking points of this translation is the way in which Borde and Malovany-Chevalier translate Beauvoir's most famous sentence; rather than the 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' of Parshley's translation, they write 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman', [115] treating Beauvoir's *femme* as plural. Whilst the

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[110] *The Second Sex*, p. xxi

[111] Mann, p. 2

[112] Mann, pp. 4-5

[113] Toril Moi, 'The Adulteress Wife' (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), p. 107

[114] Mann, p. 51

[115] *The Second Sex*, p. 293

majority of the language in both interpretations of this sentence overlaps, the meanings carry different weight and implications. On a basal level, there is, of course, a major difference between singularity and plurality, with the use of 'a woman' versus 'woman'. Borde and Malovany-Chevalier are able to see women as a collective group, a unified being made up of all female-sexed individuals. Perhaps a product of his time, I suggest that Parshley writes of 'a woman', there is an implication of a singular and objectified being; power is consequently lost by rendering woman as singular.

With regard to the quality of the Borde and Malovany-Chevalier translation, Moi identifies:

> … three fundamental and pervasive problems: a mishandling of key terms for gender and sexuality, an inconsistent use of tenses, and the mangling of syntax, sentence structure and punctuation. [116]

The translators have defended their own choices, justifying that they wanted to render Beauvoir's original text whilst retaining her sentence structure and vocabulary choices. They write:

> Long paragraphs (sometimes going on for pages) are a stylistic aspect of her writing that is essential, integral to the development of her arguments. Cutting her sentences, cutting her paragraphs, and using a more traditional and conventional punctuation do not render Simone de Beauvoir's voice. [117]

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[116] Moi, 'The Adulteress Wife', p. 108

[117] *The Second Sex*, pp. xxi-xxii

They also note that the purpose of a translator 'is not to simplify or readapt the text for a modern or foreign audience but to find the true voice of the original work, as it was written for its time and with its original intent.' [118] They are mindful that the work should be examined in the context of Beauvoir's own culture: 'Her words, expressions, and ideas resonate with historical, social, and linguistic references, which had to be taken into account. At every step of the way, we knew we were translating, not rewriting, not second-guessing.' [119] They were also adamant that they did not wish to modernise any of Beauvoir's language, and wanted to remain as true to Beauvoir's choices as was possible. [120] They are, however, aware of the shortcomings of the process of translation, and the issues which translators face: 'Try as we may to remain objective, total objectivity is impossible. We know that every translator brings to her work her own cultural horizon - her education, values, and interests, all of which influence the translating process.' [121]

Some critics are aware of the positives. Meryl Altman, whilst aware that no translation has the ability to be entirely faithful to the original text, is receptive to the breadth of Borde and Malovany-Chevalier's work. She writes that they: 'have attempted to be faithful, down to a microscopic level… their systematic choices were made with integrity and are explained clearly in an honest and transparent way.' [122] Simons agrees,

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[118] *The Second Sex*, p. xxi

[119] Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier, 'The Life of a Sentence: Translation as a Lived Experience' (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), p. 279

[120] Borde and Malovany-Chevalier, p. 280

[121] Borde and Malovany-Chevalier, p. 285

[122] Meryl Altman, 'The Grand Rectification: The Second Sex' (in *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017)), p. 128

calling the new translation a 'triumph… so true to the original that we can hear her [Beauvoir's] voice in the text'. [123]

* On the other hand, Mann points out that Bauer believes that the very fact that the translators tried to come up with an accurate English translation caused problems of its own: 'The new translation too often sacrifices readability for a clunky, ungainly word-by-word translation and a preservation of Beauvoir's original sentence structure that end up obfuscating Beauvoir's view.' [124] [125] Moi agrees wholeheartedly with this, believing that the often literal word-for-word translation sometimes changes or obscures the meaning, and that cultural references are missed. [126] This is clearly entirely a matter of taste; Altman praises the restoration of the long quotations in the new translation, which were a part of de Beauvoir's original text, but which were subsequently removed by Parshley. [127] She also understands the difficulty of translating such a complex text in the first instance. [128]

Conclusion

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[123] Simons, p. 57

[124] Mann, p. 57

[125] For further reading, please see *"On ne nait pas femme: on le devient…": The Life of a Sentence*, Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari (eds.) (Oxford: OUP, 2017). Collected in this book are people from different fields whose work focuses upon Simone de Beauvoir: translators, literary scholars, philosophers, and an historian. All take different positions on how the sentence should be translated from its original French, as well as varying stances on sexual difference, and how this is conveyed in Beauvoir's work.

[126] Moi, 'The Adulteress Life', p. 112

[127] Altman, p. 131

[128] Altman, p. 132

With regard to Beauvoir's thought in general, the quotation which has been chosen for this thesis - 'Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world' - is a pivotal component of *The Second Sex*. Understanding woman as both a physical body, and a being capable of her own thoughts and perspectives, which were so often wrested from her, allowed Beauvoir to promote women's identity. It sees her as an individual, as capable, and as valid in the world.

In this chapter, I have explained my rationale for not incorporating Beauvoir's most famous quote into this thesis, and have justified my reasoning for focusing upon her ideas about the body. The quotation which has been selected as the backbone of this thesis is key, embodying as it does the theories of ambiguity and existentialism which Beauvoir upheld, along with the legitimacy of women in the world. Whilst there is no gender specificity included within the chosen Beauvoir quote in this thesis, I have explained the focus upon female authors and characters. In this discussion, I have situated Beauvoir's quote in the context of *The Second Sex*, and the concepts which Beauvoir advocates throughout - for instance, the male construction of society, the 'Other'ing of women, and the limitations of defining women as a collective group.

* I have gone on to explore the relevance of *The Second Sex* in the twenty-first century, and argue that it is still a pivotal text in the women's movement, and one which served as a platform for much of the work by other feminist critics which came afterwards. The relevance of Sartre upon Beauvoir's work, and vice versa, has been touched upon here, as have notions of the body and embodiment, and the importance of the reclamation of the body in theory. I have also discussed the difficulties bound up in translations of *The Second Sex*, and the way in which every translation is, in its very nature, an inexact copy of Beauvoir's voice and ideations. I have clarified the reason as to why I have used the Borde-Malovany-Chevalier translation throughout this thesis, rather

than the first English translation by Parshley, due to the far more thorough quality of the text.

The section on the receptions and critiques of *The Second Sex* encompasses those who have supported, and seen the importance of, Beauvoir's work - Moi and Butler, for instance - as well as those who have found it limited, the most outspoken of whom is Irigaray. By looking into the reception of her work, I have been able to view *The Second Sex* from different angles, and have come to my own conclusion with this in mind, that the text is a momentous and crucial one. The interpretations of Beauvoir's work, which radically differ from one another, serve as another reason for including her as the backbone of this thesis. Critics have interpreted her work in numerous ways since its publication, and whether they agree wholeheartedly with what she says or disagree vehemently with it, the attention fixed upon Beauvoir's brand of feminism has rarely wavered since the 1990s. Regardless of the critiques which feminist authors have written following the publication and translations of *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir is clearly a central and essential figure in the women's movement.

Chapter Two: Virginia Woolf

Introduction

From her earliest work, Woolf has concentrated attention upon the complexity of human beings, and has often demonstrated tension between the female mind and body. In this chapter, I will examine *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse*, before going on to discuss *Between the Acts* in more detail. *Between the Acts* (1941), Woolf's posthumously published, 'cumulative, collaging' [1] final novel, has been chosen as the primary text within this discussion. It demonstrates the author's explorations of the mind, with regard to her depictions of the physical body. In the novel, Woolf demonstrates, as per de Beauvoir's quotation, that her female and non-binary characters are 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. *Between the Acts* probes the importance of the physical body and its relation to both the mind of the individual, and the bodies of others. Woolf presents the physical body against a background which is heavily concerned with the fears and ravages of war, as well as with the pastoral and the animal worlds. With the majority of characters in this novel, Woolf demonstrates, as per Beauvoir's quotation, that her characters are at once a 'a body that is both a thing of the world, and a point of view on this world'. In *Between the Acts*, the connectivity and relationship between mind and body is ever present; Woolf does not deviate from this, as she does in earlier novels.

Orlando and *To the Lighthouse* have been included in this discussion because both novels demonstrate that whilst body and mind can be temporarily separated from one another, it is vital for the self concerned that they reconnect. There are a couple of in-

[1] Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2010; repr. 2015), p. 10

stances which I identify below in which the mind and body appear to be existing separately, rather than together; this is particularly the case in *Orlando*, which complicates gender, and explores the notion of self. However, the way in which Woolf has approached each of the novels which I will discuss here, with the third person perspective, and the use of the mocking biographer as the principal narrator in *Orlando*, allows her to demonstrate the togetherness of body and mind, which ensues even - and perhaps especially - after moments of crisis.

* In Woolf's novels, we are more often than not unaware of the voice which is speaking to us as a narrator; these voices are used rather more as an omniscient mouthpiece than as a character proper, demonstrating the complexities of Woolf's characters. Despite a lack of focus upon such things as the animal body and pastoral body which I will speak about below, *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse* fit in with the longer discussion on *Between the Acts* due to their handling of physical bodies and the perspectives of selected characters. In *Orlando*, the protagonist turns from man to woman, and the character's thought patterns alter along with this monumental bodily change. Woolf explores personhood in *To the Lighthouse* too, and my focus in this discussion upon Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe will look at moments in which their perspectives and physical bodies are either at odds with each other, or are in synchronisation, as per Beauvoir's quotation.

Whilst there are certainly some examples of physical body, thoughts and perspectives shown as separated within Woolf's work, they are, overarchingly, intrinsically linked. All of her female characters have a material body which is present in the world, and which they are almost always aware of - Rachel becoming aware of her sexual body in *The Voyage Out* (1915), and Mrs Ramsay's physical body as a site of childbearing in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), for instance - as well as manifesting a simultaneous point of view about it. Reina van der Weil expresses Woolf's preoccupation with the topic of the body:

'Emphasizing the importance of the body within literature, Woolf centred on the notion of writing the self: the body as part of subjective experience, as lived depth.' [2] This focus can be found in varying degrees throughout Woolf's work, and whilst she does write about male characters, it is arguably the female that she is most engaged with. *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), for instance, follows its title character Clarissa Dalloway as she plans a party. The diurnal novel has been written in such a way that interior monologues acquaint the reader with those characters who are most important to Clarissa, as well as simultaneously revealing things about her own life and past. Even with regard to those characters in states of turmoil - Mrs Dalloway's crisis of identity, for example - there is a continual consciousness of the place within the world which they occupy, as well as a recognition of the space which their physical bodies take up.

* In the following examples which I have identified - Orlando when inhabiting the female body, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*, and Isa Oliver, Miss La Trobe and Mrs Lucy Swithin in *Between the Acts* - the female protagonists at the heart of each are constantly aware of themselves. The existence of both the physical body and the perspective is integral to each of Woolf's female characters. Whilst there are certainly deviations from the physical body, mind, and 'point of view' being shown together, the overarching reading which one can glean from Woolf's work is that one can never be entirely separated from oneself. In this way, the female characters which I will focus upon in this chapter support Beauvoir's quotation; they exist as both a thing in the world, and a perspective toward it.

Orlando

[2] Reina van der Weil, *Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson,* p. 41

An obvious choice with regard to the display of undefined gender and shifting love affairs would be Woolf's 1928 novel, *Orlando: A Biography*, which plays with the ideas of biological sex and time on a grand scale, breaking boundaries as it does so. *Orlando* is Woolf's most experimental, ambitious, and eccentric novel, in terms of the distinctions of gender, and nature of the protagonist embodying both a male and female material physicality. As Elaine Showalter notes, 'But whatever the abstract merits of androgyny, the world that Virginia Woolf inhabited was the last place in which a woman could fully express both femaleness and maleness, nurturance and aggression.' [3]

* This 'world that Virginia Woolf inhabited' was limited; women were sexually repressed and had fewer opportunities, and their lives were largely expected to revolve around the domestic sphere. There were different implications, both legal and social, for women. Higher education was barred to the majority, and whilst Cambridge University had two women's colleges, Newnham and Girton, they were unable to award women degrees until 1948, the last University in the United Kingdom to do so. [4] All women over the age of twenty-one were only given the vote in 1928, thirty five years after New Zealand, the first nation to do so, granted women's suffrage in 1893. [5] The emphasis upon androgyny which Woolf explored particularly in *Orlando* is a case of writing back against the society which would prohibit one from being able to 'fully express' themselves, whether in terms of equal suffrage or with regard to other societally gendered conventions. Whilst the character of Orlando is never androgynous, embodying both distinctive

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[3] Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Writers from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing* (London: Princeton University Press, 1977; repr. London: Virago, 2008), p. 216

[4] Gill Sutherland, 'History of Newnham' <http://www.newn.cam.ac.uk/about/history/history-of-newnham/> [accessed: 06/09/2018]; Of course, Woolf gave both of the lectures that would be reworked in *A Room of One's Own* at Newnham and Girton.

[5] Anon., 'The Women Suffrage Timeline' <http://womensuffrage.org/?page_id=69> [accessed: 17/09/2018]

sexes with no ambiguity, through the novel's construction Woolf allowed herself a creative outlet to write against societal constraints of gender expectations.

* Jean E. Kennard proposes that *Orlando* was the end of a process of gender exploration for Woolf: '*The Voyage Out* (1915), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *Orlando* (1927)… demonstrate such a progression from androgynous to bisexual and finally to transsexual characters.' [6] Kennard identifies the rapidity of the gender shift which Orlando constantly undergoes:

> Orlando's escape from the biographer and his/her subversion of binary heterosexuality are achieved in part by frequent transformations of gender. She appears to change sex so readily in the latter half of the biography that her actual transsexualism is rendered almost irrelevant. [7]

The inhabiting of both sexes allows Woolf to explore the societal conditions and constraints which existed, both for Orlando as a man in the mid-1500s, and Orlando as a woman, in both the same period, and in the Victorian age. After a stint in the court of Queen Elizabeth the First, inheriting his parents' property, and left heartbroken after his affair with a Russian princess, Orlando falls into a trance in Constantinople; he wakes up several days afterwards as a woman. Of course, a change of this gravity in Orlando's body completely alters the protagonist's biological sex and gender. The effects of this can be considered in three ways: on a personal level of metamorphosis; with regard to the physical body, and the way in which it is viewed in the world; and the impacts which such an immense modification has upon the mind.

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[6] Jean E. Kennard, 'Power and Sexual Ambiguity: The "Dreadnought" Hoax, *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando*' (*Journal of Modern Literature*, Volume 20, Number 2 (Winter 1996)), p. 149

[7] Kennard, p. 162

Orlando opens with the line: 'He — for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it'. [8] This partial obscuring of sex through the use of costume is a motif which occurs throughout the novel. After Orlando's transformation into a female body, for instance, she 'dressed herself in those Turkish coats and trousers which can be worn indifferently by either sex'. [9] *Orlando* is an exploration of sex and its limitations, orchestrated by Woolf in the same bodily character. In her female form, Orlando is more aware of her body in the world. However, in his first incarnation as a male, Woolf demonstrates that he is more self-assured:

> And here we may profit by a pause in his soliloquy to reflect how odd it was to see Orlando stretched there on his elbow on a June day and to reflect that this fine fellow with all his faculties about him and a healthy body, witness cheeks and limbs — a man who never thought twice about heading a charge or fighting a duel — should be so subject to the lethargy of thought, and rendered so susceptible by it, that when it came to a question of poetry, or his own competence in it, he was as shy as a little girl behind her mother's cottage door. [10]

The above occurs when Orlando is still in the male bodily form, and demonstrates the link between the physical body and mind. Whilst Woolf hints that Orlando has never been at such mercy with regard to his thoughts before, the very fact that he is 'rendered so susceptible by' the lethargy of thought gives a level of consciousness to him. The very act of thinking is tiring, and seems to take the majority of his capacity; the rest of his body, by contrast, is still. The 'man who never thought twice' suggests that

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[8] Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928, repr. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2003), p. 5

[9] *Orlando*, p. 68

[10] *Orlando*, p. 49

thinking deeply is a rarity for Orlando; ordinarily, he is so self-assured that he has no need to consider his options when doing such things as flying into battle, and instead relies heavily upon his instincts. The 'shy as a little girl' gives a foreshadowing of what is to come. According to societal constraints, Orlando should be less sure of himself in his female form, but also partly to the [removed: quite] drastic physical transformation which will overcome him; however, as he retains a lot of his distinguishing traits and judgements, as well as expectations toward the world, this is not quite the case.

* Of course, Orlando changes immeasurably, first when he physically becomes a woman, and then when he adapts to womanhood, shifting continuously throughout the process. Woolf demonstrates through both character constructions that there is a disparity between the female and male body and mind, which suggests that the mind can be perceived as biologically sexed; whilst thinking tires the male Orlando, the female Orlando seems most at peace when alone with her own thoughts. When she runs away to join the band of gypsies, they soon become 'suspicious' of her, and the way in which she acts:

> They noticed that Orlando often sat for whole hours doing nothing whatever, except look here and then there; they would come upon her on some hill-top staring straight in front of her… They began to suspect that she had other beliefs than their own… [11]

In this manner, female Orlando is able to exercise some independence, willingly separating herself from those with whom she is living, and to think freely. Woolf recognises that even in her female form, what was normal for and expected of male Orlando, like the capacity and necessity of autonomy, still remain. When transformed bodily, Woolf

[11] *Orlando*, p. 69

writes: 'His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman's grace.' [12] The human form shifts in this novel, and with it gradually shifts Orlando's point of view. She becomes more aware of the space which she should, and can, inhabit within the world as a woman. Although still capable of riding 'six horses at a gallop over London Bridge', [13] her emotions begin to restrict her: 'She would burst into tears on slight provocation.' [14] This demonstration of volatility is present only in female Orlando, and displays a divergence within the character; as a female, Orlando is more aware of her emotions, and less able to control them than male Orlando.

In the novel, more emphasis is placed upon Orlando's physical body in his male incarnation, and the female mind when he changes sex. Orlando seems to be far more aware of her consciousness and thoughts in her second incarnation, as well as what oppresses her. Woolf makes clear that the change in appearance is largely what causes the shift in point of view:

> If we compare the picture of Orlando as a man with that of Orlando as a woman we shall see that though both are undoubtedly one and the same person, there are certain changes. The man has his hand free to seize his sword, the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses and fashioned to his liking. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even of suspicion. Had they both worn the same clothes, it is possible that their outlook might have been the same. [15]

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[12] *Orlando*, p. 67

[13] *Orlando*, p. 93

[14] *Orlando*, p. 93

[15] *Orlando*, p. 92

There is recognition here that Orlando is still recognisably the same person, despite the sex change which he has undergone, but the recurring notion of costuming blurs this. Men and women were regarded with different expectations, and whilst a man was able to demonstrate his strength, with 'his hand free to seize his sword', the woman had to display a continual awareness of keeping her appearance perfect, and 'must' only use her hand 'to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders'. Both actions are markedly different; the first demonstrates activity, and the second passivity. Orlando as male is able to inhabit the world as he wishes, believing that it is 'made for his uses and fashioned to his liking'. There is no sense of demureness which he has to demonstrate; rather, what is present in the world is there for his own taking and enjoyment.

* Orlando as a woman has a markedly different way of viewing the world, however. She has to do so secretively, unable to view the world head on, having instead to take 'a sidelong glance'. She sees the world with suspicion, writes Woolf, as she has an overwhelming awareness that the world is something in which she exists, but which she is also separate from. She is unable to take what the world may have to offer, merely because she is a woman.

Woolf highlights the sense of disassociation which Orlando feels in her female body:

> Nothing could be seen whole or read from start to finish. What was seen begun — like two friends starting to meet each other across the street — was never seen ended. After twenty minutes the body and mind were like scraps of torn paper tumbling from a sack and, indeed, the process of motoring fast out of London so much resembles the chopping up small of identity which precedes unconsciousness and perhaps death itself that it is an open question in what sense Orlando can be said to have existed at the present moment. Indeed we should have given

her over for a person entirely disassembled were it not that here, at last, one green screen was held out on the right, against which the little bits of paper fell more slowly; and then another was held out on the left so that one could see the separate scraps now turning over by themselves in the air; and then green screens were held continuously on either side, so that her mind regained the illusion of holding things within itself and she saw a cottage, a farmyard and four cows, all precisely life-size. [16]

Of course, much time has passed between Orlando inhabiting both bodies. Whilst Orlando as a character only reaches her mid-thirties, the period in which he - and later she - lives spans three centuries. The body and mind are grouped together in Woolf's description, and the allusion to being 'like scraps of torn paper' is a clear metaphor for the fracturing of the self. The idea of 'tumbling from a sack' makes it feel as though Orlando - indeed, all of London society in this passage - has been fragmented into 'separate scraps' due to circumstance. The 'person entirely disassembled' suggests that one can be split from oneself, not just in terms of body and mind, but one's physical body can be broken too. This 'chopping up small of identity' is a phrase which suggests that one is able to remove some parts of oneself from others. This can be seen as a contradiction of de Beauvoir's quotation; whilst it is not specified that Orlando's physical body is removed entirely from her point of view as a female character, it does suggest that the ability to remove oneself from the physical world in the sense of a single body and mind can be actualised, albeit in a metaphorical manner.

*The 'precedes unconsciousness' leads one to think of a dream state; perhaps, as the female Orlando is more aware of her own point of view and interior world, she is more in touch with such non-masculine pursuits as daydreaming. '… in what sense Or-

[16] *Orlando*, p. 152

lando can be said to have existed at the present moment', again, suggests some separation of consciousness and body; is Orlando at once removed in both of these respects, or does her character retain some awareness still of her existence? Of course, her physical body has undergone dramatic change from the beginning of the novel; perhaps the notion of existence of which Woolf writes is pointing towards this, exploring how far one can appear to be the same person when their exterior has entirely changed.

The notion that 'her mind regained the illusion of holding things within itself' encompasses the thought process; it suggests that Orlando believes that she is getting back to herself, reclaiming her own authenticity and identity, although the word 'illusion' here is pivotal. Again, Orlando's point of view has changed markedly since her incarnation into a female body. As a woman, she has different perceptions of what a woman is, as well as the place which she is expected to, and is able to, occupy in the world. Whilst on the ship, she has a crises of self:

> And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each. It was a most bewildering and whirligig state of mind to be in. [17]

The sense which Woolf evokes of Orlando concurrently belonging to both, and to neither sex, is crucial. At this moment in time, Orlando has not inhabited her female body for long. Having inhabited a male body for most of her life, she still embodies many qualities of masculinity; therefore, 'she was man'. Her present physical form, as well as shifts of emotions to the more capricious, and stereotypically feminine, mean that si-

[17] *Orlando*, p. 77

multaneously ‘she was woman’. The use of ‘vacillate’ suggests Orlando’s discomfort in her new body. She has insight into being both sexes, of course, and that she ‘knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each’ blurs her being even more.

She has an awareness that she, when in her male form, treated women unscrupulously. When Orlando meets Sasha, for instance, he is already ‘betrothed to another’, [18] but soon eschews her to embark with the ‘Muscovite’. [19] In terms of her point of view in this passage, Orlando is able to partially get back to herself after seeing things which exist in the natural world - ‘a cottage, a farmyard and four cows’. Whilst Orlando, in her female body, is broken apart, Woolf ensures that this is not a permanent state, writing of the way in which she starts to regain herself.

To conclude this discussion of *Orlando*, throughout the novel, there are markedly different expectations which exist between her male and female incarnations. As a male, Orlando exhibits virility, and the way in which his movements are exhibited exaggerate his male power: for instance, he ‘dashed downhill’, ‘tore up the winding staircase’, ‘tossed his stockings’, and ‘thrust on crimson breeches’. [20] None of these movements are the dainty, ladylike ones which he will be expected to perform as a woman. He is able to inhabit the outside world, and has a wealth of freedom at his disposal. As a female, Orlando’s place in the world is far more complicated. She recognises that her life has shifted, as she is now unable to inhabit the world in the ways which she was able to before. She has to adhere more to conventions, and the sphere which she occupies is less within the public world, and more within the private one.

Whilst Orlando is not split in terms of body and perspective, or body and mind, Woolf displays the real split in personhood which occurs when Orlando changes gender.

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[18] *Orlando*, p. 26

[19] *Orlando*, p. 26

[20] *Orlando*, pp. 8-9

Whilst, with regard to Beauvoir's quote, Orlando is constantly 'both a thing of the world, and a point of view on this world', the shift from male to female serves to irreversibly alter Orlando's point of view. This shift in the mind, along with the physical change, shows how Orlando as female splits from Orlando as male.

To the Lighthouse

In *To the Lighthouse* (1927), matriarch Mrs Ramsay is based upon Woolf's own mother, Julia Stephen. Susan Kavaler-Adler writes that Stephen is converted 'into a symbol of motherhood as a unifying force' [21] in the novel. Marylu Hill identifies the difficulties with which Stephen has been converted to the page in Woolf's fiction: 'Woolf battles with yet loves a ghostly mother. She writes and re-writes this presence in an effort to assimilate the best of the mother's legacy without being dragged back into the constraints of Victorian gender ideology.' [22] Brenda R. Silver has found that views of Mrs Ramsay as matriarch have altered over time; at first, as suggested by Morris Beja, the idea of her as an archetypal and upstanding wife and mother was common. [23] Silver wrote to many Woolf scholars to ask them about Mrs Ramsay's character; she argues that personal feelings and readings colour the novel, with many respondents projecting their own mothers onto her. [24] I align myself with Adrienne Rich here, who calls Mrs Ramsay a

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[21] Susan Kavaler-Adler, *The Creative Mystique: From Red Shoes Frenzy to Love and Creativity* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 126

[22] Marylu Hill, *Mothering Modernity: Feminism, Modernism, and the Maternal Muse* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999; repr. New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 169

[23] Morris Beja, *To the Lighthouse: A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1970)

[24] Brenda R. Silver, 'Mothers, Daughters, Mrs. Ramsay: Reflections' (Women's Studies Quarterly, Volume 37, Issue 3/4 (Fall-Winter 2009)), pp. 259-274

'kaleidoscopic character', [25] changing as she does throughout the novel, and particularly with regard to the expectations which those around her have of her.

Mrs Ramsay has mechanisms which she has fabricated in order to protect herself. She spends her entire day giving everything she has to others, and it leaves her with an overwhelming fatigue:

> Immediately, Mrs. Ramsay seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself, so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page of Grimm's fairy story, while there throbbed through her, like a pulse in a spring which has expanded to its full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation. [26]

Mrs Ramsay is an archetype of womanhood, the doting wife and mother who always puts her family first, no matter how it makes her, personally, feel. The phrase 'fold herself together' suggests that she is able to manipulate her physical body, making it smaller and less noticeable to the wider world. This is intrinsically linked to the state of her mind, and her point of view; when she is worn out, she clearly wants to close herself off from further demands. Mrs Ramsay's beauty is lauded throughout, and nods toward her sexuality are suggested with 'throbbed', 'pulse', and 'rapture'. She is both dependable and depended upon; she has little time left for herself.

* Many critics have compared the character of Mrs Ramsay to the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House, promoted as a model for all women, and coined by Coventry

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[25] Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Norton, 1976), p. 227

[26] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927; repr. Orlando: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1955), p. 60

Patmore's in her poem of the same name. [27] Shannon Forbes believes that Mrs Ramsay is aware of the limitations of encompassing such characteristics: 'Mrs. Ramsay is trapped within her uncompromising Angel role and left wrestling with her unfulfilled need to experience precisely the life this role denies her.' [28] I agree with Forbes. The expectations which others have upon Mrs Ramsay - those in her family of demanding husband and eight children, as well as the likes of Lily Briscoe and Charles Tansley - mean that she nearly always has to present herself as the perfect, patient, and kindly matriarch. She is outwardly fulfilling this role - she knits stockings for the son of the lighthouse-keeper, who has a 'tuberculous hip'; [29] reassures her son, who has high hopes about visiting the lighthouse, about the weather, which her husband has assured him 'would not be fine tomorrow'; [30] and that despite the negative elements of their holiday home, 'the rent was precisely twopence halfpenny; the children loved it; it did her husband good' [31] - but there is an element of performativity in Mrs Ramsay's character. She is outwardly confident, but her point of view, particularly about herself, counteracts this. At the beginning of the novel, for example, she wonders whether 'she might have managed things better - her husband; money' his books'. [32] She tells Charles Tansley that her husband 'should have been a great philosopher… but he had made an unfortunate marriage.' [33] She notices that her surroundings are 'fearfully shabby', [34] her children 'talked such

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[27] Coventry Patmore, 'The Angel in the House' (1862)

[28] Shannon Forbes, '"When sometimes she imagined herself like her mother": The contrasting responses of Cam and Mrs. Ramsay to the Role of the Angel in the House' (*Studies in the Novel*, Volume 32, Number 4 (Winter 2000)), p. 466

[29] *TTL*, p. 11

[30] *TTL*, p. 26

[31] *TTL*, p. 43

[32] *TTL*, p. 14

[33] *TTL*, p. 19

[34] *TTL*, p. 43

nonsense', [35] and comes to see that Charles Tansley as an 'odious little man', [36] but keeps these thoughts inside.

* Mrs Ramsay rarely expresses feelings of self-doubt, and when in the company of her family, she maintains the confidence of her outward self. On the face of it, she is a figure of constancy for them, a reliable woman who 'did not like admiration', [37] who is capable of running a household and bringing up her large family. The misgivings which she has about herself are not expressed by her family, and live only in her. Her actual point of view is often at odds with the one which she expresses. In this manner, as Mrs Ramsay's private thoughts are rarely expressed by her physical body or articulated in her speech, she has an almost entirely secret self.

In the above extract, the idea of 'one petal closed in another' echoes the sexual femininity which Mrs Ramsay has perhaps sacrificed for her wifely and motherly duties in the current incarnation of her female role. She is still feminine, but the idea that she is now able to hide this from the world demonstrates that she has changed over the course of her marriage. Woolf is pointing toward the transformation which Mrs Ramsay has made from young, alluring woman to motherhood, when she writes that her 'whole fabric' has collapsed. The physical signs of ageing are apparent to her: '… she looked in the glass and saw her hair grey, her cheek sunk, at fifty', [38] which demonstrates that she has altered physically, as well as with regard to her perceptions and points of view.

* In a literal sense, rather than embodying something sheer and suggestive which embodies femininity, Mrs Ramsay has had to adapt herself to be more practical, in order to cope with the demands of her large family. Woolf indicates that, through her un-

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[35] *TTL*, p. 17

[36] *TTL*, p. 26

[37] *TTL*, p. 47

[38] *TTL*, p. 14

doubted ‘abandonment to exhaustion’, Mrs Ramsay is ultimately concerned with, and proud of, ‘the rapture of successful creation’. This can be seen as a metaphor for motherhood; ‘exquisite abandonment to exhaustion’ suggests that she is leaving herself behind. By becoming a mother, she has succumbed to a force greater than herself, just as she succumbs to the force of ‘exhaustion’. She has succeeded as wife and mother, and this overrides everything else for her. Whilst her physical body is drained, she still has the ability to remember all the good which she has given to the world, and to her husband, in the forms of her children, her ‘successful creation’. With her use of ‘rapture’, Woolf implies something corporeal rather than cerebral, which fits with the idea of creation and recreation. Mrs Ramsay’s mind is intrinsically connected to her physical body here, thus supporting Beauvoir’s quotation.

Lorraine Sim suggests that Mrs Ramsay is the necessary antithesis to her husband in the novel. She proposes: ‘Woolf contrasts Mr Ramsay’s linear thought patterns, inflexible concept of truth and dogmatism with the dynamic, plural and dialectical spatial models of thought and perspective associated with Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe.’ [39] Mr Ramsay is continually aware of his own mortality, and concerned with his output and intellectual achievements. He depends wholly upon his wife, and this is demonstrated particularly in the third section of the novel. Woolf later discusses Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe together, asking searching questions about the two women in terms of solidarity:

> Could the body achieve, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her [Lily Briscoe] and Mrs. Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to

[39] Lorraine Sim, *Virginia Woolf: The Patterns of Ordinary Experience* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), p. 37

men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs. Ramsay's knee. [40]

Whilst the 'unity' which Woolf highlights here is, in a broader sense, that of two people, the unity between the physical body and the point of view is still suggested. The first sentence, which asks about the body and mind demonstrates a separation with the use of 'or', but their close proximity to one another is demonstrated too. Both have the ability to 'achieve', but not independently; of course, in a base biological sense, one cannot operate one's body without the use of one's mind to give commands. The 'intimacy itself' which Lily yearns for is intrinsically linked with the knowledge and wisdom which she wishes she possessed.

* Throughout, Lily - a young woman who is painting on the Isle of Skye, and who meets the family on the island - struggles with her own sense of self worth, and is undermined by characters such as Charles Tansley, who think that women should not be able to exercise free will independently of male influence, or make their own living. Lily believes that spending more time with Mrs Ramsay will allow her to develop in a positive manner, making her more astute and womanly. Lily's own body is shown as gentle and pliable as she leans her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee; she is almost rendered into the figure of a child, yearning for maternal comfort. In this passage, Lily's body and mind are shown to be working in tandem. The gentle demeanour which she displays is public, and the longing thoughts which she holds in her head, and which she is unwilling - or unable - to articulate, are private.

In *To the Lighthouse*, we see both Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe in a bodily sense, and are party to Mrs Ramsay's hidden thoughts. Both characters, who are at very different stages in their lives, support Beauvoir's claim. They exist as 'both a thing of the

[40] *TTL*, p. 51

world, and a point of view on this world.' Mrs Ramsay is a central character whose point of view is demonstrated throughout; this, she often masks from her family. We learn comparatively less of Lily's perspectives, but Woolf shows that the two are as together with regard to their body and mind as is possible.

Between the Acts

Between the Acts (1941) contains a wide range of characters - a village's worth, in fact - and is played out within a public arena. In the novel, Woolf has created several highly masculinised and feminised characters - Giles Oliver, his wife Isa, and his aunt Lucy Swithin.

Giles is a stockbroker, [41] who is described as 'the muscular, the hirsute, the virile'. [42] This language is highly masculinised, and Giles thus epitomises the physical traits for which a man would be admired. Rather than feel pride in himself or his way of life, however, Giles is dissatisfied: 'Given his choice, he would have chosen to farm. But he was not given his choice. So one thing led to another; and the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water.' [43] Here, Woolf expresses that societal and familial conventions and expectations were not reserved solely for women. Woolf suggests that Giles has entirely lost his individuality, pressed 'flat' as he is, and that he is unable to escape from it. Whilst he does embody a lot of masculine traits, they were not selected by himself. He has not been able to exercise the freedom which

[41] *BTA*, p. 312

[42] *BTA*, p. 357

[43] *BTA*, p. 328

one might expect, and is now stuck in a position which society expects of him, but which he finds lacking.

Isa is a whimsical, maternal figure, with her 'rather heavy, yet handsome, face. [44] The way in which she moves 'Flurriedly, disconnectedly' [45] shows that she is susceptible to sudden excitement, which appears almost at odds with her sensibility. Isa is feminine and ethereal, given to sudden, unplanned movements. She has few reservations in her role as a mother, and shows affection to her children. When the children pass, 'she tapped on the window and blew them a kiss', [46] for example, which suggests a tendency toward impulsive, loving behaviour. Although at times her movements are more self-conscious - for example, when her 'bare brown arms went nervously to her head' - [47] she feels a sense of satisfaction with regard to her largely conventional life: '"He is my husband," Isabella thought… "The father of my children." It worked, that old cliché; she felt pride; and affection; then pride again in herself, whom he had chosen.' [48] Her femininity and motherhood are not at odds with one another, and it is clear that she is still a sexual being.

* Unlike what has occurred with Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, Isa's maternal instincts and her sensuality are not at odds with one another. Elements of her uninhibited behaviour support this. When she is walking with William Dodge, for instance: 'Isa went ahead. And she was broad; she fairly filled the path, swaying slightly as she walked, and plucking a leaf here and there from the hedge.' [49] Isa is comfortable in her body; her point of view is continually aware of her self, and the place it fills in both her

[44] *BTA*, p. 312

[45] *BTA*, p. 330

[46] *BTA*, p. 319

[47] *BTA*, p. 345

[48] *BTA*, p. 328

[49] *BTA*, p. 360

family and the physical setting of Pointz Hall and its grounds. She is a character who fully supports Beauvoir's notion that a body is both in the world and demonstrates points of view upon the world. Whilst there are instances in which she keeps her thoughts hidden from the company which she is in, she is always true to herself.

Lucy has all of the 'usual trappings of rather shabby but gallant old age', [50] and of her, Isa thinks: 'What an angel she was - the old woman!' [51] Although she is ageing, there is a glimpse of her younger self given at times - for instance, when 'she smiled a ravishing girl's smile, as if the wind had warmed the wintry blue in her eyes to amber.' [52] Despite the image which she radiates of a proper, faithful woman in her later years, such sudden sparks of youth within her emphasise her femininity. Lucy is unable to exert any real pressure upon her nephew: 'She seemed to see them for the first time. Was it that she had no body? Up in the clouds, like an air ball, her mind touched ground now and then with a shock of surprise. There was nothing in her to weight a man like Giles to the earth.' [53]

* On a basal level, her bodily strength, as a woman, is unable to match 'a man like Giles'; she is shown to be the weaker sex throughout. This reflects the subservient place of women within society at the time. This loss of body which Woolf hints at suggests that Lucy does not feel entirely present within the situation; she is not tethered to the ground, like her nephew is. Her mind, too, is 'up in the clouds'; she has no 'weight' whatsoever to her to make any impact. Whilst the key issue here is the weakness which Lucy feels, both as an individual and with regard to her sex, Woolf demonstrates that

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[50] *BTA*, p. 310

[51] *BTA*, p. 317

[52] *BTA*, p. 341

[53] Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (London: Hogarth Press, 1941; repr. as *The Years & Between the Acts* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2012)), p. 362

whilst she is perhaps not a physical presence in the world in a meaningful way, there is no separation with regard to her material body and point of view.

Giles, Isa, and Lucy exhibit the traits which society would expect of them and their sexes; they fully embody what men and women should be. In this way, they act as paradoxes for those in the novel who are shown to be in any way deviant from the norm. I will use the examples of Miss La Trobe and William Dodge, who are not shown as heterosexual characters, and Albert, an anomaly in the cast due to his status as the 'village idiot'. [54]

Throughout the novel, allusions are made to the non-normative sexuality of both Miss La Trobe and William Dodge. Of course, when *Between the Acts* was published, male homosexuality was a criminal offence, and was viewed as something non-human, and animalistic. Male homosexuals were 'Other'ed. Female homosexuality, however, had never been recognised as something which needed to be prohibited, as it was widely assumed that it did not even exist. In *Between the Acts*, it can be argued that Woolf presents a more positive view of animality. By bringing together her cast of characters in a rural area, surrounding them with wildlife and removing urbanity, Woolf serves to counter the homophobic alignment of animals and gay people; she does not allow historic boundaries to engulf her novel. *Between the Acts* affirms our own animality, enabling us to embody it in a positive manner.

In *Between the Acts*, there are no genderless characters, but Woolf has used sexuality in order to blur the distinction between the sexes [removed: somewhat]. Nowhere in *Between the Acts* is the sexuality of either William Dodge or Miss La Trobe explicitly spoken about, and indeed, the reader is not even told if either are aware of their own sexualities. Rather, hints are given throughout which suggest that they are not heterosexual characters. Miss La Trobe uses no personal language to describe her-

[54] *BTA*, p. 359

self; rather, the actions which she makes are exhibited far more than the words she says. William Dodge, whilst stylish in terms of his dress, is 'urban, professional, that is putty coloured, unwholesome'. [55] He is modest too; when introduced my Mrs Manresa as an artist, he soon corrects her, stating that he works as 'a clerk in an office', [56] but reveals little else of himself. When others view him, the females tend to respect and admire him for various reasons. Isa, for example, recognises a kindred spirit in Dodge: 'A poor specimen he was, afraid to stick up for his own beliefs - just as she was afraid, of her husband.' [57] Mrs Manresa mothers him, treating Dodge almost as a possession, a beloved pet; she calls him 'Bill' throughout, and talks of the 'treat' which she promised him. [58] Certain males, however - Giles particularly - are less than complementary. Giles uses Dodge as a scapegoat for his own fears:

> A toady; a lickspittle; not a downright plain man of his senses; but a teaser and twitcher; a fingerer of sensations; picking and choosing; dillying and dallying; not a man to have straightforward love for a woman--his head was close to Isa's head--but simply a ---- At this word, which he could not speak in public, he pursed his lips; and the signet-ring on his little finger looked redder, for the flesh next it whitened as he gripped the arm of his chair. [59]

This passage is the closest which Woolf gets with regard to probing Dodge's sexuality, and its recognition by others. Giles appears clearly aware of Dodge's tendencies, but as mentioned above, Woolf does not give concrete evidence for this. The 'toady' here re-

[55] *BTA*, p. 324

[56] *BTA*, p. 324

[57] *BTA*, p. 329

[58] *BTA*, p. 325

[59] *BTA*, pp. 334-335

inforces the link between homosexuality and animality, and the verbs which are used to describe William Dodge and his actions - for instance, 'a fingerer', and 'dillying and dallying' - are more feminine than masculine. The 'not a man to have straightforward love for a woman' suggests a complication, perhaps that Dodge can love a woman only in a platonic, and not a sexual, manner.

* Giles, in being unable to pronounce that Dodge is homosexual, seems disgusted by the proximity of what he sees as a deviant male. He dismisses Dodge due solely to his sexuality. Despite his lack of articulation about Dodge when in company, his wife understands entirely: 'Isabella guessed the word that Giles had not spoken. Well, was it wrong if he was that word? Why judge each other? Do we know each other?' [60] She also wonders what Dodge does with his hands, 'the white, the fine, the shapely', [61] vocabulary which denotes something feminine and gentle. Later in the novel, Woolf shows Dodge's thought pattern, in that he wishes to come clean about his secret to Lucy Swithin: '"I'm a half-man, Mrs Swithin; a flickering, mind-divided little snake in the grass, Mrs Swithin; as Giles saw…'. [62] This recognition that Dodge is not the embodiment of what a man should be seems to be known to some extent by other characters, but remains unspoken.

Miss La Trobe, the organiser of the village pageant, is suggested by more than one critic to be a lesbian: Herbert Marder calls her, explicitly, 'the lesbian writer'. [63] Pamela Mills believes that the novel is 'complicated by the inclusion of a lesbian woman', [64] whilst Julie Abraham views Miss La Trobe as a 'focus of dissent from the heterosexual

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[60] *BTA*, p. 335

[61] *BTA*, p. 330

[62] *BTA*, p. 341

[63] Herbert Marder, *Feminism & Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968)), p. 63

[64] Pamela Mills, 'Narrative Techniques in *Between the Acts*' <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/desterro/article/viewFile/8788/8150> [accessed 13/07/2017]

plot… [and] that the lesbian should be the writer marks the fact that there is no place for her within the pageant, within the plot, and perhaps within history; so her outcast status is underlined'. [65] There are no clear-cut references to Miss La Trobe's sexuality within Woolf's text; the words 'lesbian', 'gay', and 'homosexual' have not been used. In fact, the majority of references to sex refer to other characters - Mrs. Manresa is 'over-sexed' [66] - for instance.

* William Dodge is not 'outed' by Woolf either; whilst he performs a couple of effeminate, and stereotypically feminine, gestures - knowing that the dropped coffee cup 'was English, made perhaps at Nottingham; date about 1760', [67] and the way in which he replaces it 'Very delicately' [68] into its saucer, his sexuality is never directly referred to. He does, however, refer to himself as a 'half-man', [69] which potentially points to his homosexuality, and his deviation away from set masculine traits. Whilst 'half-man' is not listed amongst the historical terminology of homosexuality, Wayne R. Dynes has, however, identified it in definitions of androgyny: 'the androgyne is a half-man or incomplete male' [70]. Androgyny was a central focus in Woolf's work. In her extended essay of 1929, *A Room of One's Own*, she fashioned the notion of androgyny 'into a critical tool' [71] with which to explore the the position of women in the guises of writers of, and of characters in, fiction. Tamer Katz recognises that:

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[65] Julie Abraham, 'Virginia Woolf and the Sexual Histories of Literature' (in *Are Girls Necessary?: Lesbian Writing and Modern Histories* (London: Routledge, 1996)), p. 165

[66] *BTA*, p. 325

[67] *BTA* p. 334

[68] *BTA*, p. 335

[69] *BTA*, p. 341

[70] Wayne R. Dynes (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, Volume 1* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1990; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 56

[71] Marilyn Farwell, 'Virginia Woolf and Androgyny' (in *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn 1975)), p. 433

> Woolf does not present androgyny as a solution but rather as an ideal… Much of Woolf's fiction uses androgyny as a figure for a hybrid intermix of various characteristics of gender, sexuality, and race; such images can be construed as hermaphroditic meetings of difference rather than an androgynous "absorption of difference". [72]

The focus upon androgyny, and indeed of non-binary sex, in *Between the Acts* challenges conventions and stereotypes about what society believed masculinity and femininity should encapsulate. Whilst Woolf includes no genderless characters, there is still a keen focus upon non-binary gender identity, and in part androgyny, in the novel. The very steering away from fixed gender constructs allowed Woolf the fluidity to explore characters who were, in some way, deviant from the societal norm. She also used gender fluidity as a tool to write women back into the discourse which they have so often been left out of historically.

Miss La Trobe, for instance, is rather masculine in her movements, which plays up to the stereotypical trope of female homosexuality:

> Miss La Trobe was pacing to and fro between the leaning birch trees. One hand was deep stuck in her jacket pocket; the other held a foolscap sheet. She was reading what was written there. She had the look of a commander pacing his deck. The leaning graceful trees with black bracelets circling the silver bark were distant about a ship's length.

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[72] Karen Kaivola, 'Revisiting Woolf's Representations of Androgyny: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Nation' (Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Autumn 1992)), p. 256

> Wet would it be, or fine? Out came the sun; and, shading her eyes in the attitude proper to an Admiral on his quarter-deck, she decided to risk the engagement out of doors. Doubts were over. All stage properties, she commanded, must be moved from the Barn to the bushes. It was done. And the actors, while she paced, taking all responsibility and plumping for fine, not wet, dressed among the brambles. Hence the laughter. [73]

The use of 'commander pacing his deck' in this passage evokes a heavily respected male figure in a position of authority. This military imagery is further enhanced with Woolf's later use of 'Admiral on his quarter-deck'; essentially, Woolf uses the language of male authority to add a level of command to Miss La Trobe's position, both as the director of the play, and of her deviance from that of heterosexual female. The use of 'ship' and Miss La Trobe as a naval commander or Admiral, show that she is not tethered to the land. She is not as she should be, and does not conform to the hackneyed societal view of womanhood; thus, she is rather excluded from finding a stable place on land, and is metaphorically cast adrift in a ship of her own making.

* She inhabits a freer, and less tethered world, than those women around her who conform to the stereotypes of heterosexual marriage and motherhood, two of the main, and most obvious, elements which her sexuality denies her. Miss La Trobe populates a world which allows her a degree of freedom in comparison to other women, but also which excludes her from their societal circles. This exclusion manifests in the way in which Miss La Trobe feels imprisoned within herself. 'Deep stuck' is a phrase which relates not only to the positioning of Miss La Trobe's physical body; rather, it suggests that Miss La Trobe cannot escape. She is 'stuck', or trapped, within her feminine body, despite the way in which she aligns herself - or at least is aligned in the eyes of her audi-

[73] *BTA*, p. 335

ence - more with the male. She is able to clothe herself in masculine apparel, but she has no choice but to wear it as a costume; the masculine cut of the clothing which she wears obscures her female sexed body, but she is still biologically a woman. In this way, Miss La Trobe's gender is performative. Whilst she does not conform to commonplace conventions of femininity, nor can she be seen as a male due to her clothing being a form of costume.

To reiterate the notion of costuming, a jacket with such deep pockets sounds like a masculine rather than feminine article of clothing; the pockets are clearly there as a useful feature, rather than the decorative addition which they would so often be to a woman's piece of clothing. The movements which she makes heighten her distinct manoeuvre away from femininity; 'pacing' is not an accepted feminine gesture, and women are supposed to walk daintily. This action is reiterated with 'while she paced', which causes one to view her almost as an androgynous figure. Further ways in which she uses her body and her voice augment this view; she 'commanded', which is more of a male trait, reiterating as it does the imagery of the 'commander' and 'Admiral', before 'taking all responsibility' in the situation.

* She has no male minder to defer to; there is no husband, or senior male figure who is able to give her orders, and so she takes it upon herself to act on her own behalf. She is called 'Bossy' [74] by the villagers; she is in a position of authority given her direction of the play, but this is not seen as a positive thing. Had she been male, one expects, none of the audience would have made any derogatory comments; women, at this time, were simply not expected to lead. Even her figure, described shortly after this passage, is not at all ladylike; she is 'stocky', and has 'thick ankles' and 'guttural accents', to go along with her 'abrupt manner'. [75] The 'foolscap sheet' which Miss La

[74] *BTA*, p. 336

[75] *BTA*, p. 336

Trobe carries is again a deviation from the feminine; its very history, in that it was named after a literal 'fool's cap' which was used as a watermark from the fifteenth century, [76] suggest that she is being mocked. Despite her capacity, and her undoubted ability in the role of director, Woolf is suggesting that due to her biological sex, she will never be viewed as seriously as a male in her position would.

The trees are the feminine antithesis to Miss La Trobe's masculinity; they are 'graceful' and wear 'black bracelets'; they also stand in a group, and are of the same kind; all are birch trees - they do not deviate from what they should be. 'Hence the laughter' hints at a secret which all of the actors, as a singular group, have, and from which Miss La Trobe is excluded. This, again, goes along with the way in which she is alienated from those around her, and reinforces the notion of her as an outsider.

Miss La Trobe's body is at odds with her perspective; she is trapped, as I have said, within her female sexed body, but wishes to express herself in a more masculine manner. She is presented as quite different to the overtly feminine Isa and Lucy, and goes against societal expectations in her manner of dress, and the way in which she has become a leader, if only of a theatre group. However, as per Beauvoir's hypothesis, Miss La Trobe's point of view and the way in which she both costumes and carries her body are always demonstrated as being together in the novel; she is a complete character, despite not conforming to gender norms.

Between the Acts: The Animal Body

[76] 'Foolscap definition and history' <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/foolscap> [accessed: 01/09/2017]

Speech and the capacity for thought are the two paramount differences between humans and animals. Whilst many animals have been identified as possessing a complex mental capacity, and voicing mechanisms - apes and dolphins, for instance - as far as we can perceive, human language is vastly more advanced. Tromanhauser writes: 'Woolf points to the masking properties of language itself as a medium through which humans seek to conceal their fundamental kinship with the beast and marks the failure of such language - the signature expression of human difference…'. [77] This notion that language is the only thing which sets us apart from other animals, is explored in *Between the Acts*. The 'masking properties' which language has allow humans to deliberately extricate themselves from the animal kingdom, making us feel superior. The negativity which comes with this is clear; by separating ourselves from the animal world in this manner, we are effectively masking all of the things which we have in common with other species: biology, impulsive behaviour, and the self-selection and self-preservation which human society promotes. Humans have the cognitive ability to express and articulate thoughts, feelings, memories, and compassion. Is it fair to compare the two, when the majority of animal species use verbal cues which humans cannot understand?

Phenomenology, the philosophy of lived experience and the nature of being within the world, provides a further link between the work of Beauvoir and Woolf. With regard to this discussion animals are, of course, 'a thing of the world', but any possible points of view which they may have are obscured from humans. Regardless, the majority of phenomenologist thinkers have explored the intrinsic links between humans and animals, with a variety of results. Merleau-Ponty, an existentialist phenomenological thinker, writes:

[77] Tromanhauser, p. 79

> everything is both manufactured and natural in man, as it were, in the sense that there is not a word, not a form of behaviour which does not owe something to purely biological being—and which at the same time does not elude the simplicity of animal life [78]

Merleau-Ponty pinpoints the existence of 'purely biological being', a similarity drawn between humans and animals of other species. Whilst he is referring to the human animal here, this idea of 'manufactured' and 'natural' living beside one another in the human body provides a fascinating contrast. Although one can effectively manufacture one's own traits as one grows, and be influenced in doing so both in terms of nature and nurture, there are many 'natural' things which mankind has in common, particularly with regard to our core biological elements. Merleau-Ponty, writes Derek Ryan, 'forges an ontology that entangles human and animal life', [79] recognising the links between different biological species, and the nature of being which every individual has. Derrida is of the belief that: "… encounters between human and animal are also "on the threshold of sexual differences", therefore challenging the neat way human sexual difference is divided…'', [80] thus bringing another key marker into play.

* Heidegger 'explains that the "essence of the animal" and its relation to the world is of primary importance in uncovering not only the difference between "man" and "animal" but also in reaching a more precise concept of "world"'. [81] He draws together three intrinsically linked biological concepts here, and understands that by study-

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[78] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (trans. C. Smith, London: Routledge, 1962)

[79] Derek Ryan, *Animal Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 107

[80] Ryan, p. 93

[81] Ryan, p. 101

ing the animal, one can make more sense of both the physical and, indeed, the conceptual, world around one.

* Feminist critics, too, have played upon the notion of the difference between human and animal life. In Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), for instance, 'the human/animal divide is central'. [82] She has been termed a 'multispecies feminist theorist', [83] who is intent upon forging 'a new language for our times'. Haraway uses the term 'Chthulucene' for our times, named after, of course, H.P. Lovecraft's octopoid monster, who lies in sleep beneath the Pacific Ocean, and has a dominant bearing upon our world. [84] She recognises that terms which have been used to describe our human civilisation before now - Anthropocene, which reflects the period in which human activity is seen to have been the dominant influence upon both our environment and climate, and Capitalocene, in which capitalism is viewed as a particular organisation of the natural world, for example - are limited, and do not go far enough to pinpoint the space which the human race currently occupies. For Haraway, such a new distinction is necessary.

In *Between the Acts*, animality and humanity, with regard to both the similarities and differences between them, are core themes. The ideas which the phenomenologists have put forward, and which draw attention to the entanglement of human and non-human animal life, have been explored by Woolf particularly. In a general manner, the novel draws parallels between animal and human bodies. Woolf partially achieves this

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[82] Ryan, p. 67

[83] Patricia Reis, 'Dining Out on the Great Divide: Donna Haraway, Thomas Thwaites, Frans de-Waal, Karen Joy Fowler, Charles Foster and Helen MacDonald', in *Dark Matter*, Issue 4: Making Kin (Part One), October 2016 <http://patriciareis.net/files/2014/02/Women-Witnessing-Issue-4a.pdf> [accessed: 01/09/2017]

[84] H.P. Lovecraft, 'The Call of Cthulhu' (1928) <http://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/fiction/cc.aspx> [accessed: 01/09/2017]; Donna Haraway, 'Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene' in *e-flux*, Journal #75 (September 2016) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/> [accessed: 17/09/2018]

due to the way in which the interior lives of her characters are mediated through their bodies, and the comparisons which are made with creatures from the animal world to reinforce particular characteristics.

* As well as using animals as metaphors for humans, Woolf also describes animals in relatable human terms; for instance, 'the starlings, and the rooks, come together, crowd together, to chatter and make merry…'. [85] Of course, from a purely biological standpoint, humans are part of the animal kingdom, albeit occupying a different sphere to all other species. The animal body is a material thing in the world, just like the human body. The animal body still allows agency, and whilst there is little evidence given in *Between the Acts* to suggest that the animals have any kind of 'point of view on this world', the human characters certainly do. These human to animal comparisons have a lot to say, both with regard to both physical bodies, and the phenomenological correlation between animal and human behaviour. This has been pinpointed by Tazudeen, who writes that before she penned *Before the Acts*, Woolf had been concentrating upon the ideas of 'nonhuman agency and sensation…'. [86] This merging of the human and animal worlds allowed her to ensure that in her work 'nature is ceaselessly entangled with human consciousness and processes of thought.' [87]

* Within the novel, the use of animal metaphors is ubiquitous. Characters are described variously as 'goose-faced', [88] 'solemn as an owl', [89] and having a 'blue vein which wiggled like a blue worm'. [90] Metaphoric allusions to animals have also been in-

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[85] *BTA*, p. 363

[86] Tazudeen, p. 492

[87] Tazudeen, p. 494

[88] *BTA*, p. 307

[89] *BTA*, p. 327

[90] *BTA*, p. 341

cluded throughout, for example when Miss La Trobe is seen 'scattering and foraging' [91] in a bird- or squirrel-like manner, and 'She [Isa] looked at Mrs Swithin as if she had been a dinosaur or a very diminutive mammoth'. [92] Onomatopoeically, the human characters do such things as 'roar', [93] , and have both a voice which 'came wimpling and warbling', [94] and 'the sudden laughter of a startled jay', [95] which puts them on a more base mammalian level. Perhaps the most striking comparisons relate to animals through the intervention of a materialistic, and always manmade, third party; for instance, when Grandpa 'crumpled the paper which he had cocked into a snout', [96] and the 'knobbled shoes as if she had claws corned like a canary's'. [97] Isa's elegance has been drawn with comparisons to the graceful swan; firstly, she moved into the room 'like a swan swimming its way', [98] before she and Rupert Haines 'floated… like two swans downstream'. [99]

Alongside these metaphors, the physical presence of animals in *Between the Acts* both contrasts with, and aligns itself with, the human audience. The herd of cows which border the outdoor stage can be seen by the village's human inhabitants from where they sit. The cows are given human characteristics at times, rendering them anthropomorphic: they 'coughed', [100] and walked in an orderly manner in a human space: 'a file

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[91] *BTA*, p. 377

[92] *BTA*, p. 388

[93] *BTA*, p. 311

[94] *BTA*, p. 323

[95] *BTA*, p. 351

[96] *BTA*, p. 311

[97] *BTA*, p. 318

[98] *BTA*, p. 307

[99] *BTA*, p. 308

[100] *BTA*, p. 307

of cows passed the door'. [101] Through this blending of human and animal bodies, Woolf suggests that humans are actually not as far removed from animals as we may think, by depicting literal and metaphorical relationships between human and animal bodies.

In *Between the Acts*, the herd mentality and survival instincts are prevalent. The villagers are animalised in their base longing to stay together - for instance, when 'They grouped themselves together', [102] much as a herd would - particularly against the looming threat of war. In this manner, they - innocent civilians living in an English village - become the prey of their German foes. Tromanhauser writes of the theory of 'anxiety sacrifice' by Burkert and Rene Girard's 'scapegoat mechanism' [103], going on to say that, with relation to the novel 'diplomacy, whether on an international or domestic scale, between nations or lovers, is merely ritualized predation, in which each member of the herd casts about for another victim to offer up in its place.' [104] Woolf's novel, suggests Tromanhauser, intends to: 'reverse this lethal process [of Fascism] by restoring to her readers a uniquely human awareness of their inherent animality.' [105] The characters also 'hunt for personal scapegoats' [106] in order to vent their frustration at the onset of war.

* As the following occurs: 'And Lord! the jangle and the din! The very cows joined in. Walloping, tail lashing, the reticence of nature was undone, and the barriers which should divide Man the Master from the Brute were dissolved' [107] - Tazudeen suggests that 'The human/animal divide collapses in this moment, as does the order of representa-

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[101] *BTA*, p. 319

[102] *BTA*, p. 344

[103] Vicki Tromanhauser, 'Animal Life and Human Sacrifice in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*' - Vicki Tromanhauser (*Woolf Studies Annual*, Volume 15, 2009), p. 72

[104] Tromanhauser, p. 75

[105] Tromanhauser, p. 69

[106] Tromanhauser, p. 71

[107] *BTA*, p. 393

tional language that would separate entities from one another by any transcendental criteria.' [108] I align myself with both of these viewpoints; Tromanhauser's point, that recognition of one's own animality can help to reinforce their place within the world, as well as the war, and writing back against it. Both are clearly two of the main focal points of the novel. Tazudeen, too, demonstrates that rather than be separated at this point in the novel, humans and animals almost become one; they are inherently aware of one another, and reliant upon one another.

Tazudeen ties together the inheritance of the land with the use of the animal body in the novel. In *Between the Acts*, there are:

> points where human self-knowledge become entangled with an impersonal prehistory out of which and alongside which the human has emerged. This constitutes a reversal of traditional employments of animal metaphor, which were meant to illustrate a particular trait about humanity, a convention dating at least as far back as the fable tradition. [109]

Tazudeen goes on to critique: 'For Woolf, the animal metaphor produces knowledge about the human… by using the human as a vessel of knowledge into an evolutionary past or fictional point of origin that no longer exists.' [110] According to Tazudeen, the animal world is also tied to the notion of history; the idea that we exist only because our ancestors existed. This coexistence of humans and animals is pivotal, and complex. The 'impersonal prehistory' which Tazudeen notes is something which we are all aware of; science has made us aware of how the human genus came to be, how Homo sapiens

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[108] Tazudeen, p. 506

[109] Tazudeen, p. 497

[110] Tazudeen, p. 499

evolved to the detriment of other now extinct Homo species, and how early man lived alongside and relied upon different animal species. This ties in again to the connection between Beauvoir and the animal; animals such as cows, sheep, and various species of birds, are physical presences in the world, and are used as markers which help to interpret the behaviour of Woolf's human characters.

Attention should also be placed upon the scene in *Between the Acts* in which Giles sees an engorged snake on the path: '… choked with a toad in its mouth. The snake was unable to swallow, the toad was unable to die… It was birth the wrong way round - a monstrous inversion.' [111] Tromanhauser declares that the manifestation of the snake in Giles' mind has more than just the effect of physical repulsion:

> The engorged snake obstructing Giles's garden path provides an image of political, marital, and ontological impasse… The violent action of crushing the beast thus becomes an extension of Giles's stone-kicking game, in which the other pageant guests become personal scapegoats onto whom he can deflect his inner rage. [112]

Tazudeen goes further, suggesting that the monstrosity of the occurrence is grotesque in its blending of two species: '… an integration of multiple bodies (or, in Darwinian terms, of traits from multiple species) without a conceptual mode of relation to write them.' [113] This freakish occurrence, then, both startles and repulses Giles, and the violence which he performs in order to eradicate it has roots within his earliest childhood.

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[111] *BTA*, p. 353

[112] Tromanhauser, p. 75

[113] Tazudeen, p. 501

I also wish to argue that there are three characters in *Between the Acts* who have been used as bridges, effectively, between the human and animal. They inhabit a kind of No-Man's Land; character attributes, as well as their own choices, prohibit them from being accepted into the human group with the rest of the villagers. [Removed: However, the way in which two of them can express themselves sets them apart from possible inclusion within animal world.] Woolf suggests that William Dodge and Miss La Trobe both have sexualities which cause them to be perceived as deviant from the norm; whilst they appear to be accepted within the village, their implied homosexuality marks them apart from the heterosexual, normative inhabitants; they are, as Tromanhauser expresses, 'culturally unfit'. [114]

Albert is perhaps the anomaly here; the 'village idiot', he cannot think clearly, or express himself as he wishes. In fact, his gestures and movements veer more toward the machine than the animal: 'There was no need to dress him up. There he came, acting his part to perfection. He came ambling across the grass, mopping and mowing.' [115] Mopping and mowing is a direct reference to *The Tempest*, and means to pull grotesque faces. Albert is thus shown as being something alien; he makes movements and gives facial expressions which appear grotesque or, in their own way, animalistic. After this, Albert 'tittered', [116] thus aligning him with either a relatively small and naive child, or a bird. His further movements align him with the former category; he 'whistled on his fingers', 'made as if chasing [a mouse] through the grass', and 'stood erect, puffing out his cheeks as if he were blowing a dandelion clock', before he 'skipped' off. [117] The innocence of these uninhibited gestures excludes him from the adults who watch him from

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[114] Tromanhauser, p. 86

[115] *BTA*, p. 347

[116] *BTA*, p. 347

[117] *BTA*, p. 348

afar, discussing him with cruel remarks. Mrs Elmhurst, to give perhaps the most glaring example within the text, 'came from a village ten miles distant where they, too, had an idiot. It wasn't nice. Suppose he suddenly did something dreadful?' [118] This addition of danger, or fear felt towards Albert, gives a juxtaposition to his childlike actions; they add the threat and unpredictability of an animal. Woolf calls attention to Albert's mental incapacity throughout, introducing him more often than not as 'the idiot' or 'that idiot' [119], as though he has to be continually and explicitly defined in his differences to others, rather than being identifiable by the use of his Christian name alone.

Despite her place within society, Miss La Trobe has been viewed by critics as almost a godlike figure, another position of authority which she holds within the novel. [Removed: Whilst her homosexuality sets her apart from both human and animal, she also oddly serves to bridge the gap between the human and animal worlds.] 'La Trobe, like Woolf herself, wants to expand the order of life, widely enough to encompass both human and nonhuman modes of being…', [120] writes Tazudeen. Certainly, Miss La Trobe's physical position, outside and surrounded by herds of animals as well as a human audience, plays up to this. This notion of 'nonhuman modes of being' could equally be applied to those characters who seem to bridge the human-animal divide, as to the physical animals which inhabit Woolf's novel. The suggested non-normativity of Miss La Trobe and William Dodge's sexuality causes characters like Giles to view them as 'Other'. They do not fit in with the human population of the village as they are not seen as heterosexual, and they are still apart from the animal world, given their human biology.

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[118] *BTA*, p. 347

[119] *BTA*, p. 359

[120] Rasheed Tazudeen, '"Discordant syllabling": The language of the living world in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* - Rasheed Tazudeen (*Studies in the Novel*, Volume 47, No. 4 (Winter 2015)), p. 495

The animal metaphor is particularly important in this text because it allows Woolf to bridge the animal/human divide. Woolf demonstrates that just as humans can display the characteristics of animals, animals can embody human traits. The relationship between the animal body and the human body has been discussed by several phenomenologists, as noted above. Whilst there is little relation between different species detailed in *The Second Sex*, the notion of being 'in the world' is a pivotal one for Beauvoir's ideology. The animal body is still a physical body, which both belongs to the world, and is part of it. This justifies my use of the animal body in this discussion.

Between the Acts: The Pastoral Body

In *Between the Acts*, Woolf makes it clear that the land upon which the action, both of the pageant and with regard to character relationships, unfolds is just as important as those who people it. Alexandra Harris writes that *Between the Acts* is 'Woolf's intense celebration of her countryside', in which she 'recorded the spoils of a long English past'.[121] I define the pastoral body as the way in which the physical human body relates to the rural landscape. The use of the pastoral body interprets the way in which the human body works 'in the world', as per Beauvoir's quote. The body of land which Miss La Trobe's play is performed upon is integral in *Between the Acts*; the rural landscape is a space which both allows the villagers to come together, and the characters to interact with one another.

The relationship between the land and the physical bodies is an important one in the novel, and there is a symbiosis between the two. Renee Dickinson establishes a link between the land and the characters; for her, they:

[121] Harris, p. 113

> form a palimpset of geographical writing that asks us to understand *Between the Acts* as an ecocritical text in terms of the relationship between the land and history; between the land and the female characters, specifically Isa; and, eventually, between the land and cultural identity. [122]

This relationship between human and landscape manifests itself physically when the pageant is enacted outside. The space of the land acts as a natural stage, and the audience are able to see a herd of 'motionless' [123] cows from where they sit. As Tromanhauser writes: 'In placing her theater outside, [Miss] La Trobe shows the distinction between human mastery and animal nature to be illusory… the village audience loses its stretch of cultural "high ground" and encounters the prospect of humanity joining the herd.' [124]

* Perhaps most interestingly placed is the character of Isa, who is shown largely in the realm of domesticity, 'embedded within layers of geographical and domestic images…', [125] and is unable to fully live on her own terms when outside. It is almost as if she is prey to the elements which surround her: 'Isabella felt prisoned. Through the bars of the prison, through the sleep haze that deflected them, blunt arrows bruise her'. [126] She is, says Dickinson, 'shown to be enclosed inside the house which cannot communicate with or have access to the outside "green island".' [127] In this manner, Isa is akin

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[122] Renee Dickinson, '"Writing the Land": *Between the Acts* as Ecocritical Text' (*Virginia Woolf Miscellany*, Volume 81 (Spring 2012)), p. 16

[123] *BTA*, p. 337

[124] Tromanhauser, p. 67

[125] Dickinson, p. 16

[126] *BTA*, p. 337

[127] Dickinson, p. 27

to Mariana within the moated grange. [128] This image is echoed further when Isa, outside, 'saw water surrounded by walls of shining glass' [129] - a figurative moat, if you will. This imprisonment is at odds with the security the house, 'meant as a stable centre', [130] is supposed to present to its inhabitants.

As I have discussed, the symbiotic relationship between the land and characters in *Between the Acts* is a key feature of the novel. This notion of connection can be tied into the main quotation of Beauvoir's in this thesis, as the characters are physically 'in the world' when they inhabit the pastoral landscape. The land acts as a stage in itself in two ways: firstly, for the performers, and secondly for the audience. There is a real sense of freedom bound in with the pastoral landscape, and this contrasts with the oppressive atmosphere of imposing Pointz Hall, which acts more like a prison for Isa than as a place of safety.

Between the Acts: Narrative Voice

In the introduction to his edition of *Between the Acts*, Mark Hussey writes of the 'blurring of boundaries between the speech of the pageant and the narrative voice in the novel.' [131] He has reflected upon the use of italics within the original and later edited versions of *Between the Acts*, and the ways in which the inclusion, or removal, of them can create a markedly different reading of the text. 'By instructing the printer to set all the pageant's language in italics, Leonard Woolf influenced reader response to the text

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[128] Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Mariana in the Moated Grange' (1830)

[129] *BTA*, p. 337

[130] Harris, p. 113

[131] Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (ed. Mark Hussey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)), p. lxi

in a specific way.' In his editorial capacity, Hussey reinstates their absence, allowing one a different reading of the novel. Differing conventions are expected from the reader when the voice is italicised or not; italicised text implies stage directions, and directives, whereas the unitalicised text can be read as an extension of the narrator's voice. Indeed, the italics imply the presence of an embodied director, but this is problematic; the narrator is not bodily visible, and there are no clues as to their identity. The use of italics suggest that a different body, or several bodies, are responsible for the speech, and the narrator for the majority of the novel is not involved at this point. When the italics do not appear within the text, the distinction of who exactly is speaking is less marked. The collectiveness of voice at points suggest that all of the separate bodies have blended into one. Hussey goes on to write from his studies of Woolf's work, that: 'Italics were for emphasis, and to be used sparingly as Woolf observed in her essay on Edward Gibbon (1937)…'. [132] It is unclear, in this manner, as to who is speaking within *Between the Acts*; we are never made aware of who our omniscient narrator is, or what he or she represents. There is thus a separation of voice from the physical body; it becomes separate, and almost disembodied.

Melba Cuddy-Keane, who also writes about this blurring of boundaries in her introduction to *Between the Acts*, argues that: '[i]n the final merging of voices there is no longer any distinction of performance from life, of the intervals between the acts from the acts; all voices are part of one choric voice, all act is equally central'. [133] Hussey aligns himself with this particular belief, but goes further by placing it in the context of Woolf's oeuvre: 'This playing with voices, with spoken and unspoken words, and with a

[132] Hussey, p. lxvi

[133] Melba Cuddy-Keane, 'Introduction' (in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, 2008)), p. 283

dizzying multiplicity of levels of narrative, suggests that the unfinished *Between the Acts* was a new experiment for Woolf.' [134]

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have focused on Woolf's presentation of several bodies in *Orlando*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Between the Acts*. I have chosen to examine a broad range of Woolf's characters, including those who are non-binary and subvert traditional gender constraints. In *Orlando*, the protagonist's body shifts from male to female, and the notion of androgyny is thus able to be explored. In his male body, Orlando is self-assured; in her female body, she is more self-aware. Both of these explorations of self manifest throughout the novel, in the descriptions which Woolf gives of their physical bodies, and the focused discourses the reader is party to.

* The change in perspective with Orlando demonstrates the complexity of biological sex. Whilst it may be expected that Orlando is, essentially, the same self in both bodies, the physical body which he, and later she, inhabits is so markedly different that the character's behaviour changes as a result. Orlando shifts in her woman's body; she begins to embody more feminine characteristics, and her outward behaviour alters to that which feels more societally acceptable. Throughout *Orlando*, Woolf posits a constant awareness of the protagonist's self, and the ways in which mind and body work together to make sense of the great chasms of change in Orlando's life. There are occasions in which this self seems fractured, particularly during moments of crisis, as I have examined above. Ultimately however, Woolf demonstrates the vital codependence of the material body and perspective.

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[134] Hussey, p. xlvi

The complexities of the body and mind in *To the Lighthouse* have been touched upon in this discussion with the characters of Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Mrs Ramsay is presented in many ways as an archetypally perfect woman, wife and mother, who largely inhabits the domestic sphere, although of course she has moved away from her home domain during her holiday, and into a borrowed space. As Woolf suggests with both Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, there is a unity between the physical bodies and thought patterns and perspectives of both characters.

My extended commentary here is focused upon *Between the Acts*, in which gendered and sexual nonconformity has been tested, particularly through the characters of Miss LaTrobe and William Dodge. The former has been masculinised, with the focus upon her choice of unfeminine clothing and her less than dainty postural body, and the latter feminised, with the use of soft language to describe his movements, and his knowledge of the detailed production of quite effeminate objects, such as the teacup which is dropped. The concentration upon those characters whose sexuality does not fit into the heteronormative spectrum has been discussed here due to the emphasis which Woolf gives to their physical bodies. Intellectually, the character of Albert is [removed: somewhat] limited, and thus represents another deviation from what is perceived to be normality.

* The comparisons to animal and pastoral bodies interweave with the characters throughout the novel, and become another intrinsic part of the exploration of their lives. They can no more be separated within the village setting than can the material body and perspectives, due to Woolf's use of comparative and animalistic language to express particular characteristics of her human characters. The pastoral body suggests further that each character is palpably 'in the world'; their own bodies are entwined with the body of land around them, as well as with the physical bodies of other villagers when they come together as one in the audience.

As the readings in this chapter demonstrate, the physical body and interior world, which encompasses both the point of view and perspectives of female characters, are integral to Woolf's work. When explored together, they give a real depth of focus, both with regard to each character's mental and physical state. For Woolf's characters, it is pivotal that the mind and body are working in tandem with one another. With regard to the quotation which forms the backbone of this thesis, Woolf's characters fully support Beauvoir's statement. Whilst they can be separated, the material body and 'point of view on this world' are only successful if the character in question possesses both in tandem.

The next chapter in this thesis will focus upon Katherine Mansfield, and her presentation of female bodies. Whilst I have not identified any characters in her short stories who could be described as non-binary, her female protagonists often make tiny rebellions against societal constraints. I will focus most of my discussion upon the character of Linda Burnell from 'Prelude' (earlier *The Aloe*), and will also explore representations of femininity and self in Linda's young daughter Kezia and sister Beryl, and with regard to protagonist Bertha Young in 'Bliss', and Ada Moss in 'Pictures'.

Chapter Three: Katherine Mansfield

Introduction

'True to oneself! Which self?' [1] Mansfield was concerned with the way in which a human can have hundreds of distinct selves, 'what with complexes and suppressions, and reactions and vibrations and reflections'. [2] In Mansfield's work, the claiming, and reclaiming, of selfhood has prominence.

In Mansfield's stories, the selfhood of her woman characters is explored in great detail. Beauvoir shows her awareness of Mansfield in *The Second Sex*; Sage writes of how she 'would quote Mansfield's autobiographical Beauchamp stories with special approval, for the clarity with which they identified the mystificatory processes that entrap women'. [3] The relationship between Beauvoir and Mansfield was essentially one sided, given that Mansfield died on Beauvoir's fifteenth birthday, before any of her work had been published. [4] Beauvoir recognised Mansfield's stories as important, particularly with regard to this notion of entrapment, which she focuses on throughout *The Second Sex*. One can imagine that these 'mystificatory processes' within Mansfield's fiction offered food for thought for Beauvoir, given that it is an element which she explores at length in *The Second Sex*. This justifies an inheritance of sorts from Mansfield to Beauvoir, and explains in part why they have been discussed alongside one another so often. Just as

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[1] Mansfield, Journal entry (19/04/1920) <http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/29-april/> [accessed: 13/02/2017]

[2] Ibid.

[3] Lorna Sage, *Moments of Truth: Twelve Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (London: Fourth Estate, 2002)

[4] Beauvoir was born on the 9th of January 1908; Mansfield died on the 9th of January 1923.

Mansfield is credited with reinventing the short story, Beauvoir had a similar effect, and influence, upon feminism.

One element which has historically always been available to a woman in order to free her from this entrapment in repressed society is the female subconscious, and the power of the dream world. Mansfield uses dreams, and the subconscious, to demonstrate details about several of her protagonists which the reader would not learn had their current experience solely been concentrated upon. This is a simple, yet effective, tool in such a restricted narrative space as the short story; the character comes bodily to life in several deft strokes, and the use of facets of their unconcealed minds allows the reader to see each as a more distinctive and realistic being. In 'The Little Governess', a story fraught with psychological tension, and with an unnamed and vulnerable protagonist as its focus, the dream has been used as a device to demonstrate what reality is: 'Still half asleep she put her hands to her hair to make sure it wasn't a dream'. [5]

* Memory, too, provides an effective manner of distancing oneself from unwanted or unstable realities; for instance, in 'A Dill Pickle', Vera turns to her subconscious to take herself away from the uncertainty of the present moment: 'In the warmth, as it were, another memory unfolded. She saw herself sitting on a lawn. He lay beside her, and suddenly, after a long silence, he rolled over and put his head in her lap'. [6] Although such dreams are not often articulated, and largely remain private within Mansfield's fiction, a dreaming woman is at once 'a thing of the world, and a point of view of this world'. She exists in herself, and for herself. In instances where Mansfield probes the subconscious mind, she allows a certain freedom to her female protagonists, which would otherwise be denied to them. A link can be drawn to Beauvoir's quote due to the 'point of view of this world' which dreams allow an individual. Whilst one may not exist

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[5] Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006), p. 144

[6] *The Collected Stories*, p. 133

as a complete physical body in their dream world, or in their subconscious, the point of view and thoughts which they have are often extensive. Whilst, therefore, a woman dreaming cannot be said to be at once a material body and a point of view toward the world, it is an important element to address.

For Mansfield, the interiority of those who identify as women is a focus throughout her short story collections. No matter which tale a reader selects at random, consciousness, and often elements of subconsciousness, can be found embedded within. Mansfield's most detailed character studies in her stories are those of women, which she writes of using both the first and third person perspectives. I have chosen the examples here of Linda Burnell, her sister Beryl Fairfield, and Linda's daughter Kezia from 'Prelude' (and, in part, 'The Aloe'), which I explore in an extended discussion. This chapter will also take into account Bertha Young in 'Bliss' and Miss Ada Moss in 'Pictures'.

'Prelude' (1918)

In 'Prelude', Mansfield demonstrates the depths of her exploration of interiority in her fiction; she more explicitly separates mind and body in many of her stories than Woolf does. Protagonist Linda Burnell has recently moved to rural New Zealand with her husband and young daughters. The story was revised from Mansfield's only attempt at a novel, *The Aloe*, which was published posthumously. [7] *The Aloe* essentially deals with very similar themes and scenes, but goes further in its portrayal of motherhood, and the way in which Linda deals with what can be interpreted as postpartum depression. This is particularly true within 'Prelude'.

[7] Katherine Mansfield, *The Aloe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930; repr. London: Capuchin Classics, 2010)

* There is a dislocation of self within Linda; she does not come across as a character whose body and mind are working in tandem with one another. Rather, contrary to Beauvoir's quote, her material body is often separated from her point of view and interior world, and she has little control over the physical symptoms which manifest in her as a result of her troubled psyche. Linda's conflict with herself is psychosomatic - that is, the cause of her physical symptoms is a mental factor. Linda does not encompass the maternal characteristics of love and patience as society would have expected her to. Moran writes that Linda is a 'woman trapped in the nightmare world of her own fertility'. [8] The idea of motherhood, and the dependence of her children, terrifies her, and she has become entirely reliant upon her own mother in order to compensate for her own fear.

* Parallels can be drawn here between Mansfield and Woolf. As Woolf does in *To the Lighthouse*, Mansfield, too, projects the image of her own mother, and the arduous relationship which they had, into her work: 'Motherhood for Mansfield and Woolf remained a vexed personal issue bound up with their own fertility, their memories of their mothers, their relationships with other women, even their relationships with their own culture as "non-mothers"'. [9] Patricia Moran identifies the 'simultaneous emergence of a mother-daughter plot' in the work of both authors. [10] Moran believes that 'Mansfield suggests that Linda's dependence upon her mother derives from a desire to merge from her', [11] thus transcending her own bodily self. She is not an archetypal mother figure, and can be contrasted in many ways with Woolf's Mrs Ramsay. Linda poses a challenge

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[8] Patricia Moran, 'Unholy Meanings: Maternity, Creativity, and Orality in Katherine Mansfield' (*Feminist Studies*, Volume 17, Number 1 (Spring 1991)), p. 117

[9] Patricia Moran, *Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1996), p. 26

[10] Moran, p. 25

[11] 'Unholy…', p. 118

to Beauvoir's quote; whilst she is a 'a thing of the world' in the sense of her material body, the muddled thoughts which she has cause her point of view to often be obscured.

With regard to the title in its most base noun form, a prelude is presented with the introduction of the Burnell family. The way in which the story itself begins *in medias res* of course provides a prelude of its own; the beginning action, in which the family is moving to its new, isolated home, serves as an introduction to the more important tropes of what the family stands for, and Linda's own positioning within it. Whilst she is a mother, she does not embody matriarchal status; her husband Stanley mentions at intervals how pleased he is to have bought the house cheaply, which reiterates his standing as the breadwinner of the family.

* Of course, this adheres to conventions of the period, in that fathers were expected to feed, house and clothe their young, whilst mothers spent every waking moment with them, raising them as they ought to be raised - unless, of course, they had the wherewithal to hire a nanny who could take over such duties. With Linda, Mansfield subverts these conventions. She does not adhere to the expected deportment of a mother; where she should be ever-present, always energetic and reliable, she shuts herself away from what could be termed 'real life'. The fact that she has 'fallen asleep in the daytime', and the implication that this is not an unusual occurrence, shows that she is keeping barriers between herself and her children. The presence of Mrs Fairfield, the children's maternal grandmother, as well as a servant girl named Alice suggest that the children are cared for by others; regardless, the act of falling asleep in the day is problematic. It can be seen that she is hiding herself, both physically and mentally; whether a voluntary act or not, she is regaining her own space. Disturbance of sleep, in this manner, is one marker of a symptomatic representation of hysteria, which I argue that Linda is suffering from. This, of course, complicates the manner in which Linda can be seen to have a 'point of view' toward the world; she is bodily present, but not so in

terms of her mind, or perspective. Given that Linda is presented in this manner as quite separate from herself, this is another step away from Beauvoir's quote.

The definition of hysteria which I am using here is Elaine Showalter's; she writes that historically, 'hysteria has served as a form of expression, a body language for people who otherwise might not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel', [12] and notes that to be hysterical typically 'means being overemotional, irresponsible, and feminine'. [13] It is a term which has been used to 'ridicule and trivialize women's medical and political complaints', [14] and is 'a cultural symptom of anxiety and stress', noting that 'conflicts that produce hysterical symptoms are genuine and universal'. [15] Until the First World War, hysteria was a term used almost entirely to categorise women. [16] Its name, of course, comes from the Greek word for uterus, *hystera*, and is thus marked from a biologically sexed perspective. [17] Showalter also discusses at length the physicality which hysteria often manifests, and the vast array of symptoms which have been related to it:

> Hysteria has been the designation for such a vast, shifting set of behaviors and symptoms - limps, paralyses, seizures, coughs, headaches, speech disturbances, depression, insomnia, exhaustion, eating disorders - that doctors have despaired of finding a single diagnosis. [18]

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[12] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (London: Picador, 1997; repr. 1998), p. 7

[13] *Hystories*, p. 8

[14] *Hystories*, p. 8

[15] *Hystories,* p. 9

[16] *Hystories*, p. 11

[17] *Hystories*, p. 15

[18] *Hystories*, p. 14

Showalter also recognises that 'epidemics' relating to hysteria 'seem to peak at the ends of centuries, when people are already alarmed about social change'. [19] Whilst this facet of social change is perhaps not explicitly rendered in 'Prelude', it is clear that Linda - and, to a lesser extent, Beryl - are alarmed about the positions in which they find themselves. The dislocation of Linda's body and mind is a manifestation of the physical move which she and her family have made to a different house. The current unfamiliarity of her new surroundings gives a platform for the 'Other' to manifest itself. She feels cut off from the world which she knows due to the family's relocation to an isolated geographical location.

Whilst the majority of Linda's hysterical symptoms in 'Prelude' relate to nervous problems and depression, we do not learn a great deal about her physical self; rather, we become familiar with her muddled interiority, and the way in which this manifests itself upon her person. Linda metaphorically loses control over her body at points: '… she floated, held up in the air', [20] but at other times, she is aware of her own body, and the beauty which it presents: 'Oh, she was restless, restless. There was a mirror over the mantel. She leaned her arms along and looked at her pale shadow in it. How beautiful she looked, but there was nobody to see, nobody'. [21] Here, Mansfield demonstrates that each glimpse of Linda's corporeal self is bound with her thoughts and feelings; the repeated lament that there is nobody to view her beauty is striking. She wishes to be observed, but when she is, it disconcerts her; she spends her morning 'waiting for someone to come who just did not come', [22] but the same evening, after a conversation with

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[19] *Hystories*, p. 19

[20] *The Collected Stories*, p. 18

[21] *The Collected Stories*, p. 27

[22] *The Collected Stories*, p. 19

her husband Stanley in their new bedroom, Mansfield writes: 'At the words, and with the cold wet dew on her fingers, she felt as though the moon had risen - that she was being strangely discovered in a flood of cold light.' [23] This confusion over wanting to be seen, and then being frightened of the consequences adds to the confused 'point of view on this world' which Linda expresses. She at once wishes to be a part of the world, but feels safer when away from it.

* The notion of 'strangely discovered' is a curious one, and coupled with 'flood', it feels as though Linda has little control over anything, be it her own body or the things which surround her. The moon is, of course, incapable of observing her, but she has the constant feeling of being watched by the presence of 'they'. Linda is, once again, at odds with herself here; her emotions change rapidly from one moment to the next, and she seems both volatile and vulnerable. It is unclear as to why she suddenly feels threatened here, and no articulation of Linda's thoughts is given.

Later on in the story, however, Mansfield begins to make the reader aware of these thoughts: Linda 'hugged her folded arms and began to laugh silently. How absurd life was - it was laughable, simply laughable. And why this mania of hers to keep alive at all? For it really was a mania, she thought, mocking and laughing.' [24] From this point onwards, Mansfield demonstrates the way in which this loss of control manifests itself in rather frightening ways, particularly with regard to Linda's physical body. This movement is perhaps one of the most archetypal actions of 'madness' to the observer. The very use of 'mania' here is striking, bringing with it as it does psychological depth, as well as a recognisable name for some of the episodes which Linda experiences. It is a clinical, impersonal term, which shows an abnormal, or non-normative, state of consciousness. The quote is interesting in another way, demonstrating and defamiliarising

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[23] *The Collected Stories*, p. 27

[24] *The Collected Stories*, p. 39

as it does the foundationally normal desire to stay alive. The 'mania' which Linda has causes her to become a victim of her own mental circumstance. As the story progresses, an insight is given into Linda's state of mind:

> 'I dreamed about birds last night,' thought Linda. What was it? She had forgotten. But the strangest part of this coming alive of things was that they did. They listened, they seemed to swell out with some mysterious important content, and when they were full she felt that they smiled. But it was not for her, only, their sly secret smile; they were members of a secret society and they smiled among themselves. Sometimes, when she had fallen asleep in the daytime, she woke and could not lift a finger, could not even turn her eyes to left or right because THEY were there; sometimes when she went out of a room and left it empty, she knew as she clicked the door that THEY were filling it. And there were times in the evenings when she was upstairs, perhaps, and everybody else was down, when she could hardly escape from them. Then she could not hurry, she could not hum a tune; if she tried to say ever so carelessly - 'Bother that old thimble' - THEY were not deceived. THEY knew how frightened she was; THEY saw how she turned her head away as she passed the mirror. What Linda always felt was that THEY wanted something of her, and she knew that if she gave herself up and was quiet, more than quiet, silent, motionless, something would really happen. [25]

Linda does not adhere to the expected deportment of a mother; where she should be ever-present, always energetic and reliable, she shuts herself away from what could be termed 'real life'. The fact that she has 'fallen asleep in the daytime', and the implication that this is not an unusual occurrence shows that she is keeping barriers between

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[25] *The Collected Stories*, p. 18

herself and her children. The presence of Mrs Fairfield, the children's maternal grandmother, as well as a servant girl named Alice suggest that the children are cared for by others; regardless, the act of falling asleep in the day is problematic. She is hiding herself, both physically and mentally; whether a voluntary act or not, she is regaining her own space.

* Mansfield suggests that as both woman and mother, Linda is forever being observed; perhaps not by her family, who largely seem to take her for granted, but by things unseen, which she feels are always there. The repeated mentions of 'they' throughout the paragraph, along with the capitalisation of the world given for emphasis and Otherness, demonstrate just how infiltrating and powerful the very idea of something 'Other' is for Linda; her loss of control is evident again here. Mansfield makes clear that Linda's material body and point of view are not working compatibly here; rather, her loss of control denotes the loss of her basic motor skills. This is another example which goes against Beauvoir's quotation; Linda's individual self is compromised, and it appears as though her mind and body are working against each other.

The baby bird which Linda dreams of becomes 'a baby with a big naked head and a gaping bird-mouth, opening and shutting'. [26] Comparisons can be drawn with repressed sexuality here, and also suggests a terror which she feels toward children. For Linda, this vivid dream, in essence, is a way in which to supplant and subvert reality for her; she lives her life almost entirely in a dream state, where those who are closest to her physically are the most distant mentally. Throughout 'Prelude', Linda's point of view is obscured by the lack of control which she has over her own mind and body.

Mansfield also demonstrates the manifestation of the physical body in 'Prelude', whilst focusing on the character of Linda's younger sister, Beryl Fairfield. Whilst Linda's material body is shown, she does not have full control over it, due to the symptomatic

[26] *The Collected Stories*, p. 15

nature of her hysteria. Beryl can, in this way, perhaps be seen as the reverse of Linda. With Beryl, at first, we are largely given corporeal details. She is split into two selves - the true, or real, self, and the 'other self', the false self. The latter is ever-present, and is blamed for those actions which she regrets taking: 'It was her [Beryl's] other self who had written that letter. It not only bored, it rather disgusted her real self'. [27] Beryl is aware of this 'other self'; it is not hidden from her. Mansfield soon moves on to describing the muddled subconscious depths into which her mind almost drowns: 'She [Beryl] jumped up and half unconsciously, half consciously she drifted over to the looking-glass'. [28] A falsity is also hinted at; the idea is brought to the surface that Beryl is not even true to her personally distinctive selves. [29] She does recognise, however, that she is made up of separate selves: '"… I'm always acting a part. I'm never my real self for a moment."'. [30] She even holds conversations with her false self, chastising herself for her 'despicable' [31] behaviour. This self-knowledge manifests itself in an important way; whilst she has an awareness of her true and false sides, she is [removed: quite] unable to do anything about it; she can merely attribute it to the unrelenting misery which she constantly feels.

* Beryl's voice is presented as a sense of otherness too: her 'faint far-away voice seemed to come from a deep well'. [32] This serves to highlight the helplessness which she feels, and the way in which she is not fully in control of her physical self: 'And for what tiny moments she was really she. Beryl could almost remember every one of

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[27] *The Collected Stories*, p. 41

[28] *The Collected Stories*, p. 41

[29] *The Collected Stories*, p. 42

[30] *The Collected Stories*, p. 42

[31] *The Collected Stories*, p. 43

[32] *The Collected Stories*, p. 14

them.' [33] This unificatory process which Mansfield expresses suggests that at this point in the story, Beryl is simultaneously a 'thing of the world' and a 'point of view on this world'. This whole, real self is juxtaposed against the false self which Beryl believes she has. Beryl's self-awareness acts as an antithesis of sorts to that of Linda's.

* Whilst there are moments in which Beryl's mind and material body are shown as separated, it is clear that she has the ability to be more in control of her self than Linda does. She has an awareness of what troubles her; it does not just manifest itself in dreams. She also has a consciousness which is heightened in comparison to Linda's, particularly due to her recognition of the 'Other' self which she believes exists within her. Beryl's fears are internalised rather than outwardly exhibited, and the way in which she has recognition, and even understanding, of these fears demonstrates that she is more of a unified character in terms of her material body and point of view on the world. In this way, Beryl as a character can be said to support Beauvoir's quote. Whilst there are complications with regard to her multiplicity of selves, she recognises their existence within her. She can thus be seen to be in control of her physical body and point of view, which largely work and exist together.

In 'Prelude', the power which Linda feels 'they' have over her cows her, and renders her incapable of performing even the simplest task for fear of being hurt, or judged: 'she woke and could not lift a finger, could not even turn her eyes to left or right'. It renders her so terrified that she is quite unable to move. 'They' is also personified, taking on incredibly human, and loaded, characteristics, such as 'sly', and practicing to deceive, something which, of course, inanimate objects and those who are not human are unable to do.

* Simultaneously, Linda essentially renders her self as an unmoving object, taking on characteristics of the inanimate: 'was quiet, more than quiet, silent, motionless,

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[33] *The Collected Stories*, p. 43

something would really happen.' She does this as an act of protection, of shielding her own body from a presence which she feels could alter it entirely. This renews the idea that all power has been lost from her; she cannot utter her thoughts and feelings in a manner which feels at all true, or human, and she is also rendered incapable of acting in ways which she would ordinarily choose. She has to make herself still and 'silent' in order to retain some sense of her own self; this is really the only way in which she feels that such a thing can be done. The use of movement within the passage is the antithesis to Linda's immobility; 'coming', 'lift', 'turn', 'went', 'left', and 'escape' are all completed movements on the face of it. When contrasted with Linda's inability to go anywhere, however, they show just how great an effect the presences have had upon her. They have essentially prohibited the free movement of her body.

* The physical movements here seem uncomplicated, but they denote the almost robotic manner in which she carries herself. It is as though her body is still able to perform these actions, but they are quite at odds with her complicated sense of self. She does not express a 'point of view' as such here; rather, it is as though her mind is absent, focused so intently as it is upon the apparitions which surround her. The presence of 'they' prohibit her from having a normal level of control over her physical body. This is particularly apparent when Mansfield addresses that 'Sometimes, when she had fallen asleep in the daytime, she woke and could not lift a finger, could not even turn her eyes to left or right because THEY were there', demonstrating that the presences which Linda believes fill her room are more powerful than her own bodily control. Despite the lack of control which she more often than not has over herself, Linda is always a 'material thing in the world', but there is rarely a semblance of her existing as a 'point of view on this world'. Rather, her world is peopled by sinister invisible forces, and she denotes far more thought to these, and what they may do to her, than she does her 'real' life.

The idea of growth is present in the extract. Linda herself, whilst having physically grown whilst pregnant, and now inhabiting an altered biological body, is tormented by the presence of the aforementioned Other which grows within the paragraph. Language such as 'swell' and 'full' emphasise transformation in rather a stifling manner. The passage of time, too, is interesting; Mansfield uses 'sometimes' and 'times in the evening' to show that Linda's ordeal is not a one-off. The past tense also reiterates this recurrence of the situation, and suggests that the more it occurs, the less safe Linda feels, both within the confines of the home and her own body.

The use and positioning of pronouns is interesting in 'Prelude': 'But it was not for her, only, their sly secret smile; they were members of a secret society'. Here, Mansfield uses both Linda and the unidentified presences as subjects in the sentence through free indirect discourse; both parties seem to hold the same importance, and as the sentence goes on, the presences even seem to overshadow her a little. Linda is the focus of this paragraph; indeed, it opens with one of her own thoughts. As it goes on, however, 'they' leave her incapable of any kind of productivity, and make her question her own place within the space of her new home. There is no sense of safety for Linda; perhaps this sense of the unknown, in an unfamiliar house in a new district, overshadows her entirely as a self. The use of 'only' here is interesting; it implies that their smile is both for her and separate from her. This is, again, threatening behaviour; she has privileged access to those who are haunting her, and which nobody else can see. This, however, raises further questions as to why she alone is being tormented; her hallucinations exist for her and her alone. Surely, her experience is far more terrifying than it would be with the inclusion of another party to legitimise what she sees.

There is a removal here, both in a very literal sense - in that the family have moved from one house to another - and in a more subtle manner. Perhaps not entirely deliberately, Linda removes herself from the familial unit: 'in the evenings when she was

upstairs, perhaps, and everybody else was down'. She already feels quite detached from it in that, as mentioned, her family all have their own interests and ways of being. This physical removal of herself into a space in which she is continually tormented, however, make one think that the very nearness of her children and husband have an awful effect upon her mental health. The phrasing '… when she could hardly escape from them' both continues the idea of the threat of 'they', of the other, as well as its placement within the sentence suggesting that 'them' is also used in relation to her family.

The very presence of 'they', first in Linda's mind, and then in the rooms in which she is supposed to feel the safest, even seems to make her scared of herself: 'THEY saw how she turned her head away as she passed the mirror'. It is as though Linda is so unsure of her positioning, and her power within her private rooms, that she shies away from the notion of being a self, and inhabiting her own space. The function of the mirror in reflecting what is within a room is perhaps also shied away from because Linda is worried about what she will see within; if there is no physical manifestation of those whom she views as the sinister 'they', it throws her own mind into question, and builds upon unspoken ideas of hallucinations and symptoms of hysteria.

* Similarities can be drawn in this manner between 'Prelude' and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1892 work *The Yellow Wallpaper*, a story which demonstrates the unnamed narrator's postnatal depression, and her slow spiral into madness after being forced to take a rest cure. She begins to hallucinate that there is a semblance of a woman - or sometimes a collective of women - trapped between the wall and the yellow wallpaper which covers it: 'Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.'

[34] Perkins Gilman's narrator has been able to define in some ways what haunts her, but Linda is removed from these specificities, and knows only that she is being tormented by something bigger and more powerful than herself.

Despite this, the sinister edge of the room aims to take any personal space in which she feels safe, or comforted, away. Whilst on the face of it the use of 'they' seems to relate to the birds which are mentioned in Linda's dream, as one reads on, it appears to refer to something much darker, and echo the idea of the 'coming alive of things'. The very positioning of 'they' throughout suggests that any of the privacy which Linda is able to claw away from her family and their demands is taken away, almost as though she is being punished for wanting to exist as a woman first and foremost, and a mother in a secondary sense. The capitalisation of 'THEY' reiterates the something threatening which Linda cannot escape from, no matter how much she may try to rail against it. She herself is conjuring up this sense of overwhelming otherness which seeks to stifle her, and it is related solely to her interiority. 'They' feel like a ghostly presence: 'because THEY were there… THEY were filling it'. There is something otherworldly about them, and this sense is exacerbated because Mansfield never displays specifically what 'they' pertains to. Rather, the 'they' relates both to this intangible sense of being overpowered, and to the inanimate objects which surround Linda. This also refers to Linda's loss of control, which she can do nothing whatsoever about. The language used when she speaks seems both out of character, and out of place; she feels threatened, and her utterance of 'Bother that old thimble' seems to fit neither with the situation, nor her feelings. It holds none of the power which the presences around her have over her; it is almost as though they have leeched her very being of any capacity to hold her own.

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[34] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1952/1952-h/1952-h.htm> [accessed: 07/04/2017]

Linda is kept apart from the presences in her room: 'they were members of a secret society and they smiled among themselves'. This exclusion could be said to reflect the alienation which she feels within her own family. Stanley is out at work for much of the day, and her children are very much wrapped up in their own girlhood games; there is no set place for her, aside from that of motherhood, and this she finds problematic. Mansfield's use of 'secret' reflects both the ways in which Linda feels she is barred from things, and in which she has to keep her fears and nervousness as hidden as is possible from her family. She undergoes her crisis of personhood, and of womanhood, alone; she really has no choice in the matter. The only overseers of her condition are 'they', something which terrifies her. They interpolate, call, and address her, as they do not anyone else; in this manner, she is privy to their actions.

Whilst the majority of Linda's hysterical symptoms in 'Prelude' relate to issues which have developed outside of her control - for instance, the emotional removal which she feels from members of her family: '"Are those the children?" But Linda did not really care; she did not open her eyes to see', [35] and the 'sharp and defined' feelings coupled with a sudden hatred which she feels for her husband [36] - we do not learn a great deal about her physical self, particularly in comparison to Beryl. Rather, we become familiar with Linda's muddled interiority, and the way in which this manifests itself upon her person. Indeed, Kaplan writes: '*The Aloe* becomes, through its evolution into "Prelude," an awakening into female sexuality. It is also a rejection of male modes, and this strategy is apparent in its all-over structure: its multiplicity, its fluidity, its lack of a central climax, and its many moments of encoded sexual pleasure'. [37] Linda has been a

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[35] *The Collected Stories*, p. 11

[36] *The Collected Stories*, p. 39

[37] Kaplan, p. 30

sexual being solely in terms of biological procreation to date; she has birthed healthy children as far as the exterior world is concerned.

* Personally, however, Linda strives for the outlet of sexuality in order to better express herself; to set her apart from others, and make her an individual amongst the largely faceless mass of women. For Linda, this vivid dream, in essence, is a way in which to supplant and subvert reality for her. She lives her life almost entirely in a dream state, where those who are closest to her physically are the most distant in her mind. Kaplan argues that Linda 'strains against her given role and does not want to be a mother. She avoids her children and dreads the sexuality that might lead to the birth of yet another one…' . [38] Her ambivalence toward motherhood and responsibility is again left behind whilst Linda fills her dreamworld; her subconscious imagination is used as an escape for her. The future which she sees mapped out for herself as the story goes on is an uninspiring, conventional one: '"What am I guarding myself for so preciously? I shall go on having children and Stanley will go on making money and the children and the gardens will grow bigger and bigger…"'. [39] There is an embedded sense of fear here; it is as though, with the repetition of 'bigger and bigger', something ominous and uncontrollable lays ahead of her. She has an anxiety about the future, and seeming to know what it will hold, particularly in terms of her having more children, only exacerbates this. Her 'point of view toward the world' is evident here, but it is not a positive one; rather, it is steeled in a sense that her life is already laid out for her, and there is nothing which she can do to change it. Her material body will be used for further procreation; she will thus be fulfilling the role of wife and mother.

As I have discussed, 'Prelude' explores a dislocation of the self with regard to its protagonist, Linda. She has little control of her physical body throughout, and her psy-

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[38] Kaplan, p. 31

[39] *The Collected Stories*, p. 39

che is clearly troubled. Through Linda, Mansfield is able to subvert conventions of motherhood. Linda is not a typical maternal figure - she shuts herself away from her children, and leaves them in the care of others, for instance. She is seen as quite separate from them throughout the majority of the story, much of which focuses upon her creating space for herself. I have discussed her hysterical symptoms, using Elaine Showalter's definition of hysteria to do so. The otherworldly 'they' which fill and haunt Linda's room has been examined in this section, particularly with regard to the effects which their presence has on Linda. The unreal in this story appears highly realistic to her, another element which both suggests and explains the impairment of her physical body and perspective. The 'coming alive of things' poses a threat, and the phantoms which fill her room are far more real to her than her own family, who exist outside it.

I have contrasted Linda with Beryl here. There are differences between the pair both with regard to the control which they have over their material bodies and points of view. Beryl recognises the multiplicity of self which is present within her; she has a real self and an 'other', false self. Whilst in this manner she is at odds with herself, the very fact that she has an awareness of it allows her to be more in control than Linda, who does not recognise that there is anything wrong with the way in which she views either herself or the world around her. In some ways, Beryl is powerless, unable to consolidate the different selves which exist inside her, but she is presented as far more together with regard to her body and point of view, thus echoing the sentiment of Beauvoir's quote.

'Prelude': Kezia

In the same story, as evidenced through Mansfield's choice of language, Kezia is painfully aware of the perfect little girl exterior which she is supposed to present to the world, and hides her emotions beneath a veil. When she begins to cry, for example, 'She sat with her head bent, and as the tear dripped slowly down, she caught it with a neat little whisk of her tongue and ate it before any of them had seen'. [40] For Kezia, fright is found in every corner of her world; the darkness is a living thing which chills and threatens her, [41] and her vivid imagination often pictures swollen animals rushing toward her. [42] When the masculine influence is about to be introduced into their closed world, Kezia and her sisters adhere to conventions expected of them: 'The three little girls sat up to table wearing large bibs embroidered with their names. They wiped their mouths as their father came in ready to be kissed'. [43] The position of Mansfield's child characters, as well as the adults, is rather precarious:

> Mansfield's wonderland is indeed a place where dream and nightmare recurrently overlap. References to hallucinations or nightmarish happenings give surrealistic undertones - characteristic of wonderlands - to the child's realm. Space and shape are affected. People and objects assume deformed dimensions, for the child's scale of measurement is flawed by a low-angled perspective… Unlike Alice, in Mansfield's stories it is not the children who grow or shrink, but the size of others, and the world which surrounds them. [44]

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[40] *The Collected Stories*, p. 7

[41] *The Collected Stories*, p. 8

[42] *The Collected Stories*, p. 10

[43] *The Collected Stories*, p. 26

[44] Delphine Soulhat, 'Kezia in Wonderland' (*Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, ed. Janet Wilson, Gerri Kimber and Susan Reid, London: Continuum, 2011), p. 104

The seemingly idyllic geographical location in which the girls are located, and the sheltered setting in which they play, shows terrific insight into the mind of both parent and child. The mindsets of each distinct group is not compared directly to one another, but one can clearly see the boundaries of Linda's motherhood, and how her gentle, hidden hysteria could - and does - affect the vulnerable girls she has birthed. There is a notion of heredity present in the story; Kaplan identifies that Kezia 'shares so many of her mother's internal responses'. [45] She is not a carbon copy, in the sense that she has the ability to think for herself, and is beginning to form her own opinions, but it is clear that the environment which she inhabits, and her mother's traits, have had some bearing on her developing character. Kezia seems to have a similar tendency to Linda to hide her feelings from her family; just as Linda is shut away in her bedroom, where her hysterical symptoms manifest themselves far more so than they do in company, Kezia tries to hide her upset when she and her sister, Lottie, are 'cast off' [46] from travelling to the new house in the buggy:

> Pooh! She didn't care! A tear rolled down her cheek, but she wasn't crying. She couldn't have cried in front of those awful Samuel Josephs. She sat with her head bent, and as the tear dripped slowly down, she caught it with a neat little whisk of her tongue and ate it before any of them had seen. [47]

Whilst it is clear that Kezia cries involuntarily in this excerpt, Mansfield demonstrates that she does have an overarching awareness of her self, as well as the will to control her actions; there is a self-preservation about her. She has a fierceness in her; even as

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[45] Kaplan, p. 30

[46] *The Collected Stories*, p. 5

[47] *The Collected Stories*, p. 7

she recognises the tear, she is adamant that she is not crying. She also has the wherewithal to hide any evidence of her upset. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir writes: '… a woman's body - and specifically the girl's - is a "hysterical" body in the sense that there is, so to speak, no distance between psychic life and its physiological realisation'. [48] This sense of crying against one's will, whilst not a markedly hysterical symptom, does show that the mind can have effects upon the material body.

* Whilst one could attribute this involuntary action of Kezia's to her youth, the fact that her mother and grandmother have travelled onward without her, or the stressful upheaval of moving to somewhere similar, it hints at the way in which there are elements already visible in Kezia which she is unable to control. This ties in with her mother's hysterical body. In this manner, 'Prelude' explores the way in which psychosomatic symptoms that manifest in the mind can be just as damaging as those which emerge in the physical body. This idea of hysteria also carries through from Linda to her daughter; whilst Kezia does not demonstrate any manifestations of madness, as such, this idea of heredity is ever present in the story. Like her mother, she experiences a strange and sudden sense of fear whilst in their old house, somewhere she feels quite at home:

> The windows of the empty house shook, a creaking came from the walls and floors, a piece of loose iron on the roof banged forlornly. Kezia was suddenly quite, quite still, with wide open eyes and knees pressed together. [49]

The emptiness of the house, coupled with the stormy weather outside, gives a sense of the unfamiliar to a place which Kezia has previously felt comfortable in. This is contrasted with the otherworldly elements which Linda believes are observing her, and

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[48] *The Second Sex*, p. 356

[49] *The Collected Stories,* p. 8

crowding in around her, in the new house. Linda's surroundings are completely unfamiliar, and although Kezia recognises where she is, the absence of the furniture which should be around her causes the space to become almost unknown to her. The 'quite, quite still' here is paralleled later in the story, when Linda believes that '… THEY wanted something of her, and she knew that if she gave herself up and was quiet, more than quiet, silent, motionless, something would really happen.' In its own way, this motionlessness is both an involuntary thing, as well as something which both feel may protect them from the unfamiliar wider world. The 'wide open eyes' are a physical representation of the concern which she feels, and her 'knees pressed together' suggest that she is aware of her own body, and has a need to feel comforted.

Whilst in context Claire Davison is discussing an occurrence in the real life of Mansfield - a camping trip which the author took when still a teenager - when she writes that the girls in question are given 'a hint of self-awareness, canniness and psychological depth', [50] the quote can easily be applied to the younger characters in 'The Aloe', and later 'Prelude'. Isabel is described by Linda as 'much more grown up than any of us', [51] and is frequently admonishing her sisters, and telling tales on them if they do something wrong. Kezia, particularly, has much 'psychological depth' to her; whilst young, she has fully established thought patterns and feelings of her own, rendering her a convincing creation. There is a scene which echoes the fear which Linda feels at being observed by the moon. On the first night in the new house, Kezia lays in her grandmother's room: 'Outside the window hundreds of black cats with yellow eyes sat in the sky watching her - but she was not frightened.' [52] This shows Kezia's feeling of safety; she believes that

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[50] Claire Davison, *Translation as Collaboration: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and S.S. Koteliansky* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 101

[51] *The Collected Stories*, p. 21

[52] *The Collected Stories*, p. 13

the cats are real, but perhaps due to the domesticity and familiarity which they embody, she does not see the necessity to feel fear.

* Kaplan writes of the story's evolution as 'an awakening into female sexuality', with 'its many moments of encoded sexual pleasure'. [53] Even for Kezia, this awakening holds power, with the non-traditional gender roles in the girls' games. Through the medium of play, she questions the place of men and women within the familial structure: '"I hate playing ladies," said Kezia. "You always make us go to church hand in hand and come home and go to bed."', [54] and, in doing so, she 'shares so many of her mother's internal responses'. [55] This heredity is important, particularly in demonstrating Kezia's growth; whilst she too is a distinct being, she is evidently influenced by those around her, and her mother is the obvious first point of contact in her communication with the world and society.

Kaplan believes that during the story, Kezia 'is still polymorphous, responsive to a whole range of stimuli. But she already fears any that might overpower her. Her sexuality requires mutuality, not assault'. [56] Kaplan picks up on Kezia's awareness of the wider world around her; whilst she has relatively inherent freedom as a child, she already recognises that growth and the expectations of others around her could alter her permanently, and irrevocably. Regardless, Kezia continually looks to her mother for reassurance in her new surroundings: she and sister Lottie 'stared with round solemn eyes first at the absolute necessities and then at their mother', while more sure of herself Isabel 'was perched beside the new handyman on the driver's seat'. [57]

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[53] Kaplan, p. 30

[54] *The Collected Stories*, p. 30

[55] Kaplan, p. 30

[56] Kaplan, p. 30

[57] *The Collected Stories*, p. 5

In this section, I have explored how Kezia has already learnt to mask her emotions due to her growing awareness of societal conventions. She recognises that she should project an image of perfection to those around her. Throughout 'Prelude', Mansfield gives an insight into Kezia's young mind, and the way in which Linda's mothering - or lack thereof - has already had great bearing upon her character. The "hysterical" body which Beauvoir identifies, and believes is present in 'a woman's body - and specifically the girl's' is exaggerated by the current upheaval which Kezia is undergoing, particularly with regard to the family's house move. The notion of the hysterical body hints at things already present in Kezia which she is unable to control; in effect, it suggests an inheritance between her mother and herself. This is explored further in 'Prelude' when Mansfield points out similarities between Kezia's and Linda's sudden fears. Kezia's awakening, and growing awareness of herself, has also been focused upon here. Her body and point of view are always seen to be working in tandem, and thus her character fully supports Beauvoir's quote. At no time does her mind appear separated from her physical body.

Bliss (1918)

In an extended story like 'Prelude', or 'The Aloe', Mansfield allowed herself far more space to draw up the complexities of a troubled character such as Linda. 'Bliss' is different in its approach, and Bertha relatively undeveloped in comparison to Linda. Overarchingly, however, there are strong similarities in both stories. The notions of recognising a [removed: somewhat] painful existence, having to hide elements of one's character to better conform, and of being watched - or not, as the case is for Linda at points - are prevalent. Bertha Young in 'Bliss', for instance, is introduced through a series of

relatively simple actions, which one would tend to associate with a child rather than a grown woman. 'Bliss' begins like so:

> Although Bertha Young was thirty she still had moments like this when she wanted to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at - nothing - at nothing, simply. [58]

The actions which she wishes to take are childish; whilst her body is able to perform actions such as 'run', 'take dancing steps', and 'stand still and laugh', Bertha knows that she is perceived as too old to do such things. Her point of view is at odds here with what she will allow her body to do; the actions above are thoughts only, rather than physical moves which she will make. Bertha comes to recognise that her interiority and exteriority should be markedly different if she does not want to draw attention to herself. Chantal D'Arcy suggests that 'the most prominent aspect of 'Bliss' is that the actual events or occurrences related are so insignificant as to be almost trivial, while the female protagonist is so simply portrayed as to appear, at first hand, entirely devoid of any depth or personality.' [59] Such superficiality, on the face of it, serves to make the childish actions which Bertha forces herself to conceal all the more prominent.

The difficulty of expression for Bertha is shown throughout; the manifestation of her inner feelings is rather problematic when one is aiming to project a sane image of oneself to society: 'What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss - absolute bliss! … Oh, is

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[58] *The Collected Stories*, p. 69

[59] Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy, 'Katherine Mansfield's 'Bliss': "The Rare Fiddle" as Emblem of the Political and Sexual Alienation of Woman (*Papers on Language and Literature*, Volume 35, Number 3 (Summer 1999)), p. 244

there no way you can express it without being "drunk and disorderly"? How idiotic civilisation is!' [60] Eventually, Bertha comes to recognise that her interiority and exteriority need to be markedly different if she does not want to draw attention to herself.

* Society expects her to be a staid, unemotional being, concerned with such things as finding a husband and correctly raising children. As it is, she is rather detached from her child, through the fault of societal dictates rather than her own doing. When trying to act in a maternal role to Little B, helping with her bath and feeding her, she is overruled by her daughter's nanny, who is fearful of Bertha encroaching upon her own territory, which she is employed for. Indeed, when Bertha wants to make a comment about it surely being dangerous that her small girl is able to grab a strange dog's ear, she daren't, for fear of being reprimanded. [61] In a way, it is almost as if Bertha is being nannied too; there are a distinctive set of rules which she must follow to maintain her high-class stature to the outside world. For this reason, she is almost forced to keep her feelings hidden, and thus her exterior and interior worlds are at odds: 'But in her bosom there was still that bright glowing place - that shower of little sparks coming from it. It was almost unbearable'. [62]

In her work on 'Bliss', Moran establishes just how well Mansfield's stories can be analysed in a wealth of different ways; she differs in her approach to most other critics by using an explicitly Freudian framework when discussing Mansfield's stories. She gives the following interpretation of Bertha: 'But if the longing for "bliss" evidences an enduring preoccupation with the pre oedipal mother and her surrogates, the conventional gender distinctions Bertha draws reveal the intervention of post-Oedipal knowledge', [63]

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[60] *The Collected Stories*, p. 69

[61] *The Collected Stories*, p. 70

[62] *The Collected Stories*, p. 69

[63] *Word of Mouth,* p. 46

and argues that what Bertha calls 'bliss' is 'a release at once sexual and unearthly'. [64] She also pinpoints the physical embodiment of hysteria upon this particular story, with its knock-on effect: 'Her hysteria becomes the hysteria of the text, which in turn becomes the hysteria of the reader'. [65] She call's Mansfield's approach 'radical' , explaining that 'Bertha's hysteria results not only from a repressed allegiance to the preoedipal mother, but from the refusal of a violent and violating heterosexuality'. [66]

* Moran also infers that Bertha's state is one of repression, a theme which Mansfield demonstrates throughout her short stories which feature woman protagonists. With regard to this criticism, Linda Burnell is repressed by her motherhood, and Bertha by her lack of freedom within the household. Whilst Moran goes further in her interrogation of Bertha's character than I would be inclined to using this perspective, her use of Freud's interpretations of character certainly adds psychological depth and insight.

To draw a parallel to Beauvoir's quote, Bertha's body and point of view are linked to one another throughout. Whilst, unlike Linda in 'Prelude', she is able to control her bodily movements, she is still constantly aware of what she wishes to do, and would do, was nobody watching her. Bertha still holds onto her childish and spontaneous actions, but they are manifested solely in her mind - for instance, she stops herself when she wants to 'run instead of walk' and 'bowl a hoop'. Her mind is aware of the social conventions which would not accept such actions from a thirty-year-old woman, and allows her to stop herself from physically enacting them.

Pictures (1917)

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[64] *Word of Mouth*, p. 46

[65] *Word of Mouth*, p. 66

[66] *Word of Mouth*, p. 76

With Mansfield, an area of focus which has been relatively little discussed to date is the otherness which she presents in her stories. In 'Pictures' (1917), singer Miss Ada Moss, who is currently unemployed, walks the streets of London, looking for opportunities, which do not present themselves as readily as in her youth. Miss Moss seems surprised by the way in which her body has changed; she is no longer visibly the young woman who found it almost easy to become employed in her field. Her body has aged even though her mind has not; Mansfield matter-of-factly demonstrates this when she crossly gets out of bed, and 'stared at her fat white legs with their great knots of greeny-blue veins'. [67] After seeing her reflection in the mirror, and almost lovingly chiding herself with the endearingly expressed phrases 'old girl' and 'silly thing', [68] she is described as a 'stout lady in blue serge'. [69] Just moments afterwards, she catches her reflection again, and an almost out of body experience is described: 'But the person in the glass made an ugly face at her'. [70] Giving her reflection a mind of its own, at least fleetingly, creates a powerful sense of otherness; it is as though Miss Moss barely recognises herself.

* Interestingly, in 'Prelude', a similar sort of otherness is hinted at with the previously discussed character of Beryl; again, the same technique is used, in which Beryl looks at her physical self in the mirror, but barely recognises it: 'What had that creature in the glass to do with her, and why was she staring? She dropped down to one side of her bed and buried her face in her arms'. [71] This despair is echoed throughout 'Prelude'. The mirror confronts a juxtaposition between the protagonist's sense of self, and what they see reflected back at them.

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[67] *The Collected Stories*, p. 93

[68] *The Collected Stories*, p. 94

[69] *The Collected Stories*, p. 94

[70] *The Collected Stories*, p. 94

[71] *The Collected Stories*, p. 42

Later, when Miss Moss finds herself in conversation with other female performers, the reader can see just how her life has altered; the necessity for her to actively ask casting director Mr Bithem for work 'four times a week for the past - how many weeks?' [72] demonstrates that she is unwilling to give up on herself. She still believes that there are opportunities out there for her; even if, on a subconscious level, she perhaps realises that there is little hope for a woman of her more mature years to be given good, paid employment - after feeling downtrodden following an unsuccessful casting, for example, she begins to imagine wildly inflated scenarios for herself in which she is discovered, and paid 'Ten pounds a week' [73] for working as a contralto singer - the very act of her asking for work serves to give her legitimacy.

* She is told by a 'dark, mournful girl' [74] in the waiting room - filled largely with 'early ones', and 'later ones', [75] who sit on their laps, perhaps on a subconscious level to obscure the youth of the person sitting beneath them in some way - that a particular manager '"wanted someone young, you know"'. [76] Coupled with Mr Bithem's comments - that he had received a 'call for twenty-eight ladies today, but they had to be young and able to hop it a bit', and his insinuation that she is not well-versed in new techniques such as 'sand-dancing', [77] a fragmented Us and Them culture is created, setting her apart from others solely due to her age.

Interestingly, throughout 'Pictures', little is mentioned about Miss Moss' singing talent or dancing ability; it seems to have been sidelined in favour of youth and vanity, particularly when in possession by the younger women around her. There is little re-

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[72] *The Collected Stories*, p. 97

[73] *The Collected Stories*, p. 98

[74] *The Collected Stories*, p. 96

[75] *The Collected Stories*, p. 96

[76] *The Collected Stories*, p. 96

[77] *The Collected Stories*, p. 97

spect discernible from others that Miss Moss was once in their position, or that at some point in the future, they will be in hers.

The sense of otherness which Miss Moss has, both internally and externally, is reiterated when a similar scene is described whilst she is in a London park after the failed casting: 'And then she sat down on one of the benches to powder her nose. But the person in the pocket mirror made a hideous face at her, and that was too much for Miss Moss; she had a good cry. It cheered her wonderfully'. [78] Rather than her putting the occurrence out of her mind as best she could, as she did previously, she takes it as a productive experience, and does her best to see the positives: 'It's one comfort to be off my feet', she says to herself. [79]

* In the paragraph which follows, she is still rather hopeful that a situation can be found imminently for herself; when debating whether to enter a cafe, she tells herself: 'It's such a place for artists too. I might just have a stroke of luck'. [80] The path which she chooses, to follow an unknown man - described as a 'stout gentleman', [81] a similarity can at least be drawn between the pair - from the cafe which she is sitting in, after he utters just five sentences to her, seems a little out of character, and here the story ends. Perhaps, Mansfield is insinuating, hope can be found in the most unlikely of places. Miss Moss clearly feels a little more human to be addressed in a manner which shows that said stout gentleman is physically attracted to her; through the simple act of leaving her table and walking out after him, she is regaining some of her youth, and some of her humanity. It is an interesting parallel issue that this man has nothing to do with Miss Moss' career; rather, he has chanced upon her in a separate public space.

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[78] *The Collected Stories*, p. 98

[79] *The Collected Stories*, p. 98

[80] *The Collected Stories*, p. 98

[81] *The Collected Stories*, p. 99

Miss Moss has a body and mind which work in tandem with one another; she exists as both a physical body, and a point of view. However, her mind perceives her throughout the story as younger than she is, which causes her to be [removed: quite] at odds with herself. Despite her obscured picture of herself which exists in her mind, Miss Moss is still a character who can be said to inhabit the world fully, as she is 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'.

Conclusion

Particular emphasis and close readings have been given in this chapter to 'Prelude', an extended short story which follows our female protagonist, Linda, through a time of turmoil, and demonstrates the severe effects which this has on her physical body, and upon her thoughts. I have considered three other female characters who form the focus of other stories, and have examined expressions of hysteria and selfhood in Mansfield's work. The idea of inheritance between Linda and her daughter Kezia in 'Prelude', and the manifestations of 'Other' in the story have been discussed. I have also touched upon notions of selfhood and autobiography in Mansfield's fiction.

I have gone into depth with examples of ways in which Mansfield's prose explicitly splits the mind and the body in her female characters, particularly with regard to Linda. There is often a sinister edge to Mansfield's exploration of self, be it an echo of postnatal depression, or more simply the process of ageing. For Mansfield, the body is, per Beauvoir's quote, a 'thing of the world' and a 'point of view on this world', but the two things are not always intrinsically linked to one another in her narrative. This is particularly the case with regard to Linda; her interiority and psychosomatic symptoms muddle her further. Her mental state, and the emotional conflict which is ever present for her,

has a great effect on her physical body and how it works, but her 'point of view' is often blurred, or even obscured.

Other characters who have been focused upon here are a kind of antithesis to Linda, and can support Beauvoir's hypothesis; they are present in the world, both a thing and a point of view upon it. Beryl and Kezia in 'Prelude', and Bertha Young in 'Bliss' all have an awareness of themselves, and are able to alter to their behaviour accordingly, to fit in with the expectations which society has of them. Miss Moss is more of a complicated character to categorise, given that her view of her own self is [removed: quite] at odds with what others see; however, at no point is it suggested that her mind and body are not working in tandem with one another.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the work of Jeanette Winterson, looking at the young protagonist Silver in *Lighthousekeeping*, and exploring the use of gender fluidity in *Written on the Body*. In *Lighthousekeeping*, Silver is in her formative years, and is being shaped into a young woman. In *Written on the Body*, we are unaware throughout of the narrator's biological sex, but learn a lot about their perspective and thought patterns. A juxtaposition is given with the narrator's lover, Louise, who is learnt about almost entirely through depictions of her physical body, and not at all with regard to her thoughts or perspective.

Chapter Four: Jeanette Winterson

Introduction

This chapter will focus particularly upon Winterson's *Written on the Body*. In this novel, we are party to the narrator's every thought and utterance, but learn nothing of their sex or physical body, and little about their lover Louise is revealed that is not related to her material body. In this, and in much of Winterson's other work, the body and point of view often split from one another and then converge; there is a necessity for both to work simultaneously for one to function to one's full capacity. Thus, Winterson poses a challenge to Beauvoir's notion of selfhood - that a body is at once 'a thing of the world and a point of view on this world' - as she focuses on the notion of one material body being comprised of numerous selves.

This multiplicity of self is a recognised trope throughout Winterson's work; in *The PowerBook*, for instance, Winterson writes: 'We think of ourselves as close and finite, when we are multiple and infinite.' [1] In her novel *Weight*, a retelling of the myth of Atlas and Heracles, the physical body is, of course, of great importance; it allows Atlas to shoulder the world. Atlas is also the first person narrator of the whole, and, through crafting a voice for his character, Winterson suggests that his perspective, and point of view toward the world, have previously been overshadowed by his physical body and evident strength. In her introduction, she states that she wanted to move 'far away from the simple story of Atlas' punishment', and to 'explore loneliness, isolation, responsibility, burden, and freedom' [2] in her retelling.

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[1] Jeanette Winterson, *The PowerBook* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000; repr. London: Vintage, 2001), p. 103

[2] Jeanette Winterson, *Weight* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2005), p. xiv

* She adds weight to the myth; she reimagines Atlas as rather a sensitive being, whose enormous, muscular figure is [removed: quite] at odds with what he thinks and feels inside. When Atlas reveals how the shouldering of the weight of the world feels, the narrative demonstrates the pain he feels, which we, as humans, can relate to; she adds, essentially, a personal aspect to the myth, allowing us to sympathise: 'There was a terrible pain in the seventh vertebra of my neck. The soft tissue of my body was already hardening. The hideous vision of my life was robbing me of life. Time was my Medusa. Time was turning me to stone.' [3] In the novel, his mind and body are rarely shown as split from one another; he is continually aware of himself, and is, in support of a gender-neutral version of Beauvoir's quotation, 'both' a material body within, and a point of view towards, the world. Of course, Atlas is a male rather than a female character, but Winterson's use of body and mind in this instance certainly suggests that the material body and mind exist simultaneously.

There are marked differences between the characters who are the focal points of each of these extracts. The genderless narrator of *Written on the Body* is an anomaly with regard to my chosen focus of female characters in this thesis, but he or she warrants discussion for two reasons: firstly, due to the stereotypes which Winterson eschews, and secondly with regard to the way in which mind and body are entirely separated through the use of two different characters, who live - and love - in close proximity to one another. Silver, the main character in Winterson's later novel *Lighthousekeeping*, is a young orphaned girl who is learning about the world around her from her lighthouse home, and the lighthousekeeper named Mr Pew who took her in. I have included her in this discussion because she has such an awareness of self that she fully supports Beauvoir's quotation in that her body and point of view are ever present; she is thus an antithetical figure with regard to the characters I will consider in *Written on the Body*.

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[3] *Weight*, p. 43

Lighthousekeeping (2004)

In *Lighthousekeeping,* a coming-of-age novel which is far more straightforward than *Written on the Body* in its approach, a young orphaned girl named Silver is taken in by a lighthousekeeper on the Scottish coast. The notion of the adopted daughter is a repeated, and arguably biographical, trope which appears across Winterson's fiction. The novel echoes, in some ways, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, in both an obvious titular sense, and in the way in which the lighthouse metaphor is used in a philosophical sense. Unlike in *To the Lighthouse*, however, the lighthouse in *Lighthousekeeping* is actually reached and inhabited by the protagonists. In both novels, the lighthouse itself stands as a point of safety and stability in an uncertain and shifting world, as a place in which true human emotion can play out, and as a longed-for destination in which one may be able to find, or rediscover, oneself. It stands as a physical symbol denoting strength, tenacity, and guidance. For Silver, it is a place in which her imagination is encouraged to grow, and in which she is able to forget her orphanhood and loneliness.

> As I was no longer Making Progress, I let my mind drift where it would. I rowed my blue boat out to sea and collected stories like driftwood. Whenever I found something - a crate, a gull, a message in a bottle, a shark bloated belly-up, pecked and pitted, a pair of trousers, a box of tinned sardines, Pew asked me the story, and I had to find it, or invent it, as we sat through the sea-smashed nights of winter storms.
>
> A crate! Raft for a pygmy sailing to America.
>
> A gull! A princess trapped in the body of a bird.

A message in a bottle. My future.

A pair of trousers. Belonging to my father.

Tinned sardines. We ate those.

Shark. And inside it, dull with blood, a gold coin. Omen of the unexpected. The buried treasure is always there. [4]

As one might expect with a novel set almost entirely within the confines of a lighthouse, Silver dreams, and daydreams - here, she 'let her mind drift where it would', as though such an action has some semblance of control over her interior world. The imagery which she thinks up is heavily influenced with her surroundings; stories are compared to 'driftwood', and those objects which she finds, metaphorically, are bound up with conceptions of such a seaward life. She attaches importance to these objects - a pair of trousers which belong to her deceased father, for example, and her childish, hopeful need to believe in such things as buried treasure. While this example is concerned with Silver's point of view, and the ability of her mind to create such a vivid dreamworld, her body is still present in a physical way, however briefly, in her daydreams. She imagines herself rowing, collecting, and finding things, albeit in a passive manner.

There is an awareness throughout the novel of Silver discovering her own identity, both bodily and in an interior sense. Her own point of view towards the world is inextricably linked with the stories which she has heard, and the histories which she has been taught. In this way, she is influenced by Mr Pew, the lighthousekeeper, who is concerned with the growth of her imagination and grasp of history; he continually tells her stories of nineteenth-century clergyman Babel Dark, whose story intertwines with Silver's as the novel goes on. Silver uses Dark's past to make sense of her own, essentially.

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[4] Jeanette Winterson, *Lighthousekeeping* (Florida: Harcourt, 2004), p. 92

Silver is a character living through her formative years in this novel. It should be noted therefore, that her body is always changing, becoming something different to the child's body which she was used to. Silver mentions bodies from time to time, but rarely her own; she talks, for instance, of a gull as 'A princess trapped in the body of a bird', and she does recognise the importance of the physical being: 'And yet, the human body is still the measure of all things.' [5] She discusses scientific elements of her body, and shows an awareness of how important it is in terms of a working machine: 'The simple image is complex. My heart is a muscle with four valves. It beats 101,000 times a day, it pumps eight pints of blood around my body. Science can bypass it, but I can't.' [6] This quite detached medicalisation of the biological body is discussed in far greater detail in *Written on the* Body, and my analysis of this can be found later in this chapter.

* Silver's own body, with regard to descriptions and noticeable changes, however, is [removed: somewhat] obscured. She refers cleaning to her act of her own body 'in darkness', thus hiding it from herself. [7] There is not a great deal of emphasis upon the way in which she is changing, but her character does shift as she becomes older, culminating in a trip to Italy, and her falling in love with someone known only as 'You'. We learn next to nothing about this loved person, or lover, but Silver does demonstrate the differences between them, observing the importance of another person's body in relation to her own: 'Breathe in. Breathe out. Your rhythm different to mine. Your body not mine; the celebrated strangeness of another.' [8] This body which she loves is not a perfect one; she describes it variously as 'not so small', and 'snoring'. [9] This recognition of another physical body is at odds with her own; she recognises so many details about

[5] *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 147

[6] *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 148

[7] *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 18

[8] *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 183

[9] *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 184

her lover, and the way in which they move, but says very little about her own self. Silver is, however, continually aware of her point of view, and whilst she reverts to daydreams at times, this very notion of letting her 'mind drift where it would' is an element of character building.

* Silver, as she grows, learns with regard to the world around her, and is almost entirely conscious of her thoughts and feelings, those things which constitute her interior world. This awareness which she has of her self posits her as a fully formed body within the world, as per Beauvoir's quotation. Silver certainly has a point of view towards the world, and is attentive to her place within it, both with regard to the confines of her existence in the lighthouse, and in the wider world.

To conclude, there is not so much a demonstration of the multiplicity of self in *Lighthousekeeping*, as there is in a lot of Winterson's other work. Yet Silver's growing awareness of the world does translate into recognising the importance of the body. The bodies of stories which she and Pew tell one another are another representation of this. She is continually aware of people, whether those around her, or those in the stories which she is told, and their importance. Whilst we learn little about Silver's own physical body, it is clear from the thought patterns and utterances which she offers throughout the novel that she and her body are presented as one, 'both a thing of the world, and a point of view on this world'. Her character can thus be seen as a representation of Beauvoir's idea that presence in the world is dependent upon the body and mind working in tandem.

Written on the Body (1992)

The most striking evocations of body and point of view in Winterson's work, however, can be found in *Written on the Body*. *Written on the Body* is intimate and domestic, and is comprised of a relatively small cast of protagonists, and few secondary figures who appear as anything but memories. In this novel, Winterson subverts several common novelistic conventions, most obviously the identification of a named and biologically sexed narrator or protagonist.

* The two protagonists in the novel have been characterised in a highly specific way; the reader is shown the point of view and interiority of the genderless narrator in minute detail, but learns next to nothing about their physical body, to the extent that it is quite impossible to establish their sex. The narrator is physically present in the world, but their body is deliberately obscured. Their lover, Louise, on the other hand, is physically present in her feminine and feminised body, but very little of her point of view or perspective is displayed in the novel, other than in her dialogue. The genderless narrator is one of the pivotal elements of Winterson's book, and in this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which her use of language and syntax allow the blurring of biological sex [removed: gender distinction] to occur, along with the viewpoints of other critics, who largely believe the narrator can be characterised as a lesbian.

In Louise, Winterson has created a physical figurehead of womanhood. A juxtaposition of sorts has thus been provided within *Written on the Body*. Neither protagonist in the novel is a whole character; Louise is manifested almost entirely as body, and the narrator almost entirely as mind. In this way, Winterson essentially goes against Beauvoir's notion of a body and perspective working in tandem; she demonstrates a clear split between the two, and suggests that a person is not always complete as one may think. As Louise's point of view is concealed in the novel, we are aware that she is part of the narrator's world, but her place in the physical world is obscured. The narrator provides many perspectives, but we are largely unaware of the way in which his or her

body interacts with the wider world. In this manner, both characters pose a challenge to Beauvoir's ideation, that the body is at once a thing of the world and a point of view toward it.

The way in which we are not even party to the narrator's preferred gender adds to this rather striking contrast between mind and body. Much information is given about both characters, but Winterson has gone about this in very different ways. Of course, a lot can be gained from this. As Julie Ellam notes, by 'keeping the secret of the narrator's gender, [Winterson] undermines the metaphysics of being. The narrator is both he and she and neither…'. [10] Even as Winterson withholds information from the reader, they are at the same time given a lot of detail to create a sense of being told deep, dark secrets by the narrator, and the reasoning for his or her falling in love with the bodily Louise. Winterson delineates this rush of love through the narrator's thought patterns, and the actions which Louise's body makes in order to reciprocate this love.

* When Louise is diagnosed with leukaemia and her physical body undergoes a dramatic transformation, Gemma Lopez writes: 'Louise's corporeal disintegration under the assault of the affliction becomes a powerful metaphor which runs parallel to the dissolution of the narrator's identity through the novel's refusal to inscribe its narrative voice within a specific gender.' [11] The physical affection which the pair demonstrate, as well as the deterioration of their relationship, echoing Louise's physical deterioration, goes hand in hand with the complex feelings the narrator has for Louise, and the love which is suggested on Louise's behalf through the tool of speech.

* *Written on the Body*, then, is striking in its use of exterior bodies and interior thoughts and perspectives, both in terms of the relationship and the individuals involved. This is an important motif in the novel, as although parts of the relationship are

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[10] Julie Ellam, *Love in Jeanette Winterson's Novels* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), p. 109

[11] Gemma Lopez, *Seductions in Narrative: Subjectivity and Desire in the Works of Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson* (New York: Cambria Press, 2007), p. 154

divulged, these revelations are very much one-sided, coming as they do solely from the perspective of the narrator. There is therefore an unevenness bound up in their relationship, and no sense of balance with regard to the participants. We are aware of ways in which their bodies interact with one another, but the emotional element is revealed only from the narrator's perspective. When viewed together, the narrator and Louise are the epitome of phenomenology; [12] throughout, one is party to the narrator's thoughts and feelings, and the intricacies of Louise's physical body. The inclusion of a genderless character alongside a markedly feminine one fits with the genderless element of phenomenology.

In this discussion, I am taking Winterson's titular idea of the body as a canvas, and will be discussing the corporeal vessel of the body with regard to animality, and the body as an object. The latter includes the body in relation to science, and its medicalisation. With the idea of the body as a canvas, we learn about the narrator's past loves, and in part about his or her life largely through the depiction of memory. With Louise, however, very few of her memories are given; rather, we are shown her past with regard to her physical body, and her relationship with her husband:

> The light breaks colours under her eyelids. She wants the light to penetrate her, breaking open the dull colds of her soul where nothing has warmed her for more summers than she can count. Her husband lies over her like a tarpaulin. He wades into her as though she were a bog. She loves him and he loves her. They're still married aren't they? [13]

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[12] Phenomenology, as previously discussed in the chapter on Virginia Woolf, is defined as 'the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/> [accessed: 30/08/2018])

[13] Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992; repr. London: Vintage, 2014), p. 73

Louise is the focus of the novel, essentially, its constant, and the narrator is quickly infatuated with her. Elgin, who appears very little in the later scenes in the novel, manifests as a kind of grotesque phantom, an ever-present love rival for the narrator, whom she both loathes, and yet is a little obsessed with due to her connection and infatuation with Louise.

The melding of both mind and body is described in the following way in *Written on the Body*, when the narrator talks of Louise: 'It was necessary to engage her whole person. Her mind, her heart, her soul and her body could only be present as two sets of twins. She would not be divided from herself.' [14] This notion of the interdependent body and mind, of one depending on the other, lies at the core of this thesis. A juxtaposition of sorts has been provided within *Written on the Body*. The physical affection which the couple demonstrate goes hand in hand with the complex feelings the narrator has for Louise, and the love which is suggested on Louise's behalf through the tool of speech.

* This alone is a reason for discussing *Written on the Body*; its use of exterior and interior are striking and important, both in terms of the relationship, and the individuals involved. Body and mind are not inextricably linked here, and Winterson clearly marks these elements as separate from each other throughout the novel. She therefore obscures the narrator's body, as well as Louise's perspective and thought patterns. This goes against Beauvoir's notion of the synchronised material body and point of view.

In the novel, love is something which both appeals to, and manifests itself within, the body and point of view. This all-consuming love, which is written about in detail throughout the novel, appears genderless, like the narrator. It has been used as a char-

[14] *WOTB*, p. 68

acter in itself, and its nature shifts and changes throughout the story. Winterson highlights its importance in passages such as the following:

> Love demands expression. It will not stay still, stay silent, be good, be modest, be seen and not heard, no. It will break out in tongues of praise, the high note that smashes the glass and spills the liquid. It is no conservationist love. It is a big game hunter and you are the game. A curse on this game. How can you stick at a game when the rules keep changing? I shall call myself Alice and play croquet with the flamingoes. In Wonderland everyone cheats and love is Wonderland isn't it? Love makes the world go round. Love is blind. All you need is love. Nobody ever died of a broken heart. You'll get over it. It'll be different when we're married. Think of the children. Time's a great healer. Still waiting for Mr Right? Miss Right? and maybe all the little Rights? [15]

Like the narrator in Winterson's novel, 'love' is a genderless character, a manifestation of feeling. Essentially, Winterson establishes that anyone can be in love with anyone else; the feeling can be just as strong in a normative heterosexual relationship, as it is for a same-sex couple. Love does not discriminate. As the above passage suggests, love has human qualities; it 'will not', rather than cannot, 'be good', 'be modest', or 'stay silent'. The very fact that it uses the very human quality of making 'demands' is not a positive trait, but it does render love identifiable to the reader. To 'break out in tongues of praise', however, is more positive.

* Winterson has essentially drawn together both positive and negative traits of the human persona, allowing love to become personified, as a character in its own right; rendering it anthropomorphic. Its volatility is expressed too; when love hits the 'high

[15] *WOTB*, pp. 9-10

note that smashes the glass and spills the liquid', the disturbing and dangerous occurs. This is at odds with the use of 'high note' in itself; used alone as a phrase, it denotes a peak in one's life for as long as it lasts. Through its use, and the following unpredictability of what it causes to happen, it is as though Winterson is denoting love as an unstable and all-consuming force; it has peaks of its own, before the possibility of it embarking upon an erratic and unstable course.

With the sentence 'big game hunter and you are the game', Winterson is highlighting both the kind of game which one can play - the Game of Love, if you will - and also the idea of predator and prey. With the 'game hunter', biological sex is invoked without relating to the gender of characters; it has masculine connotations in itself. This also displays the way in which Winterson displays the body whilst using inexplicit language to suggest gender markers. 'Game' also places the human further down the food chain; they become the hunted, and play with the idea of predator and prey, as Winterson does throughout this passage. One can fall prey to love; one is 'hunted', or sought out, by a partner, and can be exploited, or terribly hurt, in one's very vulnerability.

* Winterson's use of 'conservationist' is placed in opposition to the idea of game and hunting. Whilst it plays upon the aforementioned unpredictability of love, the negative connotations which come with 'game hunter' and hunting plays on the fact that the stronger force in a relationship has power over the weak. Love may not last; it cannot be forever preserved when the ideas of predator and prey come into a relationship. Winterson's repeated use of 'game' above - 'a curse on this game', as well as the literal playing of croquet in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* - is distinctly at odds with the seriousness of love, and of the narrator's love affairs throughout *Written on the Body*. The narrator becomes infatuated with every partner he or she has, unable to see past anything but their all-consuming love - until it all goes sour, that is, and af-

fairs are had. 'How can you stick at a game when the rules keep changing?' appears as a plea to the reader, essentially asking how one can love the same person despite the very nature of love being so volatile. This unsettled emotional landscape which both Louise and the narrator are part of is exacerbated by the uncertainty of Louise's illness. With regard to Beauvoir's quotation, although she appears as a person within the world, Louise's place within it is as precarious as their relationship.

'Alice in Wonderland' is a markedly feminine, and incredibly recognisable, gender marker; it points to a kind of sheer innocence, and a childish naivety and curiosity. In the playing of croquet, which, of course, is a famous scene from Carroll's book, the 'game' of love appears to manifest itself as something more controllable in a very unsettled world; the very fact that it has rules provide the antithesis to the capriciousness of love. The use of Alice can perhaps be viewed as unpredictable too. Wonderland, in which Carroll's character finds herself after falling down a rabbit hole, is not a world which one can access in real terms, but perhaps one feels that one can reach it when in love. The idea of the dream must be discussed here; with regard to leaving the world, which manifests itself in many of Winterson's books, the dream allows one to figuratively travel to a world such as Wonderland, which is at once strange and familiar. Love, Winterson suggests, is dreamlike in itself; its edges are often blurred and cannot be defined - much like her genderless narrator in *Written on the Body*. '… love is Wonderland isn't it?', the narrator asks above. This use of a question mark again acts as a plea to the reader; such uncertainty is both welcomed at first, and then shied away from, once the person in question realises that they are perhaps awfully out of their depth. Here, Winterson also echoes the distorted connection between the physical world and perceptions of it which runs through *Alice in Wonderland*.

Many clichés about love follow Winterson's evocation of Wonderland, which sharply swing from the positive, comforting mantra - 'All you need is love' - to the

markedly negative and impatient 'Nobody ever died of a broken heart'. The idea of preserving love affairs with marriage - 'It'll be different when we're married' - is a little worrying; yes, one might hold onto to their love, but can the initial, overwhelming feelings actually be reclaimed, or stay in place? The use of 'Mr Right? Miss Right?' is playful, relating as it does to both sexes. Here, Winterson serves to close any clues about the sex of the narrator by following one with the other in quick succession. The use of 'Right', with its capitalisation, thus appears both as a name in its own right, and plays up to the cliche of finding the 'Right' partner. This, of course, has implications with regard to the wider novel, and the overall topic of the body; the narrator believes that he or she has found the perfect partner in Louise, but Louise is still physically attached to Elgin. She is married to him, and has made vows to love him in sickness and in health, the former in which she now resides. The very fact that he is a doctor, and more specifically an expert in the cancer which she is diagnosed with, ties them bodily together; the skills which his body can perform have the potential to heal her physical body.

The way in which Winterson presents the body and mind as separate in *Written on the Body* has been focused upon in detail here. The genderless narrator is manifested almost entirely as a point of view, and Louise as a physical body. In this way, neither can be said to constitute a fully formed character; they lack facets of personhood, and the absence of body with regard to the narrator, and point of view with regard to Louise, stresses this. In this way, we learn a lot about the characters throughout the novel, but through considerably distinct approaches. The characters go against Beauvoir's quotation when viewed singly; it is only when one views them together that the narrator and Louise can become 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world.'

Written on the Body: Gender and Sexuality

Following on from the previous discussion about *Written on the Body*, I shall now highlight just how important sex and gender are to the novel. The undefined narrator has been cleverly wrought, and there are clues throughout about whether they could be biologically defined as male or female; for instance, he or she offers comparisons between their own self and literary characters, who range from Christopher Robin, [16] and a womanising Lothario, [17] to the ultra feminine Alice in Wonderland, and Lauren Bacall. [18] Specific traits, too, are gendered; for instance, the narrator says 'Why had I hit her? I'd always prided myself on being the superior partner…', [19] which feels, on first glance, rather a masculine declaration, with its use of violence, and evocation of the traditionally historical superiority which males held over women. Indeed, this idea of macho violence is explored toward the end of the novel, when the narrator tussles with Elgin, Louise's husband: 'I grabbed him by his tie and jammed him against the door. I've never had any boxing lessons so I had to fight on instinct and cram his windpipe into his larynx', [20] and 'I saw Elgin's look of complete astonishment as my fists, locked together in unholy prayer, came up in a line of offering under his jaw'. [21] Such masculine-leaning markers are cancelled out by other, more feminine traits; for instance, the decidedly feminine 'skimpy garments' [22] and 'little body stocking' [23] which the narrator wears.

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[16] *WOTB*, p. 61

[17] *WOTB*, p. 20

[18] *WOTB*, p. 41

[19] *WOTB*, p. 86

[20] *WOTB*, p. 170

[21] *WOTB*, p. 172

[22] *WOTB*, p. 75

[23] *WOTB*, p. 142

The gender markers which Winterson uses serve to render the narrator's sex as even less defined. Reina van der Weil has written of such choices throughout Winterson's work:

> In the majority of Winterson's novels, the female body is the paramount object of erotic desire and love, within both heterosexual and homosexual unions, and poetic passages celebrating the female body abound. Yet sometimes the body plays a more ambiguous role, particularly regarding its (un/multi-)gendered qualities. We encounter characters that either cross-dress – temporarily and outwardly taking on a different gender – or possess conflicting characteristics. [24]

This use of '(un/multi)-gendered qualities' is a paramount narrative choice within *Written on the Body*; through the use of so many 'multi'-gendered traits, the narrator is able to retain his or her biological sex as a secret, and thus remains gender-ambiguous to the reader. Sonya Andermahr argues that: 'Winterson stages a number of episodes which capture the narrator's ambiguous relation to both gender positioning and gender politics, particularly the politics of feminism.' [25] This idea of staging leads one to think of the novel - as, indeed, all novels are - as an elaborate play of character, rather than as a realistic depiction of life. Andermahr implies that the narrator is theatrically presenting a distorted persona, deliberately camouflaging or costuming what should be obvious about themselves - for example, their biological sex and physical looks. The novel essentially acts as a smokescreen, allowing the narrator to hide his or her self, and revealing only what he or she wants to.

Regardless, this has not prohibited critics from trying to guess the narrator's sex, with many veering toward the identification of a female. Whilst Jim Shepherd 'suggests

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[24] van der Weil, p. 35

[25] Sonya Andermahr, *Jeanette Winterson* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 78

that the intensity of focus of Winterson's meditations on the loved one's body gives love a physicality and materiality within the text, but that this strength is hampered in particular by the genderless narrator', [26] he is still convinced that there is enough evidence within the text to establish that the narrator is female. [27] Cath Stowers [28] postulates that the novel should be viewed through the lens of lesbian fiction, reasoning that: 'Winterson has, through previous novels, developed a focus on female sexuality, attempting to reposition sexual pleasure from the feminine experience, rather than the masculine point of view.' [29] This does not make a claim based upon Winterson's own sexuality, but upon how she writes. Heather Nunn asserts that the narrator is 'unstably gendered' rather than genderless:

> Winterson's text first explores Louise's body, then splits it asunder into its constituent parts, before finally reinventing it anew for a transgressive, specifically lesbian sexuality. Such a strategy is only possible because of the narrator's non-gender-specific identity, since it serves to highlight society's vulnerability in relation to patriarchal gender binary divisions, through his/her troubling, intriguing position. [30]

This notion of the splitting up of the body relates to the scientific dialogue which Winterson provides in the novel, in which Louise's body is examined in terms of its biological machinery. Nun's belief that this separation of self causes Louise to have a 'specifically

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[26] Makinen, p. 111

[27] Jim Shepherd, 'Loss is the Measure of Love' (*New York Times Book Review* (14 February 1993)), p. 10

[28] Cath Stowers, 'The Erupting Lesbian Body: Reading *Written on the Body* as a Lesbian Text' (in *'I'm telling you stories'*, ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods)

[29] Makinen, p. 123

[30] Makinen, p. 117

lesbian sexuality' is limiting and feels contradictory, suggesting as it does that the narrator must be gendered as feminine. This notion, along with 'troubling, intriguing position' of the narrator, goes against Nunn's idea of the 'unstably gendered' narrator. To have a 'specifically lesbian sexuality' means that the narrator has to be female too, something which is clearly not intended due to the [removed: gender] ambiguity of biological sex.

Jane Haslett posits that Winterson's bodies, 'in all their postmodern complexity, are all queer bodies: deconstructing notions of a stable bodily identity and a "natural" body, and they afford the female reader the confidence to participate in being part of, or relating to, the differences that surround us at the end of the twentieth century.' [31] This idea of the 'queer body', on the face of it, denotes an openness of gender, given that there is no biological distinction within it. It is, however, a highly politically loaded term, which does not aim for neutrality. Queer is a distinctive category, an umbrella term which encompasses those who do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender.

* Some critics have been utterly dismissive of Winterson's trope, seeing the genderless narrator as a lazy creation: 'The genderless narrator, striving to blur the distinctions between heterosexual and lesbian stereotypes, presents a self-indulgent, wallowing monologue little different from the conventional 'NW3 adultery novel'', writes Nicoletta Jones. [32] It has also been said that Winterson's use of the genderless narrator does not go far enough; Miner is of the opinion that 'the subversive intent of the genderless narrator was not fully explored'. [33] This idea of Winterson not going far enough in her creation of a genderless narrator serves to overlook the very objective of the novel.

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[31] Jane Haslett, 'Winterson's Fabulous Bodies' (in *Jeanette Winterson: A Contemporary Critical Guide*, ed. Sonya Andermahr (London: Bloomsbury Publishing 2007)), p. 53

[32] Nicoletta Jones, 'Secondhand Emotion', *Sunday Times* (13 September 1992), Books section p. 11)

[33] Makinen, p. 111

Winterson wished, in *Written on the Body*, to explore how love would be presented if it omitted gendered signifiers. [34]

There is an overall reasoning, however, that because Winterson herself identifies as a lesbian, and her debut novel, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* told of her coming out in a semi-autobiographical story, the narrator simply *has* to be a woman. Makinen goes along with this line of thinking, adding to it that because Winterson has used love triangles and lesbian relationships in her earlier books, *Written on the Body* must follow suit, and cannot deviate from it. [35] She even goes as far as to situate the narrator of *Written on the Body* as 'her'. [36] Makinen's book gathers critics together who view the book largely through lesbian literary criticism and queer theory, and discusses whether it is an 'effective lesbian text' [37]. Whilst some of the essays in Makinen's book argue their points very well, the book in itself has a limited scope, due to its lack of neutrality.

* Cath Stowers has pinpointed that for her, the *way* in which Winterson explores the body makes it more of a feminine telling than a masculine one, thus pointing to the narrator being a woman. Marilyn Farwell agrees, writing: 'The focus on the anatomy of the female body rather develops a lesbian commitment to the erotic pleasures of the flesh, reclaiming the woman's body for women's desire…'. [38] Farwell believes that the focus upon the sensual in the novel, as well as the descriptions of physical form of the women's body, is arguably at odds with Winterson's obscuring of sex; the narrator's appreciation of Louise's body is perhaps not masculine in the way in which it has been depicted. The language which has been used - for instance, when Louise is described as

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[34] Jeanette Winterson, *Love* (London: Vintage, 2017)

[35] Makinen, p. 2

[36] Makinen, p. 114

[37] Makinen, p. 3

[38] Makinen, p. 123

'looking like a Pre-Raphaelite heroine', [39] 'Your smell soothes me to sleep, I can bury myself in the warm goosedown of your body', [40] and 'If I could not put Louise out of my mind I would drown myself in her' [41] - is more consistent with the way in which a female may describe the body of a lover than a male would, in the most generalised sense. Of course, there are deviations from the norm, which again serve to cancel out any clues of the sex of the narrator. [Removed: It may be that our narrator is a more masculine-leaning biological female, or an effeminate male.] Such descriptions do not work as a clue, or a pointer as to the narrator's sex; they are still neutral. There is neither a male- nor a feminine-leaning slant to the prose of the novel as a whole, despite occasional overtly feminine descriptions and depictions. The use of scientific language alone serves to cancel out the narrator's more descriptive and poetic thoughts about Louise's body.

Why might a reader need or want to know the sex of Winterson's narrator? The choice of a genderless narrator implies that love itself is genderless, and does not therefore rely on biological clues or markers in order to come to fruition. There is actually no evidence, either for the sex or the 'lesbianism' of the narrator; any gendered clues and markers dotted throughout the text effectively serve to neutralise one another. I align myself with Farwell's further comments, in which she believes that the novel:

> … entices the critic of lesbian fiction but remains problematically aloof… Winterson depicts a love relationship in which the beloved, Louise, is identifiably fe-

[39] *WOTB*, p. 99

[40] *WOTB*, p. 123

[41] *WOTB*, p. 111

> male, but the lover, the first person narrator, exhibits no corresponding gendered markings, and in fact displays an ambiguous variety of stereotypical markings.' [42]

Soon after something decidedly feminine is mentioned in *Written on the Body* - for instance, 'I felt like the girl in the story of Rumpelstiltskin who is given a cellar full of straw to weave into gold by the following morning' [43] - a masculine-leaning comment is made. This move on Winterson's part throws the reader off; they begin to read the narrator as a genderless being. As Gregory J. Rubinson notes, 'there is no information about the narrator's body that can lead us to determine whether the narrator is male, female, transsexual, intersexed, or XXY'. [44] Susana Onega sums up the range of criticism about *Written on the Body*, and its lesbian reading, as follows:

> In other words, the critics' attempts at disambiguating the identity of the narrator miss the very point Winterson is at pains to make – namely, that identity is not a natural given, but a fluid, ever-changing and complex ideological process, determined by the individual's relationship with other individuals. We cannot refer to the narrator as a 'she' ignoring the text's insistence that we use the slashed forms 's/he' and 'her/his' even if having to use the slashes is irritating, precisely because it is this irritation that will challenge and set into question the objectivity of our patriarchal assumptions about identity. [45]

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[42] Marilyn Farwell, *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996)), p. 178

[43] *WOTB*, p. 44

[44] Susana Onega, 'The art of love' <http://manchester.universitypressscholarship.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/10.7228/manchester/9780719068386.001.0001/upso-9780719068386-chapter-3?print=pdf, accessed: 16/05/2017> (in *Jeanette Winterson* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 111

[45] Onega, p. 111

As Onega states, reading *Written on the Body* as a lesbian text is, frankly, both limiting and clichéd. One cannot simply make the assumption that because Winterson is gay, she is unable to write a novel about heterosexuals. The critics who insist that the narrator is female are reading their own prejudices into the novel, and distancing themselves from Winterson's intentions - not, of course, that these have to be sovereign. There have also been critics who believe that Winterson's narrator is transgendered. [46] Although unsubstantiated by Winterson herself, both viewpoints are legitimate, as are any criticisms or critiques of the novel. I shall argue, however, that discovering the hidden sex of the narrator is not at all important in reading *Written on the Body*. The narrator of the novel is clearly bisexual, having had relationships with both men and women; such a sexuality serves to blur gender boundaries even further. Kauer reiterates this, listing, as she does:

> … the remarkable amount of information withheld from the reader about the narrator: name, gender, age, appearance, beliefs, or the narrator's historical and geographical context. It is as if the narrator were talking to her- or himself, a private discourse that would need no objective placement. [47]

This notion of 'private discourse' is important, and would go some way to explain why there has been such an omission of markers in the novel. Makinen paraphrases Duncker's criticism of Winterson, in relation to the obscuring of sex, in her chapter entitled 'Jeanette Winterson and the Aftermath of Feminism' from *'I'm telling you stories*':

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[46] Jennifer A. Smith, '"We Shall Pass Imperceptibly through Every Barrier": Reading Jeanette Winterson's Trans-formative Romance' (*Critique*, v. 52, no. 4 (01/07/2011), p. 412

[47] Makinen, p. 121

> By not declaring a sex, the narrator is forced to conform to heterosexual cliches alongside the experimentation and so 'closes down' the potentially subversive elements of the text. In reproducing the traditional eternal triangle, Duncker believes, we learn more about the narrator's relationship with the rival than with the loved object, who remains a fantasy rather than a realised character. These failings, all of which stem from choosing a genderless narrator, militate against the novel as an effective political text and show up, she suggests, what lesbians lose in embracing queer theory to the detriment of old-style feminist politics. [48]

This notion of learning more about the narrator and Elgin, rather than the narrator and Louise, seems to simplify the novel [removed: somewhat]. Louise is its central focus throughout, and Elgin almost a secondary character. Whilst his presence is, of course, important, particularly with regard to the rivalry which the narrator feels with him in his elevated position as Louise's husband, he is discussed relatively little in comparison to Louise. Duncker writes that Louise 'remains a fantasy rather than a realised character'; if this is the case, it can be attributed to the way in which her point of view and perspectives are entirely separated from her body. We learn so little about what she thinks that the very presence of her physical body against all else might suggest that she is a 'fantasy' in terms of her passivity. The descriptions of her body, in the guise of a loved and sexualised woman, suggest an objectification of her.

Returning to the genderless narrator, Onega paraphrases the work of Hélène Cixous, one of the foremost French feminist critics. Cixous writes about the difficulty of establishing sex and gender, along with a series of concrete gender markers, in the following way:

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[48] Makinen, p. 122

> [To] deconstruct the binary logic of patriarchy involves a reinvention, or rather a rewriting, of the self both for women and men. Consequently, she distinguishes between, on the one hand, the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' as referring to traits that have been socially constructed through language and manifested in everyday experience to reinforce the binary of the couple, and hence of gender; and, on the other hand, the terms 'male' and 'female', which refer to the sexual reproductive role (the body parts) of men and women. This distinction between gender and sex allows her to state that human beings are not 'essentially' women and men but living structures caught up or frozen within historiocultural structures to such a degree that it has long been impossible and is still difficult to imagine anything else. From this, she concludes that all human beings have the capacity to be bisexual in that we all have the qualities and capacities of socially constructed 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits: we can all be emotional, reasonable, passive, active, etc. [49]

This difficulty which Cixous pinpoints with regard to males and females sharing 'socially constructed 'masculine' and 'feminine traits' is elaborated [removed: somewhat] within Winterson's novel. While humans are born with the ability to 'be bisexual', 'living structures' of personhood are unable to exercise a range of stereotypical traits related to both sexes. This is the fault of 'historiocultural structures'. We have 'the qualities and capacities of socially constructed 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits' within us, but rigid societal expectations prevent one from exercising them. By using a genderless narrator, made up of both 'male' and 'female'-leaning traits, she epitomises this difficult distinction between the sexes. While most people identify as either male or female in terms of biological sex, many traits, as outlined, can exist within the same person. One can, of

[49] Onega, p. 112

course, also perform as a gender other than their biological given, or decide to live as a member of the gender opposite to that assigned at birth.

Of her choice to make her narrator genderless, Winterson has stated that after the publication of her first two novels: 'Now I wondered what would happen if we didn't know, weren't told, the gender of the narrator. How would we read love if it didn't come with the usual signifiers?' [50] Winterson had explored both homosexual and heterosexual relationships, in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* [51] and *The Passion* [52] respectively, before embarking on *Written on the Body*. Rather than become an author who writes of similar relationships between same-sex couples throughout their entire oeuvre, *Written on the Body* was essentially a kind of experiment for its author, and a challenge presented to the preconceptions which readers may hold with the evocation of a relationship, or of a particular sex or gender. She goes on to write that she 'wanted to undo assumptions. Assumptions about male and female. Assumptions about desire.' [53]

* Perhaps 2017's *Love*, a collection of extracts from, and personal critique of her work, has been used as an opportunity for Winterson to write back against the tide of critics and reviewers who have assumed that the narrator of *Written on the Body* is female, and Sapphist. The absence of biological sex is not as crucial as one might think when beginning to read; the narrator, whether male or female, still feels like a realistic and multi-layered character creation. The absence of their sex actually has little effect upon the novel. We are aware of the narrator's bisexuality due to his or her past relationships with both males and females, but his or her corporeal manifestation is not rendered as important as the interiority which is shown. Louise's body, on the other hand,

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[50] *Love*, p. 49

[51] Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Ontario: Pandora Press, 1985)

[52] Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (New York: Grove Press, 1987)

[53] *Love*, p. 51

is shown as nothing other than female and feminine, and her corporeality is one of the most important - if not the most important - things about her as far as the narrator is concerned.

In *Written on the Body*, the body is shown both as sexualised and as a medicalised object; the erotic body thus merges with the scientific. Andermahr establishes that in the novel, '… Winterson fashions an extraordinary language of the body, in which the beloved's body is explored, excavated, categorized, fetishized and made love to.' [54] What is 'written on the body' within Winterson's novel is not clearly stated, aside from the idea of a 'secret code only visible in certain lights', [55] but one can see that the body as a literal canvas would hold the past; scars and old wounds depict both the pains of past loves, as well as Louise's current situation as patient. This inscription of processes of both time and illness manifests itself physically, and is concentrated upon as the novel progresses. Winterson's use of scientific prose to depict the body provides a discourse which shows the body in a different way entirely. Whilst such scars and telltale signs of medical intrusion are still present, the personal element is taken away [removed: somewhat] in this section. The body becomes a vessel which is sick, and then treated; whether successfully or not, the reader is unaware. The medicalisation of Louise's body provides a marked contrast to the tender way in which her body is shown by the narrator; whilst still a human body, it becomes far more generalised in Winterson's scientific treatment of it than it does when it is the sole focus of the narrator.

The midsection of *Written on the Body* shows the body as an anatomical object, a generalised vessel, rather than an individual. Winterson provides the headings of 'The Skeleton' and 'The Special Senses' to this section, in which she tries to make sense of the ravages of disease hitting Louise's body and changing it irrevocably. Each short sec-

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[54] Andermahr, p. 76

[55] *WOTB*, p. 89

tion focuses on a separate part of the anatomy of the human body, from the eye to the skin, and begins with a matter-of-fact description which is written as though it has just been plucked from the pages of a medical book: 'The scapula or shoulder blade: the scapula is a flat triangular shaped bone which lies on the superior wall superficial to the ribs and separated from them by muscle.' [56] What follows is markedly more personal, and is told from the perspective of the narrator; in this particular outlined section is written: 'If I'm not careful you'll cut me. If I slip my hand too casually down the sharp side of your scapula I will lift away a bleeding palm.' [57] This pattern is followed throughout the section, and the personalised observations are constantly at odds with, but also rely upon, the medicalisation of each initial entry. This shift from personal to scientific is important; Winterson gives the reader an antithetical way of approaching the body, in which the personal is able to arise from the scientific.

This trope makes sense when one views the novel objectively; Louise has cancer of the blood from which she will not recover, and thus the narrator struggles to come to terms with the 'relish' [58] of Louise's body, whose 'nakedness was too complete' [59] to be anything but overwhelming. The damage to her interior body, which has both occurred and more of which is forthcoming, appears as a marked contrast to the lithe, healthy-looking outer body. This deterioration is managed during the midsection of *Written on the Body*, and acts essentially as a bridge between the healthy-looking Louise, and the same woman, who is later taken away by her doctor husband, and essentially disappears from the novel. The narrator is forced to imagine a slew of fictional reasons for this

[56] *WOTB*, p. 131

[57] *WOTB*, p. 131

[58] *WOTB*, p. 51

[59] *WOTB*, p. 52

bodily disappearance, refusing as he or she does to believe that Louise is suffering, or dead:

> My equilibrium, such as it was, depended on her happiness… I built different houses for her, planted out her gardens. She was in the sun abroad. She was in Italy eating mussels by the sea. She had a white villa that reflected in the lake. She wasn't sick and deserted in some rented room with thin curtains. She was well. Louise was well. [60]

I support Duncker's argument that the 'representation of the body as a land to be scaled, mapped and invaded is… the most effective part of the novel and an indication of the opportunities lost in not "coming out" as a lesbian text'. [61] This cartographical view of the body goes almost hand-in-hand with Winterson's titular idea of the body as a blank canvas, and terminology such as 'scaled', 'mapped', and 'invaded' reinforces the duality which the physical body can hold. One can essentially be as familiar with a map, or a particular landscape, as with a lover's body. Makinen also uses geographical vocabulary to demonstrate the positioning of the body: 'The narrative uses the body itself as the site on which to explore the psychological affects of love, betrayal, melancholy and the complex amalgam of attraction and repulsion that lovers experience'. [62] Her use of 'site' can be seen on both a personal and a wider level; with regard to the former, the body itself occupies a physical space in the world, and with the latter, the very existence of the body allows Winterson to probe and scrutinise different motifs of love.

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[60] *WOTB*, p. 174

[61] Makinen, p. 123

[62] Makinen, p. 117

In this section, I have written about masculine and feminine body markers, and how these cancel one another out. The narrator's body is camouflaged, and costumed in various ways to obscure it further, and thus it is impossible to define the narrator's sex. I have identified many instances of critics projecting their own ideas about the narrator's gender and sexuality. Despite the careful neutrality which is created in the novel, some believe that the narrator is a lesbian (and thus a mirror to Winterson's own sexuality). Others have said that this gesture of a genderless narrator is lazy, or 'not fully explored'. [63] As Cixous writes, every person has traits which are traditionally associated with both genders, all of which have been socially constructed. Each person is a complex being, and will not encompass solely those traits recognised as either feminine or masculine. There is a thus real, recognised difficulty in pinpointing a single gender, and this extends to the novel. Cixous' view is pivotal. It supports the use of a genderless narrator in order to explore relationships, jealousy, and love. Whether the narrator is male or female, it makes no difference; the passion and love which it explores is unchanging. As noted, Winterson herself writes of the experiment which she undertook in *Written on the Body* in order to explore the ways in which we would read love 'if it didn't come with the usual signifiers'. [64]

I have also spoken in this section about the physical body as a canvas or 'site', and the differing ways in which the body can be represented, depending upon the language used to do so. The scientific prose which Winterson employs later on in the novel causes the body to be viewed in a different, and more distanced, way to the body which is sexualised, and again to the body which is loved for all of its flaws. Louise as a patient emphasises the importance of her physical body, and heightens these differences. Whilst we can see the effects of her illness upon her body, due to the lack of expression

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[63] Makinen, p. 111

[64] *Love*, p. 51

of her perspective and feelings, we are left quite unaware of the way in which her illness is affecting her mind.

Written on the Body: The Animal Body

Animal imagery and the scientific body are interconnected at a base level within *Written on the Body*. The conversation about the animal body here is paralleled in *Between the Acts*, which is discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. This can be tied in to Beauvoir's idea that one is 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world', as the animal body is, like the human body, a physical being. Every animal is a 'thing of the world'. Animals are recognised as sentient beings, capable of thought and consciousness. Base instincts are shared with humans, and, on a purely biological level, humans *are* animals. Like Winterson's use of the scientific body, for instance, the animal body on a purely biological level provides another manifestation through which one can view the human body. The animal body is also closely linked to the sexual body in the novel, which I will explore below.

Animal imagery has been woven throughout *Written on the Body*, and in varied ways. When discussing Louise's skin, the narrator writes: 'Your cells fall and flake away, fodder to dust mites and bed bugs. Your droppings support colonies of life.' [65] This idea that excess waste produce can sustain several species is played out elsewhere within the novel. Winterson is perhaps suggesting that despite the body wasting away during Louise's sickness, and itself becoming an excess product to the life which she will lose, not all has been destroyed; she will live on in an elementary manner. In the same para-

[65] *WOTB* p. 123

graph, Winterson suggests that Louise's falling sick enables her body to work harder to protect itself. She states the way in which '… the dermis is renewing itself, making another armadillo layer. You are a knight in shining armour.' [66] The use of battle imagery, with 'knight' here, is a clear reference to Louise's bravery in the face of her sickness and impending loss of life, whilst the nod to the 'armadillo' ties together the scientific and animal readings of the body.

* In the same manner, the narrator writes of Louise's 'shoulder blades like wings', [67] which conjures up an image of a birdlike creature, whilst also perhaps suggesting that the end is nigh, playing as it does to religious ideals of the dead becoming angels. For the narrator, the overseer, images of angels and insects are interdependent: 'You are a fallen angel but still as the angels are; body light as a dragonfly, great gold wings cut across the sun.' [68] Mythical influences are then woven in; Louise becomes 'the winged horse Pegasus who would not be saddled', [69] which demonstrates the loss of control that the narrator has in aiding his or her lover, as well as implying that Louise has perhaps found strength in knowing that she will die.

Bodily comparisons with animals are situated at many points throughout *Written on the Body*, and are emphasised by the narrator's partner, Jacqueline, working in a zoo. This placing of her within a geographical space filled with different species gives a literal overlap of human and animal bodies. Winterson demonstrates that this idea of prey being trapped within a public space has power; she writes that she and Louise 'can't move, caught like lobster in a restaurant aquarium'. [70] Even the space of the home is inhabited by the animal in terms of its products. When Jacqueline finds out about the

[66] *WOTB*, p. 123

[67] *WOTB*, p. 131

[68] *WOTB*, p. 131

[69] *WOTB*, p. 131

[70] *WOTB*, p. 72

narrator's affair and proceeds to destroy the flat which they share, Winterson writes: 'The room looked like a chicken shed. There were feathers everywhere.' [71] This use of 'chicken shed' provides a real contrast between the animal and the human. Whilst a chicken shed is seen as a fine, purpose-built space for birds to be kept, the spaces can be unsanitary and unclean.

* Such animal dwellings are woven throughout *Written on the Body*. In the section of the novel in which Winterson takes a more scientific look at the body, ideas of spaces in which animals exist away from humans, but with human intervention nonetheless, are included. For instance, when the narrator's lover fails to maintain her cleanliness - again, a more animalistic than humanistic trait - the following is described: 'My lover is a kitchen cooking partridge. I shall visit her gamey low-roofed den and feed from her. Three days without washing and she is well-hung and high'. [72] The reference to kitchen here, of course, displays a space in which human and animal converge; animals become the prey, and humans the predator. The human body, which resides within a space intended for an animal, interpolates them into animals themselves.

Even when she discusses sexual acts and eroticism, Winterson's comparisons to animals and unrestrained animal tendencies are paramount: 'She arches her body like a cat on a stretch. She nuzzles her cunt into my face like a filly at the gate. She smells of the sea. She smells of rockpools when I was a child. She keeps a starfish in there… She opens and shuts like a sea anemone.' [73] Through the use of these similes and references to sea creatures, Winterson pulls away from the manner in which she likens Louise to a cat in her initial sentence, and she becomes a more base being. It is as though her

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[71] *WOTB*, p. 70

[72] *WOTB*, p. 136

[73] *WOTB*, p. 73

sexuality drags her down to a lower level - no longer a mammal, but a spineless being lacking a centralised brain - in animal hierarchy.

* The sea creatures mentioned, both starfish and anemones, have complex nervous systems; perhaps Winterson is suggesting that during sexual intercourse, the capacity for thought is no longer important, and one should give oneself over to sensory rather than emotional feeling. This connection is also apparent when the narrator mentions that 'It's well-known that molluscs are an aphrodisiac.' [74] The narrator later extends this use of sealife imagery to Louise's wasting away: 'If I push my fingers into the recesses behind the bone I find you like a soft shell crab', [75] thus implying that such degeneration in the wake of disease causes one to lose control of oneself, just as occurs in the throes of sexual ecstasy. This demonstrates through metaphor how weak the body can become on a physical level.

The narrator, too, uses phrases relating to animality when describing his or her own self; when thinking about whether to tell Jacqueline of the falling in love with another woman, the narrator says: 'Probably I had nothing but dog-fever for two weeks and I could get it out of my system and come home to my kennel'. [76] The end point for this is seen to be enclosed within an animalistic space; like the aforementioned 'chicken shed', the 'kennel' is a place constructed purely for an animal, with none of the comforts a human being may expect from life. This is rather at odds with the narrator's naming of this place as 'home'. Later in the novel, the narrator is 'dog-dumb' [77] after Louise says that she needs three days in order to make a decision about the couple's future. There are more allusions to animalistic cliches too, from 'colt-mad' [78] to the com-

[74] *WOTB*, p. 89

[75] *WOTB*, p. 129

[76] *WOTB*, p. 40

[77] *WOTB*, p. 91

[78] *WOTB*, p. 172

parison of Elgin to 'a little rat'. [79] The narrator also expresses their reliance upon Louise, and their need of her, with sentences such as: 'I am a creature who feeds at your hand.' [80] This use of 'creature' suggests the essential biological foundation which humans and animals share.

Occasionally, relationships between human and animal life are rendered more delicately. The narrator says: 'My eyes are brown, they have fluttered across your body like butterflies' [81], and, in a more sexual manner, 'Your breasts are beehives pouring honey', [82] and '… her mouth fluttering like a moth'. [83] The more gentle comparisons to the animal world relate not to mammals but to insects. The life of an insect is far more fleeting than that of a mammal, and they are less permanent within the world; this could be part of the reason as to why they have been chosen as comparisons with the ethereal Louise. There is also a delicacy about the insect, with wings generally compared to the likes of lace and gossamer, both exquisite and breakable materials. The way in which the narrator recognises that Louise's existence may too be fleeting, and that she is perhaps not long for this world, reinforce the use of the insect as a point of comparison; they effectuate Louise's delicacy and her life, which can, like an insect's, so easily be destroyed.

Perhaps deliberately echoing the moment in Woolf's *Between the Acts* where Giles finds a snake eating a toad on the path, there is an incident with a snake within Winterson's *Written on the Body*. The narrator dreams of an ex-girlfriend, and the following occurs: 'I went to her house one day and poking out of the letter-box just at crotch level was the head of a yellow and green serpent. Not a real one but livid

[79] *WOTB*, p. 166

[80] *WOTB*, p. 124

[81] *WOTB*, p. 117

[82] *WOTB*, p. 123

[83] *WOTB*, p. 172

enough with a red tongue and silver foil teeth.' [84] The unreality of this situation, and the very fact that in such a representation the snake can still be rendered 'livid', is interesting; the inanimate object clearly disgusts the narrator, like the gorging snake does Giles in *Between the Acts*. This manifestation of horror, disgusted surprise, and otherworldliness occurring in the safety of home spaces - from Woolf's garden path to Winterson's letterbox - can be read as an echo between the two texts.

* Clearly, Winterson presents phallic symbolism in one of its most obvious comparisons here - that of the snake and the penis. The serpent within the passage is 'poking… just at crotch level'. Whilst in *Between the Acts*, the snake is used as a point of distinction between the human and animal worlds, and its engorging of an entirely different species harking back to the notion of predator and prey, in *Written on the Body*, the snake's presence serves an entirely different function. Its description reinforces the phallic comparison, particularly with its 'head' and 'red tongue'. The phallic nature of the snake is presented as something grotesque. The snake is a terrifying, animalistic presence; it is something 'Other', and unpredictable. A parallel can be drawn here with Louise's leukaemia, which is just as monstrous and strange, appearing as it did quite without warning. There is a separation, however, from the snake imagery which occurred in the dream, and Louise's illness, which manifests itself in real life in the novel. Carrying on with this motif in the novel, Louise's hair later becomes 'serpentine', [85] as though it has an unpredictable life of its own; its attachment to her body is suddenly outlawed, and it becomes something entirely separate, over which she has no control. This feeling is exacerbated when, at the end of the novel, her hair is rendered 'mane-wide and the colour of blood'. [86]

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[84] *WOTB*, p. 41

[85] *WOTB*, p. 167

[86] *WOTB*, p. 190

My discussion here has focused on the way in which the animal body is connected to the scientific body on a biological level. Thus it becomes a lens through which one is able to view, and to better understand, the complexities of the human body as a 'material thing'. Unlike in *Between the Acts*, where animals are present as physical bodies, *Written on the Body* focuses attention upon the comparisons which can be made between animals and humans. The animal body is represented in different ways in the novel, and Winterson explores different species of animal in order to display differing perspectives of the body. There are references to insects, to larger mammals, and to the almost otherworldly - the comparison of Louise's shoulder blades to wings, for example, which in context seems to embody the image an angel more than it does a bird.

* Winterson also probes the physical spaces which animals inhabit, relating these to the life of the narrator, and to those around her. The narrator's first partner in the book, Jacqueline, works in a zoo, and the house, after it has been destroyed, is described as a 'chicken shed', for instance. As I have discussed, the animal body is tied, particularly in a metaphorical manner, to sexuality, and is manifested particularly when Winterson discusses insects and sea creatures. The sea creatures also serve to demonstrate Louise's vulnerability at the hands of her illness; they expose her soft centre, and her weakness.

Conclusion

While looking at *Written on the Body* and *Lighthousekeeping*, I have discovered a wealth of complexities regarding how Winterson portrays the body. This is more straightforward in the latter, but it should be noted that Silver's adolescent body is always changing. Although this is not detailed at length anywhere in the novel, it is clear that Silver is

aware of herself in a bodily manner, despite the way in which this is sometimes obscured from herself when she washes in darkness, for instance. There are no out of body experiences for Silver; rather, more emphasis is placed upon the wealth of stories which she and Pew use in order to talk to one another. In this manner, *Lighthousekeeping* is a far more traditional novel than the likes of *Written on the Body*.

In *Written on the Body*, Winterson explicitly separates the mind and body of Louise and the narrator. The narrator is almost entirely manifested with regard to their thoughts, feelings, and 'point of view on this world', whereas Louise is referred to bodily. Aside from the occasional conversation, Louise's voice is not present in the narrative; we thus know very little comparatively about her perspectives and motivations. There is a notable absence too of the narrator's physical body; we learn swathes of information about their interiority and state of mind, but are only given red herrings with regard to what their physical body is like, a series of gendered markers which effectively cancel one another out.

* While the narrator's mind and Louise's body are inextricably linked in the novel, no such thing happens with regard to the singular body. In this manner, Winterson's experimental novel shows that mind and body can be separated. There is no illusion that Louise has no capacity for thought, or that the narrator has no body, but the way in which Winterson has extracted them from the characters goes against the model of both things being present at once, as in Beauvoir's hypothesis. They are both present in the world, but neither can be seen as a whole character. Louise is the central feature of the narrator's interior landscape, but her perspective on the physical world which she often inhabits is almost entirely undisclosed. The narrator is clearly part of the world but the obscuring of their physical body makes it difficult to detect how they act within the world, and the relationship between their body and the landscape. In this way, both

characters go against Beauvoir's hypothesis, that to be present in the world, one must possess 'a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'.

The next chapter will discuss selected work of Ali Smith, focusing upon her short stories. I will talk briefly about the inheritance which is apparent between the her writing and Mansfield's. I will then go on to explore gender fluidity and notions of identity in Smith's work, and her use of Mansfield as a character in 'The ex-wife'. I will conduct an extended close reading of 'The human claim', in which the author becomes protagonist. As in this chapter on Winterson, I will discuss the multiplicity of self which can be identified within Smith's shorter fiction.

Chapter Five: Ali Smith

Introduction

'Writers ought to have a real claim on each other.' So wrote Katherine Mansfield on a postcard to William Gerhardi in 1921. [1] In this manner, this introduction will discuss the influence, which Mansfield has upon differing facets of Smith's writing, as well as the notion of inheritance, or 'claim', from one author to another, before going on to discuss and explore corporeality and perspective in selected stories. Although this thesis is not an influence study, the notion of the 'claim' within this chapter is pertinent. Both Mansfield and Smith focus upon point of view, physicality, and the position of the body in the world in their short fiction, and thus I believe they warrant comparison. As in the chapter on Mansfield, I will look at instances in which Smith's characters appear to be both together and separated with regard to their physical bodies and interiority, as per Beauvoir's quotation.

Much previous critical work has discussed Smith's work in relation to Woolf's - Patrick Flanery, for instance, positions her 'among Virginia Woolf's most gifted inheritors' [2] - and indeed, Smith has written and talked extensively about her as a highly influential figure in her own writing. [3] She has used quotations from Woolf's work as epigraphs in her published work, [4] and if one examines their output together, a continu-

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[1] Vincent O'Sullivan and Margaret Scott (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Katherine Mansfield: Volume IV: 1920-1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; repr. 2004), p. 327

[2] Patrick Flanery, 'How to Be Both by Ali Smith, review: 'brimming with pain and joy'', *The Telegraph* (2014) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/11061768/How-to-Be-Both-by-Ali-Smith-review-brimming-with-pain-and-joy.html> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[3] Ali Smith, "Getting Virginia Woolf's Goat" (National Portrait Gallery, London, 23/10/2014) <https://soundcloud.com/npglondon/getting-virginia-woolfs-goat-a-lecture-by-ali-smith> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[4] Ali Smith, *Shire* (Suffolk: Full Circle Editions Ltd., 2013)

ation and perhaps a modernisation of Woolf's work is evident in Smith's. This is particularly so with regard to the continued use of free indirect discourse which Smith uses, as well as her focus upon fluid gender boundaries.

Mansfield's appeal to Smith has been discussed less often. This is perhaps because she is not as well-known a figure as the indomitable Woolf, and is less widely read in contemporary society, despite her and Woolf being contemporaries with an often thorny rivalry. Perhaps too, a reason for Woolf's overshadowing of Mansfield and her work is due to their media; whilst Woolf wrote short stories alongside essays, novels, and pieces of non-fiction, Mansfield was exclusively a short story writer. Whilst we have access to her extensive journals and many of her letters, these have been published posthumously, and there has not been the same emphasis or focus placed upon her work.

Those who have written works of criticism about Mansfield, however, tend to agree that the sphere of influence which she had was multicausal; as much as she was influencing younger writers than herself, she was, in turn, influenced by her forebears. Of course, the same could be said for any writer, but Ailwood and Harvey elaborate with the following in Mansfield's case: 'Throughout her reading and writing life she engaged in a rich and unabashed dialogue with her literary predecessors not only in her fiction but also in her correspondence and personal writing', [5] with writers as diverse as Evelyn Waugh, Colette, and Charles Dickens. [6] In this vein, the comparison which I am making between Mansfield and Smith seems a continuation of such influence.

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[5] Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (eds.), '"Like a thousand reflections of my own hands in a dark mirror": Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), p. 6

[6] Naomi Milthorpe, '"The Twilight of Language": The Young Evelyn Waugh on "Catherine" Mansfield' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 21-34; Deborah Pike, '"Objectless Love": The Vagabondage of Colette and Katherine Mansfield' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 105-118; Michael Hollington, 'Mansfield eats Dickens' (in *Katherine Mansfield and Literary Influence*, ed. by Sarah Ailwood and Miranda Harvey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)), pp. 155-167

Smith is undoubtedly highly influenced by Katherine Mansfield's short stories; she is the author of the introduction to a volume of Mansfield's short stories, [7] in which she 'explores the complexity and magical quality of the stories', [8] along with the themes of duplicity and truth. In a talk entitled 'Inventing the Modern Novel', which was given at King's College London in November 2015, [9] Smith referred to Mansfield several times whilst discussing those Modernist authors who have had an impact upon her own work. She has also discussed Mansfield extensively on different media outlets; for instance, on Radio 4's Open Book programme, [10] and has written in the *Telegraph* about the inspiration which Mansfield's short life left behind for the next generation of short story writers, from Willa Cather to Christopher Isherwood. [11]

* This legacy continues; unpicking Smith's central thought from the aforementioned *Telegraph* article, one can say that one of Mansfield's "afterlives" is certainly wrought within the work of Smith. Germana and Horton reiterate this, writing in the introduction to *Ali Smith: A Critical Perspective* that '… Mansfield is one of the literary revenants that frequently return to haunt Smith's writing, as she does in *Artful*… In the section on time, for instance, Mansfield stands, once again, to represent the short story…'. [12] She thus becomes a figurehead of the short story, and Germana and Horton imply that in this sense, Mansfield is ever-present in Smith's shorter work. They write, in

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[7] Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories* (London: Penguin Classics, 2007)

[8] *The Collected Stories*, p. i

[9] Ali Smith and Vesna Goldsworthy, "Inventing The Modern Novel" (King's College London, 09/11/2015) <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/ahri/eventrecords/2015-2016/CMLC/inventingmodernnovel.aspx> [accessed: 13/02/2017]

[10] Ali Smith, Open Book (18/03/2007) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00775jt> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[11] Ali Smith, 'So many afterlives from one short life', *The Telegraph* (07/04/2007) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3664280/So-many-afterlives-from-one-short-life.html> [accessed: 12/02/2017]

[12] Monica Germana and Emily Horton (eds.), 'Introduction' (in *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013)), p. 5

their introduction: 'Mansfield is one of the literary revenants that frequently return to haunt Smith's writing…'. [13]

Smith and Shorts

Short stories are the least discussed of Smith's prose works, despite her prolificacy in writing them. In *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, [14] little coverage is given to her shorter work. Rather, there is an emphasis upon her two earliest novels, *Hotel World* (2001) and *The Accidental* (2005), and no one discusses her short work is discussed without comparison to her novels. by one single critic. [15] Indeed, even when the stories are the central critical focus, it is with one particular goal in mind - for instance, Emily Horton's look at contemporary space as presented in her short fiction. [16] [Removed: work on Lacan, Derrida, and postmodernism, as it does not fit with the rest of what I have examined in this thesis]

Public Library and Other Stories is arguably the only wholly thematic series of short stories which Smith has released to date. Whilst one can easily find thematic threads relating to growth, sex, relationships, and gender fluidity in her other collections, they tend to be more generalised, if one can use such a word when discussing Smith's work. In *Public Library*, all of the stories have been written with one aim in mind - to demonstrate the ways in which books can change, challenge, and unite us across communities and countries. All are linked by short vignettes collected by Smith

[13] Germana, p. 5

[14] Ibid.

[15] Emily Horton, 'Contemporary Space and Affective Ethics in Ali Smith's Short Stories' (in *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013)), pp. 9-22

[16] Ibid.

about the importance of libraries, from the likes of Miriam Toews, and Smith's partner, Sarah Wood. This is the collection which I will be drawing my close readings from in this chapter.

Gender and Identity

With regard to gender, Smith, like Woolf, is playful at times. In 'Fidelio and Bess', [17] which deals in part with the Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*, a love between two women is eventually revealed. At first, however, the gender boundaries are played up to through the act of crossdressing; Fidelio, who is originally presented as a male, is actually a female named Leonore. Whilst echoing the original plot, the physical obscuring of gender is a relatively simple device which she uses to great effect.

Other characters in Smith's stories change their identities through the existence of others; such fluidity is available to them as they define themselves through a lover or a friend, as in 'The third person', [18] or through the medium of a prescribed social role. In 'The Child', [19] for instance, the narrator becomes a sudden, and brief, mother to a crass baby who has been deposited in her shopping trolley.

In Smith's work, the mirror has been used as a device to demonstrate a physical identity which has perhaps been neglected. Whilst the mind has paramount importance throughout the majority of her short fiction, the idea of an obscured self permeates from time to time; in 'Erosive', for instance, the narrator writes: 'I see someone in the mirror in the hall. I look again. It is me. It is the first time I have seen myself for

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[17] Ali Smith, *The First Person and Other Stories* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2008), pp. 71-90

[18] *The First Person*, pp. 55-70

[19] *The First Person*, pp. 19-36

days…'. [20] The use of the mirror allows Smith to explore the body and perspective at once, as in Beauvoir's hypothesis, and demonstrates that these often work in tandem with one another. In the mirror, the character has the ability to see herself as she appears to the outer world; very little clouding or blurring of their physical body can exist. The points of view which they then express about their body, and the way in which they personally view it, demonstrates a unity between these two components of self. This links directly into the idea of awakening; as I have demonstrated with regard to several of Mansfield's characters - most prominently Beryl and Kezia in 'Prelude' - the female protagonists go through a crisis of self of varying degrees, becoming more aware of their physical bodies, and arguably of their minds, as a result.

The natural world and its depiction into a manmade image is also used as a mirror for Smith. In 'Scottish Love Songs', [21] the elderly narrator Violet sees her reflection 'in the glass of the picture of the birds on the water'. [22] This glance takes her by surprise, altering and distorting the image which she held of herself in her mind: 'She was looking ten years younger. Well well well, she said out loud to herself.' [23] The awareness of becoming a completely different self had she had a different upbringing, or taken different opportunities, becomes important; of a proposed move to Canada, Violet says: 'I would have been a different person'. [24] Her awareness, even in Smith's suggestion that Violet's ageing mind is becoming a little too muddled to rely upon, adds a depth to her selfhood; she still remembers the woman that she was, and thinks of the woman whom she could have been. Despite any forgetfulness on her part, the very existence of her younger self

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[20] Ali Smith, *The Whole Story and Other Stories* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003; repr. 2004), p. 115

[21] *The Whole Story*, pp. 149-165

[22] *The Whole Story*, p. 150

[23] Ibid.

[24] *The Whole Story*, p. 153

in her mind allows her to hold onto her identity. Her self has altered over time, but despite her sometimes wandering mind, she is still very much 'a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world.'

Ageing is important within the work of both Smith and Mansfield. The technique which Smith uses in 'Scottish Love Songs' is similar to the positioning of Miss Moss in 'Pictures'; only in the exterior do these women really age, believing themselves to be far younger and more lithe than they appear to others. Miss Moss' sense of her youth is more fantastical, particularly in those instances where her body is noticeably ageing. Violet's, on the other hand, is available to her due to some kind of senility setting in, and her mind reverting to her younger self. The relationship between the older and younger self in both instances here plays upon the idea of ageing; the wider world can see the effects which age has had upon the body, but the owner of that body is not always aware that they have aged. Miss Moss, for instance, is unable to reconcile her older and younger selves. In an interesting point of contrast, Violet, on the other hand, almost invents a young self whom she never had; her mind allows her the freedom to perform such a task. This awareness of different selves which have, over time, inhabited the same - if altered - physical body, supports Beauvoir's claim. The physical body, however changed, is still within the world; and the point of view which the character has of herself, and toward her place in the world, is present. Therefore, these two elements are working in tandem with one another.

Gender fluidity and sexual boundaries are also markedly conjoined with interiority in Smith's work. Often, the lack of definition with regard to the distinct sex of her narrators is not revealed; in some stories, such as 'Erosive', [25] the identity of the narrator is hidden entirely from the reader. Smith continually veers back to the point that gender is almost irrelevant; rather, it is what happens to people that is important. This

[25] *The Whole Story*, pp. 115-122

has parallels, of course, with Winterson's *Written on the Body*, in which the sex of the narrator is not revealed. The obscuring of fixed gender and clear identity of the narrators in both 'Erosive' and *Written on the Body*, as well as the lack of naming, allows biological sex to remain hidden.

'Erosive', for instance, opens like so: 'What do you need to know about me for this story? How old I am? how much I earn a year? what kind of car I drive? Look at me now, here I am at the beginning, the middle and the end all at once, in love with someone I can't have.' [26] This deliberate obscuring of the narrator makes us aware of the narrator and their thoughts and feelings. Having no sense of their physicality is an interesting touch; would it render the story any different if we did know about their corporeal body, and biologically sexed identification? Whether man or woman, the unnamed narrator is just as compelling and realistic as they would have been with a distinct sex or gender, name, or body type.

When discussing Smith's short story, 'The Definite Article', Horton writes that 'Smith explores the transformative experience of urban life, as the self takes leave of itself - 'I stepped out of myself' (Smith, 2009, p. 12) - and becomes connected with the world around it'. [27] For Smith, the idea of personal transformation, often not related to a known space or place as in this instance, is an important one. In *Public Library and Other Stories* alone, several noticeable reconstructions of the self occur. In 'And so on', a friend recovering from an illness believes that she is a painting which has been stolen. [28] In 'The beholder', [29] the non-gendered narrator wakes with a dark coin-sized circle on

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[26] *The Whole Story*, p. 115

[27] Horton, p. 21

[28] Ali Smith, *Public Library and Other Stories* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2015), pp. 211-220

[29] *Public Library*, pp. 43-56

their skin; over the course of the story, and several trips to the doctor's, they transform entirely into a tree.

* Even in a lighter sense, whilst dreaming, the narrator of 'Say I won't be there' [30] believes that they have been changed into a character in a 1960s novel. Whilst relating the dream to their partner, the subconscious grows in importance in the story, to the extent that said partner sends gifts entirely for the dream self. The narrator also briefly describes the way in which she sometimes became her elder sister in dreams stemming from childhood. In the story, the dream is an effective tool for drilling into the subconscious mind, and also allows Smith to explore bodily separation. Each of these examples demonstrates a shift away from Beauvoir's claim that the body exists as 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. Whilst one can argue that the narrator of 'The beholder' is still a 'thing of the world', their transformation is demonstrated as something alien, entirely separated from their point of view, which cannot fathom what is happening.

Katherine Mansfield as Character: 'The ex wife' (2015)

In discernible ways, Smith's writing emulates Woolf's. Many critics have made the singular connection of their use of free indirect narrative style, which shifts freely between the first and third person, and have thus discussed the two authors alongside one another. Free indirect discourse allows movement to be made in the narrative between the internal and external bodies; it promotes the complications of embodiment and point of view, and the relationship between both elements. Rather than solely continue with the technique which Woolf pioneered, however, Smith hones in upon it in a slightly different

[30] *Public Library*, pp. 187-206

way in order to make it feel fresh and new. She does so through several approaches, but her recurring use of unmarked gender boundaries, and the lack of speech marks when her characters are in dialogue, are arguably the most distinctive parameters.

It may seem a little unusual, with this in mind, to compare Smith to Mansfield, when so many have previously, and competently, discussed her in relation to Woolf. However, definite parallels can be found when one reads Smith's work with Mansfield in mind. Like Mansfield, she tends to focus upon a singular episode or circumstance within her short stories, and describes the often profound significance which the instance, or incident, can have upon one particular character or narrator. She also gives several nods to Mansfield within her fiction, making my chosen comparison a substantive one.

An entire story, in fact, is devoted to Mansfield scholarship, in which Mansfield appears as not a bodily character, but a kind of spectre. In 'The ex wife', [31] the book-obsessed female partner of our narrator wakes in the night to search for an obscure reference to the name of one of Mansfield's cats in a volume of Virginia Woolf's letters. [32] In this tale, Smith adds a new relevancy to Mansfield's work through the character of the narrator's partner, linking one of her stories with the problems which the narrator is undergoing in the workplace. The response which the narrator gives demonstrates the negativity which she feels about Mansfield, whom she believes is driving a wedge between her relationship: '… but I'm struggling to make the link between you telling me the plot of a short story and Johnston email-bullying me at work. Are you saying I'm a bit past it? No, you'd say, listen, if you read it you'd see, it's obvious, I'll go and get it for you.' [33] The narrator's partner is clearly trying to help the narrator to understand her current position, by attempting to make sense of it through a literary comparison.

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[31] *Public Library*, pp. 99-120

[32] *Public Library*, p. 100

[33] *Public Library*, p. 102

The resentment which the narrator feels toward Mansfield the author is apparent when she mimics her partner's voice, and refuses to take her suggestion seriously: 'if you read it you'd see, it's obvious'.

Throughout the first few pages, the narrator demonstrates her lack of patience for her partner's devotion to Mansfield, and indicates the differences between them with the following simplistic phrase: 'I myself am not very interested in books, or words'. [34] Shortly afterwards, when a distance grows between the pair, the narrator suddenly begins to see Mansfield as a real figure; a kind of ghostly ever-present wedge, coming between the two living components of the relationship. She is unable to understand her partner's attachment to, and enthusiasm for, Mansfield:

> You were crying, and it was about the most ridiculous thing I could think of, in the real world with all its awful things to really cry about. The thing is, I'd never imagined her in colour before, you said. The book you were holding was called Traces of a Writer. It was full of pictures of what was left of your favourite writer after she died, pictures of a brooch, a little knife, bits of fabric, a little pair of scissors, a chess set, things like that. This was the day I first called her your ex-wife. I said, it's like living with an extra person in our relationship. It's like there's always someone else. I meant it as a joke. But you were off on to the next page. [35]

Although Mansfield, of course, is not bodily in the story at this point, the focus upon her in the relationship creates what feels almost like a love triangle. Rather, Mansfield as author becomes the 'extra person in our relationship'. That the narrator's part-

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[34] *Public Library*, p. 103

[35] *Public Library,* pp. 103-104

ner thinks a great deal of Mansfield, and is very invested in her, is clear when she cries over seeing a colour photograph of her for the first time; it serves almost to bring her back to life. The way in which the narrator does not understand this attachment, first calling her partner's emotional response 'ridiculous', and then joking about it, demonstrates what feels like a chasm of difference between them. The narrator feels jealousy toward Mansfield as author, for the sole reason that her partner's attention is taken up with Mansfield scholarship, and therefore deflected from her.

The narrator suddenly begins to empathise with Mansfield, over whether she would have wanted such personal details of her life to be easily available within the public eye, and continually discussed by critics and scholars. It seems that she does this purely to antagonise her partner, as one page later, she calls Mansfield - the 'ex-wife' - 'cruel'. [36] She essentially uses Mansfield as a screen upon which to project her frustration and dissatisfaction with her own relationship:

> And what if your ex-wife doesn't want people looking at her private stuff? I don't know that I'd want the general public always to be reading my letters or looking at my private writings, even if they did have research grant money to do it and they could give looking at old bits of rubbish left behind by a dead person a grandiose name like The Memory Meme And Materiology In Katherine Mansfield's Metaphorical Landscape. [37]

When the turning point of the story comes, and the couple have broken up over irreconcilable differences - which appear mainly to be about Mansfield as far as the narrative goes - Mansfield appears to the narrator whilst she is walking in a park. At the time, the

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[36] *Public Library*, p. 105

[37] *Public Library*, p. 104

protagonist is feeling keenly the loss of her partner. Smith has realistically rendered conversational patterns which one can imagine Mansfield uttering as the pair speak to one another. For Smith, Mansfield is a collection of texts, rather than the solid image of a real woman. She is an identifiable figurehead; her name is a shorthand of sorts for a collection of influential texts written by Katherine Mansfield the author, and those about her. Whilst Smith mimics a believable continuation of Mansfield's distinctive voice from her journals and letters, it is clear that she is not endeavouring to resurrect or reconstitute her bodily from history. Despite the lack of a realistic physical body, Mansfield can still be termed a 'thing of the world' in the story. She also has 'a point of view on this world', and can therefore be used as a character who supports Beauvoir's quotation.

The narrator, perhaps ironically, then starts to become interested in Mansfield, both as woman and writer, despite the horror which she initially feels about being thrust into a situation with the person she sees as her nemesis: 'Back off, I said. I mean it. I don't know who you are, but I know who you are.' [38] The narrator feels like a ghostly shadow beside Mansfield; this juxtaposition of merely surviving and feeling alive, and the vast disparity between these two states, is demonstrated by Mansfield's 'alarming lively' demeanour, 'alarmingly bright' eyes, [39] and the childish dances which she delights within, reminding one rather of Miss Brill in her titular story, [40] or of protagonist Bertha Young in 'Bliss'. [41] As discussed in the chapter on Mansfield, Bertha Young has to stop herself from making the gay, childish movements she wishes to, such as wishing 'to run instead of walk, to take dancing steps on and off the pavement, to bowl a hoop, to

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[38] *Public Library*, p. 107

[39] *Public Library*, p. 107

[40] Katherine Mansfield, *The Garden Party and Other Stories* (London, Constable & Co, 1922; repr. *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006))

[41] Katherine Mansfield, *Bliss and Other Stories* (London, Constable & Co., 1920; repr. in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006))

throw something up in the air and catch it again, or to stand still and laugh at - nothing - at nothing, simply. [42]' This comparison feels like a deliberate one, although the only alarming thing which could be said about Bertha Young is that she is prohibited by social conventions from taking an active role in her young daughter's life, and has to hide her inhibitions within in order to adhere to the expectations which others have of her.

Interestingly, after interacting with Mansfield, the plot becomes almost circular. Whilst the couple do not get back together, Mansfield serves to unite them in a way. The narrator composes an email to her own ex-wife, asking one single thing: 'Please write back telling me one single thing you think I should know about the life of the writer K Mansfield'. [43] She serves as a point of contact, or a bridge of sorts, between the two. The response which the narrator receives, about Mansfield once defending one of D.H. Lawrence's books in public despite not being friends with him at the time, speaks volumes. It ends 'She didn't come back', [44] which feels almost prophetic about the relationship which is being examined in the story.

In a further twist, the narrator then takes her ex-partner's Mansfield books, replacing them with a Stieg Larsson trilogy that her ex-partner loathes, 'and which I had disguised by placing all those volumes of that book Pilgrimage on top'. [45] This nod to Dorothy Richardson is a further acknowledgement of the Modernist fiction which has so inspired and influenced Smith's fiction. The narrator composes an email to her ex-partner, filled with facts about the woman who has suddenly become so important to them both, but decides not to send it: '… I didn't want you to think I was trying to know more about something you knew about than you did. Also, I was worried that maybe you real-

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[42] *The Collected Stories*, p. 69

[43] *Public Library*, p. 110

[44] Ibid.

[45] *Public Library*, p. 111

ly wouldn't know these things. I realized I really didn't want to know more about what you know about than you.' [46] The growing connection of Mansfield is, alas, not enough to bring the pair back together, and the narrator herself, in a cruel twist of fate, also becomes her partner's ex-wife; thus, she has more in common with Mansfield than she would have believed at the beginning of the tale. Throughout, the Mansfield embodiment demonstrates - particularly toward the end of the story, when her TB becomes noticeable - the power which life has over one, and the beauty of it.

In this story, Smith has done something interesting with the material body. Smith's interest, as mentioned, is not in creating Mansfield as a physical being, but rather as a collection of texts - a body of work. Her voice is mimicked, but there is little emphasis upon how Mansfield appears to the narrator in the sense of being, or having a body. In this story, although Mansfield is clearly a facsimile of her real self, she is still a 'thing of the world'. She expresses a point of view, and although her body is not a tangible one, she still exists to the narrator. The character of Mansfield can therefore be used to support Beauvoir's claim, in that her existence to the narrator, and the things which she articulates, suggest that she has 'presence in the world.'

'The human claim' (2015)

One can pinpoint many autofictional occurrences within Smith's work. Autofiction allows the author to view themselves from some other point in time or space; they are able to see themselves as characters within the world, but their movements and articulations can be exaggerated or manipulated. Underpinning all instances of this, of course, are the conventions of narratology; how she constructs her sentences, and

[46] *Public Library*, p. 118

presents the form of her own self. The below piece, an extract from Smith's short story 'The human claim' [47] is, essentially, a work of autofiction; Ms Ali Smith herself is the named protagonist, and the entire story is told from the first person perspective:

It wasn't me, I said again.

I sounded petulant. I sounded like a child.

Thank you for being in touch with Barclaycard, Ms Smith, she said. Have a lovely evening.

I pressed the hang-up button on my phone and found I was in my front room.

What I mean is, even though I'd been there the whole time, I'd actually just spent the last half hour somewhere which made my own front room irrelevant, even to me.

I stood by the fireplace and it was as if I had been filled with live ants. I went antsily around the house from room to room for about half an hour. Then I stopped, stood by the dark window, sat down on the edge of the couch. I told myself there was nothing to do about it but laugh it off. It happens all the time. People are always getting scammed. That's life.

I picked up a book but I couldn't concentrate to read.

I began to wonder instead who the person was, the person who'd pretended, somewhere else in the world, to be me. What did he or she look like? Was he or she part of a group of people who did this kind of thing? Or was it a single individual somewhere in a room by him- or herself? Somewhere in the world this

[47] Ali Smith, 'The human claim' (in *Public Library and Other Stories*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 2015; repr. 2016), pp. 77-96

person knew enough about the numbers on a card in my wallet in the dark of my pocket to fool a respectable airline company into selling an expensive ticket. [48]

In 'The human claim', Ms Smith receives a credit card statement with transactions that she hasn't personally made - to Lufthansa for an expensive flight, for instance. The airline, of course, are not really that interested in whether Ms Smith has booked the flight herself; they are concerned largely with whether said ticket has been paid for. In a company of the scale of Lufthansa, there is no real room for compassion in individual cases such as Ms Smith's. It is not in their interest to chase up the bogus payment, and thus the respectability which Smith discusses with regard to Lufthansa is not without irony. Who, in the first instance, has decided that Lufthansa is a 'respectable airline company'? Could it be merely because it is a name recognised around the world? Are they financially, ethically, or morally respectable? How would Lufthansa as an entity describe its own respectability, and would this differ from Ms Smith's perceptions?

Whilst the story is told from the first person perspective, it does make occasional shifts into free indirect discourse, in which Smith the author seems to observe herself in the given moment, thus providing what can essentially be termed a post-Cartesian shift. The distinction between mind and body which Descartes theorised allows Smith the author to examine her own physicality from a remove. The limits of the first person narrative voice here are pushed; the framing voice which is established is essentially at odds with the third person who is viewing its own self. This fact of being observed emphasises another level of the lack of control. The shift between signifier and signified is interesting; which self is real here? Is it the self who is in the present, who is writing and observing, or is the self which is present at the time? The self cannot be the object of its interior knowledge; it is always the subject. It is impossible to explore one's entire

[48] *Public Library*, pp. 82-83

self, and a singular self cannot turn upon itself to view the object world. There is, rather, no such thing as a universal knowing subject that does not already affect observed data.

The story's title, 'The human claim', suggests the claim which others have upon the character of Smith in this story. It is, in part, an extension of identity. The person with whom she converses, as well as the thief of her identity, have a claim upon her in that they know more about her than she does about them. Throughout, Smith discusses the whole notion of identity; what it means to the individual who possesses it, and how surprisingly easily it can be altered, or taken away. She demonstrates the way in which an act as deceptively simple as credit card fraud allows the perpetrator to both mimic and stand in for someone else, without ever being questioned about it. This theft of identity is conflicting; whilst someone knows, and is exploiting, Smith's own identity for monetary gain, she cannot help but wonder about the identity of the person who has found and used her details. At times, her curiosity is at the forefront of mind, overtaking the hurt and anger which come with the knowledge that she has been exploited in such a way.

If we focus upon the use of the word 'claim', the spectrum of meanings with regard to its verb and noun forms is of interest here. Firstly, an unsubstantiated claim states that something is the case without any concrete proof; Ms Smith claims here that she has not been the author of any of the transactions made upon her card. She has no proof which she can utilise in order to back herself up; it largely boils down to whether the Barclaycard contact believes her. Secondly, one can make a claim in the form of a formal request, or lay claim to something with regard to a demand. This essentially gives authority to the individual who is making the claim in the first place. As a noun, a claim is an assertion that something is factually accurate, which backs up Ms Smith's positioning in her telephone conversation. A claim is also a demand for something which

one considers one's prerogative. Here, Ms Smith's claim is upon her own money, which she has personally earnt, and which has been spent on unauthorised transactions by somebody unknown to her. A claim can also mean that one owns up to, or acknowledges, that they carried out a particular action. From a linguistic viewpoint, Ms Smith the character tries to *de*claim the claims of transactions upon her card; she vociferously speaks out against each separate purchase.

The use of 'human' too is at odds with the machinations of Barclaycard. Along with the physical machine which Ms Smith is connected to when she makes her phone call, there is also the idea of the company as a well-oiled machine. Humans are not machines; the theory of animality, and its distinctive differences with regard to humanity, can be used to great effect here. In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics,* Heidegger writes: 'We can formulate three distinctions: [1.] the stone (material object) is worldless; [2.] the animal is poor in world; [3.] man is world-forming'. [49] Whilst the material object, animal, and man are all *in* the world, only the human has the capacity for thought which gives this knowledge.

* Smith, through the use of her autofictional protagonist, appears to discuss what it means to be human in the world, and how the positioning of any given human can be altered or displaced through the actions of another - in this case, the actions of the fraudster cause Ms Smith to become a victim. Humankind is seen through the eyes of the individual here. Throughout the story, Ms Smith's point of view shifts as she understands more about what has happened to her. She is also a constant 'thing' in the world, whether she is inhabiting her body or observing it.

The repeated use of 'Ms Smith', spoken by the Barclaycard employee during the phonecall, is almost patronising. Whilst it does establish and reiterate Smith's identity,

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[49] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 177

it is used so often that the naming becomes almost meaningless. The repetition of her surname may be used in order to calm her down, or to demonstrate that she is being difficult. Essentially, the person who repeats it has the upper hand; he or she is placed into a position of power. Smith knows nothing about the person to whom she is speaking; the conversation, once it passes the automaton who seems not to understand Smith's Inverness accent, begins: 'Hello, you're speaking to indecipherable, how can I help you?'. [50] A lot is known about Smith from the employee's position; as well as the concrete information they possess in their database about her name, address, birthdate, and transaction history, they are also given a series of anecdotes toward the middle of the conversation, in which Smith tries to explain herself.

* The identity markers used by Barclaycard are an extension of the automaton; whilst she is speaking to a real person once the call connects proper, the person is a mouthpiece, and is still following a script given to them by the company. The foregrounding of the disembodied voice which Ms Smith speaks to covers both authentic and inauthentic signatory transactions; the contact is merely feeding the words to the listener from a proven script. Essentially, the voice represents not a real person, but language itself, and its manipulation. In actuality, we as readers have no way of knowing whether the employee ever veers away from the given script, or if she sticks to it exactly. Thus, the distinction between authentic and inauthentic voice is rather elusive. The discursive nature of identity, then, is arguably out of reach in the story, with its non-bodily reliance upon numeric pointers of establishing identity.

The language within the story serves many purposes, particularly with regard to Smith's representation of the self; it performs, it simulates, it repeats syntax with different variants. Particular sentences emphasise the notion of, and politics of, the self; for instance: 'I began to wonder instead who the person was, the person who'd pretend-

[50] *Public Library*, p. 80

ed, somewhere else in the world, to be me'. The sentence is essentially split into four parts, denoted by the use of commas, all of which revolve around the self. Here, one can count four distinct uses of self - two 'person's, one 'I', and one 'me'. The 'began' at the start of the sentence could read 'I began to be me'; she reclaims her own self from the annals of the conversation. This consciousness of self reiterates that Ms Smith as a character is also a 'body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on the world'.

* The use of 'instead' here is about replacing one thing for another; one unsettling situation is substituted for another. The fact that Ms Smith will never know the answer to these musings does not seem to disturb her further; rather, it is as though by giving her brain something constructive to think about, she can remove herself from the conversation with both Barclaycard automatons, and get herself back to the self with whom she feels most comfortable. The reader begins to think about when this wondering began; where does Smith's trying to read end, and the thinking take over? It creates an almost uncanny feeling, as we are reading the piece; essentially, the story echoes itself, as though it is trapped within a continuous loop which neither protagonist nor reader can escape from.

* The 'to be me' with which the sentence ends serves to reiterate what has happened; someone has taken over her identity, and is able, in some way, to simulate being Ms Smith. Questions regarding the development of identity over time abound in such deceptively simple sentences as this; the use of free indirect discourse and the use of both first and third person perspectives here are intrinsically linked to power relations, and subject and object, as well as sound and space, and the actions of reading, speaking, and writing. Similarly, at the beginning of the scene, one wonders whether the self presented is the same throughout: 'I said again'. Is the 'I' the same person, or have circumstances caused the self to change or adapt? 'I' is a mobile signifier; we fill it ac-

cording to context, user, and positioning. There is no real way of knowing whether the self presented in this instance is the same as the self who discovered the fraud, and experienced the phone call with Barclaycard; one could imagine that such events would adapt ways of thinking, or ways of showing oneself to the outer world.

* There is no real way for the reader, an overseer, to distinguish between the separate selves which Smith presents; we will never be given a true depiction of a self, as there will always be some degree of bias in instances of representation. The multiplicity of self which is apparent throughout the story does not, however, detract from Ms Smith being a 'thing of the world'; she is still present, in whichever guise she inhabits or recognises herself to embody.

Ms Smith's thoughts, too, about the identity of the perpetrator - for example, 'What did he or she look like?' - raise questions about biological sex and the individual. A space for androgyny is created here. The 'person who'd pretended' extenuates the claim for being human; animals, as Lacan wrote, cannot pretend to pretend, whereas humans can - and do - practice to deceive. [51] Does it really matter, in the greater scheme of things, what the person who committed the fraud was like? Knowing the identity - even roughly, in terms of the fraudster's sex or location - seems as though it would merely sate Ms Smith's curiosity. Identity, as shown here, is multiple; one can never have a singular self. Rather, there are many different selves which inhabit the same body, and that body is socially shaped by more than one self. There is, essentially, an individual collective responsibility, which Smith demonstrates within 'The human claim'; an individual is essentially responsible for the actions of others by either ignoring or tolerating them. In ignoring the fraud, Ms Smith would be allowing an injustice to herself, as well as losing out on money. In tolerating it, Ms Smith would essentially be

[51] Kelly Oliver, 'Duplicity Makes the Man, Or, Can Animals Lie?' (in Clancy W. Martin (ed), *The Practices of Deception and Self-Deception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 104-117

granting the fraudster the legitimacy to carry out further frauds on more unsuspecting people.

* Through the asking of the above questions, Smith is either addressing the reader, or is posing rhetorical questions to the divided self. The self is essentially able to watch itself doing things in the past; whilst Ms Smith is primarily the narrator of the piece, the use of the past tense throughout the story adds a little distancing to the piece. We as readers are left to wonder whether the self which Smith presents here is a true self. The bank's narratives - from the automaton to its human extension - have, in essence, served to obscure Ms Smith's selves.

The loss of control within the story is an obvious point of focus. Smith has essentially lost control of her own money, leaving the perpetrator of the crime in a similar, but more overarching, position of power than the Barclaycard employee. Smith echoes this when she says of herself: 'I sounded petulant. I sounded like a child.' These utterances, which provide an interesting reaction to her current position, show the loss of power and status. They essentially render her as little more than a figure who has very little control over what surrounds them - in essence, like a child. She sounds guilty; in saying that she is behaving petulantly, it is as though she is trying to justify herself, both to her speaking self, and, by extension, to the reader. This particular refrain, like the rest of the passage, is shown in the past tense; its repetition of 'sounded' emphasises the way in which the reader is merely seeing a transcript of the conversation. There is no way in which we too can be present in the situation, or hear 'Ms Smith' firsthand; rather, we are seeing the situation from a distance. We are party to her own representations of agency and personhood. Ms Smith appears as a 'body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world', but she is distanced from the reader.

The voice which Smith creates is at pains to explain everything didactically to the reader. There are interesting identifications of location throughout the passage - for ex-

ample, ‘numbers on a card in my wallet in the dark of my pocket’. This notion of womblike containers, and the repetition of ‘in’ essentially give a sort of Matryoshka effect, with something within something else, within something else; it extends a continuation of place and space. Space in this instance refers to the physical space of the pocket which the wallet fills, and the space within the wallet which the card in question occupies. Place can relate to both the temporal ordering of the fraud taking place, and Ms Smith knowing her own place within Barclaycard’s hierarchy, as well as in her own front room. Everything hints at the security which things inside things should have; the numbers on the card should be hidden inside the wallet, which is in turn hidden in the pocket, and all of which is obscured by the darkness. This is, however, not enough to conceal the card from the act of fraud.

* All of the above, too, are signals of commerce; the card itself can purchase, and the wallet and pocket have both been bought. A line can be drawn here between Smith’s story and Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*. Smith, both by outlining possessions relating to money, and by placing the facsimile of herself within a room in a private house, shows personal ownership, echoing that ‘a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction’ [52] - Smith’s profession, of course. When we think about the numbers on the card themselves, whilst they are unique in relating to one person and their linked bank account, the string of numbers can never be unique; they will have been used in this sequence in other forms - for instance, in sequences of computer code, or other documentation. The card itself is emblematic of a kind of printing press, which appears to show the individual, but is really nothing individual at all.

Following from this is the suggestion that Ms Smith is merely a husk, inhabited by busy ants. This, along with Smith’s comparison to herself as sounding ‘like a child’, takes upon itself organic, animal, and natural markers. This takes another part of her

[52] *A Room of One’s Own*, p. 29

identity away, in essence; she becomes something unusual which we - and she herself - can no longer connect with. One can read this as if the fraud itself has created paranoia; what it means to be a self in the world has been compromised. Ants themselves work systematically to a purpose in order to achieve things; they enact teamwork, which provides an antithesis to Ms Smith the character here, who feels as though she is entirely alone in the situation. Again, this extends the idea of the machine versus the human; whilst ants are living, the way in which they work so well together echoes that of a working machine.

* The simile, 'as if', builds an external view of the bodied self; it is as though Smith is examining herself and her actions from afar. This raises questions about how one can observe oneself from the outside, which is exactly what Smith manages to do in this voluntary imitation: 'I stood by the fireplace and it was as if I had been filled with live ants'. These ants also extend the idea raised by Lufthansa being less interested in whether an individual made a purchase or not, so long as their costs are covered; so long as the whole is functioning as a colony, who cares about the individual ant within the wider structure? The physicality of the ants lead to Smith's use of 'antsily', which is both connected to the idea of being filled with ants, and separate from it. It conjures up certain images for the reader, and the didactic voice in which it is expressed does not trust the reader to make his or her own connections. Whilst it extends the image of being colonised by something out of one's control, it does provide a shift away from the industrious insects. The use of 'antsily' develops the use of 'petulant' and 'children'; one often associates attributes of antsy, with fidgeting and being unable to keep still, with children and not adults.

The use of 'laugh it off' is interesting too; it applies both to being antsy, and to being ripped off. It aims to lighten [removed: a quite] an unsettling situation. This invokes the idea of scamming; Smith has been 'scammed' through the bogus transactions

upon her credit card, but is the reader too being scammed? Is this a true depiction of the situation, and of Ms Smith's thoughts and feelings regarding it, or have things been emphasised for effect? We cannot help as readers but to think about the subjectivity of the first person narrator; never can it give an entirely accurate portrait of its protagonist because different things are clearly exaggerated, or played down, to reach the overall effect of the story. Whilst it feels autofictional due to the naming within, is 'The human claim' actually a depiction of true events, or has it all been fabricated? The reader is perhaps separated entirely from the truth here; we have no real option but to view the scenes and occurrences as Smith the author depicts them.

The use of 'hang up button' seems almost superfluous, as the natural end of the conversation appears in the sentence beforehand. This is an interesting technique, however; as Smith, in the Modernist tradition, does not use the usual conventions of speech marks to denote the end of the conversation, finality must be reached through the use of actions. 'Hang up' too can be seen as a play on words; whilst it is, primarily, an actioning device, it is also popular discursive slang to denote an emotional issue or inhibition. Its use here implies that she has a hang up about banks.

The sense of disembodiment in the story is stressed with the series of simple actions which Smith relays: 'I pressed', I stood', 'I went', 'I stopped'. These show that she is, in part, in control; they are whole, completed actions.

The discomfort which Ms Smith is confronted with due to the situation is emphasised when the narrator talks about the solid objects in her front room. It is as though she feels acutely uncomfortable with where she is; as though the one action of receiving the credit card statement, and trying to get somebody to believe that it was not her who made any of the transactions, has alienated her from her own life. The self inhabits its two distinct spaces; that of the physical room in which it stands, and the textual space which surrounds it within the story. It is significant that the conversation takes

place in the darkness; when she stands ‘by the dark window’, the night outside acts as another obscuring veil.

* The following action - ‘[I] sat down on the edge of the couch’ - emphasises her soreness about the situation in which she finds herself; it cannot be comfortable to position oneself like this, but perhaps the sheer displeasure of the ‘edge’ beneath her is needed in order to springboard her back into her present life. The use of ‘edge’ also implies that Ms Smith is on edge, or at the edge; rather, she is both distressed, and trying to hold herself together. Objects are of importance here; they remain constant during the capricious phone call, in which Ms Smith loses authority. The phone, front room, window, couch, and book mentioned are quite incapable of change, unless Ms Smith herself alters their positions or conditions.

The sense of otherness in ‘The human claim’ is also strong. The situation transports Smith, something which surprises her greatly: ‘even though I’d been there the whole time, I’d actually just spent the last half hour somewhere which made my own front room irrelevant, even to me’. The sudden shift from aural to spatial is significant; she is moved from a situation which is both relatively commonplace to the general populous, and unusual to her, to the life which she has built for herself. The ‘even to me’ at the end of this sentence suggests that such an occurrence is new to her; the tone of the story demonstrates that she clearly views herself as pragmatic and sensible, and not as someone who is susceptible to such transportative situations. There is a sense of alienation here. The notion of pacing, which she does whilst on the phone, brings interesting links between walking and talking; does her concentration upon her footsteps and the language used by Barclaycard’s human automaton cause her to momentarily lose track of where she is and what is around her, or does she merely associate walking with moving from place to place, and is thus disorientated when the conversation, and its accompanied walking, end? The shifting of space within the story is significant. With it,

the story demonstrates the way in which one occurrence which is slightly out of the ordinary can make one lose oneself altogether, albeit for a brief period of time.

The 'somewhere else' also feeds into the idea of otherness; the place in which the perpetrator lives, or is working from, is markedly - and, frustratingly, unknowingly - different to her own place in the world. The irony, perhaps, is that we imagine that everything which fills Smith's front room has been purchased legitimately, with herself in firm control of decisions pertaining to decorating and decorations. This restlessness is clearly an unusual feeling for her too; manifesting in the fact that she cannot concentrate to read, for instance, which, if as autofictional a work as it appears, goes against what the reader might imagine of Smith the woman. The superfluity of this utterance - 'I picked up a book' - adds to the estrangement which Ms Smith feels. The attempt to read, coming after speaking and hearing as it does, provides a series of cues which the reader cannot help but notice. We are unable to hear Ms Smith speak, but we are able to read about this particular presentation of herself.

* The physical being of Smith the author constructed the sentences which we read; Ms Smith, the autofictional figure, did not. The construction of self here sits somewhere between fact and fiction. The self is thus always partially obscured; we are seeing only the narrator wants us to see, and are largely prohibited from allowing any ambiguity into our own interpretations of events. Indeed, there is very little which is not explicitly stated in this passage, aside from the specificities which occur during the 'about half an hour' in which she walks around the house. We as readers are essentially exercised into making judgements about who is speaking in any given utterance, or narrative stream. Of course, there is every reason to suggest that credit card fraud is something which Smith the author has experienced, but writing from a position of retrospect renders her a different self now; again, the idea of distancing, and its relation to truth, is paramount. There is, of course, a lapse of time between the transactions being

made, and Ms Smith's knowledge about it; the fraud is therefore already in the past, even when it bounds into her present.

Throughout 'The human claim', Ms Smith is a 'body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. Smith as author presents a compromise of her protagonist self in the world, due to the fraud which has been perpetrated against her. Ms Smith's point of view is expressed throughout, whether whilst speaking on the telephone, or when the first person perspective is focused upon. She is distanced at times both from the reader and from her self, and there is a sense of disembodiment which comes to the fore at times. However, Ms Smith's physical body can still be observed in such moments. Even when her sense of self adapts, into either a husk filled with ants, or becomes 'like a child', Ms Smith still exists as a body. Whilst her physical being, or at least what fills it, appears to have been altered, she is still present in the world. Her character can thus be used as an example which supports Beauvoir's quotation.

Multiplicity of Self

Smith often discusses the existence of multiple selves within the same body; in 'The human claim', for instance, she writes: 'Meanwhile, in my sleep, the freed-up me's went wild' [53]. Perhaps Smith's most pressing exploration about what identity means in *The First Person and Other Stories* is 'Writ'. Here, Smith discusses the multiplicity of self; a middle-aged woman meets her younger self in her own home, and both struggle to effectively communicate:

[53] *Public Library*, p. 94

> I sit my fourteen-year-old self down opposite me at the table in the lounge so that we can have a conversation, because all she's done so far, the whole time she's been here in my house, is ignore me, stare balefully at a spot just above my had, or look me in the eye then look away from me as if I'm the most boring person on the planet. [54]

Whilst the older self still surprises herself occasionally - particularly with regard to the scene in which she kisses another woman, a complete stranger, on a London street - she seems relatively well put together, with a stable job and a home of her own. Her teenage counterpart, however, is at first 'wild-eyed and unpredictable', [55] and later 'thin and insolent and complete'. [56] The overall effect on the older narrator is interesting; rather than feel wholly pleased that she can impart wisdom onto her younger self, a muddle of emotions fills her:

> It is shocking to see yourself like you haven't been for nearly thirty years. It is also a bit embarrassing, having yourself around, watching your every move as if watching your every move is the last thing that could possibly interest anyone. [57]

The present self struggles with her language, knowing that her younger self could easily become equally embarrassed if she uses phrases such as 'when I was your age' . In 'Writ', Smith demonstrates that a self at different stages of life can alter irrevocably, even to the point where it might be almost unrecognisable. Whilst the older self knows

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[54] *The First Person*, p. 153

[55] *The First Person*, p. 154

[56] *The First Person*, p. 157

[57] *The First Person*, p. 154

that her younger self is within her vicinity, the younger self seems to suspect not a thing; she is nonchalant throughout, and acts as she would, presumably, when faced with any other adult, whether of consequence to herself or not. Here, Smith demonstrates the secure naivety of girlhood. She cleverly pinpoints the shifts in identity and difference over time; it is natural to change with regard to circumstance and ageing. There is a continuity of identity between both selves, although the younger self does not realise that this is the case.

* Whilst in the real world it would, of course, be impossible to converse with one's younger self in this manner, Smith has demonstrated the reality of Bergsonian change, which naturally creates a slew of different, and sometimes unrecognisable, selves. Bergson argues that if one views one's life as being made up of recognisable parts - childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age [58] - the evolutionary process essentially becomes lost. We should say, rather, that there is 'becoming between the child and the man'; [59] that there is no break in continuity between these two states, and an adult is, at least partly, recognisable from his or her childhood self.

In this story, both the older and younger selves are shown to be 'a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. Whilst their perspectives are conflicting, and their physical bodies are markedly different given their age difference, and despite the same DNA which they are made up of, each character simultaneously exists as both body and perspective. There is no separating of one self in 'Writ'; rather, there is a replication of it.

Another story which demonstrates the multiplicity of self is 'The history of history', [60] in which the teenage narrator's mother reclaims herself from her established ma-

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[58] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* <https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Bergson/Bergson_1911a/Bergson_1911_04.html> [accessed: 19/05/2017]

[59] Ibid.

[60] *The First Person*, pp. 91-102

ternal role. She tells both husband and daughter that she is no longer defined as their wife and mother respectively, and asks her daughter to call her by her given name, Margaret: 'She keeps saying that's the name she was born with. She won't answer to anything other than that anymore'. [61] Whilst this may seem at first glance to be a rebellion, or a mid-life crisis of sorts on the part of Margaret, it can be said that she is performing an act of reclamation of her singular self, which has been lost to, or at least fractured by, her current situation, as well as by the dependence of her husband and daughter upon her. She sees that her daughter is almost old enough to be independent, and her husband can fend for himself. She is merely trying to get back to where she used to be before the roles which she first married into, and then gave birth to, became something with which others solely defined her. 'I'm a person', [62] she tells her daughter. Experience has essentially made her self change.

* This awareness of bodily change makes her another of Smith's characters who can be used to support Beauvoir's claim that fully inhabiting in the world can only be said to occur if one's body and point of view are present and aware. She is both a 'thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. The very fact that her point of view is changing, and that she wishes to reclaim her independence, solidifies her as a singular character, whose various components work together.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the final discussion within this thesis, I have explored at length the multiplicity of self, a trope which is so apparent in Smith's work. Several of her characters

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[61] *The First Person*, p. 99

[62] Ibid.

begin in one body and end up in another; they are transformed from what they know and believe of themselves, and have to shift their behaviour and thoughts accordingly. I have pinpointed instances in which Smith explores a separation of body and mind. Whilst these two elements ultimately converge once again, either straight away or later on in the story, there are moments in which they are shown to be apart from one another. Smith demonstrates that dreams have the ability to separate one's body and perspective, causing one to longer be 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. In dreams, the world in which one lives can be entirely obscured, causing the dreamer to exist in a different, liminal space.

Each of the examples which I have discussed either demonstrate a shift away from Beauvoir's claim, or support it. One stepping consciously out of one's body shows a separation of self, which is quite at odds with corporeality and perspective being intrinsically entwined with one another. When the physical body transforms, as in 'The beholder' and 'Say I won't be there', there is a separation of self; one is still present with regard to their voice and thoughts, but the marked changing of their physical body makes it imperative for them to reassess how they think and feel, thus compromising their sense of self.

In 'The ex-wife', Mansfield appears as a character who is made up of the body of text which she wrote. In this way, Mansfield is not a physical being, but she still appears to the story's narrator as a 'thing of the world', merely due to her presence. Mansfield as character also expresses her point of view throughout the story, and is able to articulate herself through Smith's mimicking of her voice. The manner in which Smith's version of Mansfield, despite being a facsimile, appears as real to the narrator means that she is able to support Beauvoir's claim, existing as a body 'that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world.'

In ‘The human claim’, Smith the author appears as a copy of herself as the story’s protagonist. In this story, Smith demonstrates the multiplicity of self which Ms Smith has, which does not prevent her from existing as a ‘thing of the world’. Whilst at times Ms Smith is distanced from the reader, and from herself, her mind and body work simultaneously throughout the story. One - whether the reader, or Smith herself - is able to observe her throughout. The portrayal of Ms Smith, and the way in which she speaks of herself, are both tools which allow Smith to express a point of view in the story. Thus, Ms Smith as character fully supports Beauvoir’s claim, that to be fully present in the world means that one has to exist, as she does, as a material body and a perspective.

In ‘Writ’, in which the narrator meets and interacts with her younger self, both characters are in the world and of the world. They exist in terms of body and perspective, and one can note ways in which the character has changed over the period of time which has elapsed between her younger and present day selves. In this story, Smith explores the duplicity of self, rather than the multiplicity of self. Whilst inhabiting two bodies, the narrator of the story is very much connected by way of her thoughts and physical body. Whilst we learn very little of the younger self’s thoughts, the presence of the same self as the narrator enables us to understand her regardless. These two examples of the same woman support Beauvoir’s hypothesis, as both are fully present in the world. They demonstrate in this manner that: ‘Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world’.

To conclude, Smith’s characters can be said to be both exemplars of Beauvoir’s comment, and to challenge it, however briefly. Whilst her characters exist as bodies within the world, elements of transformation and imagination allow the physical body and perspective to separate from one another, such as the character in ‘The beholder’ turning into a tree, and the dreamworld belief of the character in ‘Say I won’t be there’

believing herself to be a character in a 1960s novel. As transformation occurs in Smith's short fiction, the perspective of the affected character changes dramatically, and it can be said that they become a markedly different character in consequence. They are still present in the world, as per Beauvoir's quotation, but their point of view towards it changes.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have used female characters in selected works by twentieth and twenty-first century authors to test whether, as per Beauvoir's hypothesis, 'Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world.' The primary texts which have been explored here are Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *Between the Acts* (1941); 'Prelude' (1918), 'Pictures (1917), and 'Bliss' (1918) by Katherine Mansfield; Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) and *Written on the Body* (1992); and 'The ex-wife' and 'The human claim' by Ali Smith, both of which were published in *The Public Library and Other Stories* in 2015.

* I wished to explore whether a selection of characters in these novels and stories support or go against Beauvoir's hypothesis. Does one have to be 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world' in order to function to the best of one's ability? If there is a separation of self in this manner, what are the implications of this? In order to test Beauvoir's quotation, I have looked throughout at corporeal bodies and perspectives, and examined rather a few different characters. I have explored how Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson, and Smith depict female embodiment, and the ways in which they portray the complicated relationship between mind and body.

I have examined the reception which Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* has received since its publication, and have come to the conclusion that, regardless of the ways in which it has been interpreted, it is a pivotal text in the women's movement. The quotation which I selected as the core idea of this thesis is important too; it is bound up with Beauvoir's ideas of promoting women's individual identity, as well as with existentialism and phenomenologist thought. The nature of being in the world, which Beauvoir explored at length within *The Second Sex*, is succinctly signified in the chosen quotation.

The two elements which this is made up of - the physical body which is present within the world, and the point of view which exists toward it - has been the focal point of my research.

In Woolf's work, I have looked at the presentation of the female body in *Orlando*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Between the Acts*, the last of which is an extended commentary. I have discussed the non-binary characters in *Between the Acts,* and the gender fluidity in *Orlando*. Although I have focused upon female characters throughout this thesis, the obscuring of biological sex, and presentations of non-normative gender, are nevertheless an important inclusion. Although *The Second Sex* focuses upon women and their place within the world, Beauvoir's hypothesis of being present in the world is not biologically sexed. The 'body' which she speaks of belongs neither to the female nor the male sex, and thus I wished to explore and discuss instances in which selfhood becomes complicated due to the obscuring of biological sex. I also considered portrayals of the human body with regard to comparisons in the natural world. Thus, there are two sections included which explore the relationships between humans and animals, and humans and the pastoral landscape.

My research into Woolf's work has led me to conclude that there is a fundamental dependence between the physical body and the point of view. In those cases in which Woolf's characters appear to be separated with regard to these two elements, it is always at a moment of turmoil, or during a period of crisis - for instance, when Orlando's self is fractured: 'Indeed we should have given her over for a person entirely disassembled were it not that here, at last, one green screen was held out on the right, against which the little bits of paper fell more slowly'. [1] In Woolf's fiction, a unity is always denoted between both body and mind; this is a vital coexistence if her characters are to operate as they should within the world. Although there are times in which the thoughts

[1] *Orlando*, p. 152

of her characters are at odds with what their bodies display, or what they express - in the case of Mrs Ramsay from *To the Lighthouse*, for example - the unity of self is an important motif which threads through Woolf's fiction. Woolf's characters therefore can all be said to fully support Beauvoir's hypothesis. Even when there is a split within a character, in which their mind is working against their physical body, mind and body always unite with one another once the moment of crisis has passed.

There are certainly examples in which Mansfield's female characters are 'both' a physical body and a perspective in the world, but in many of her stories, this interconnectivity is challenged. At all times, the third person perspective which has been used allows Mansfield to view her characters wholly, and objectively. The characters of Mansfield's which I have explored in this thesis suggest that she is of the impression that in order to function within the world, one's mind must be fully united with one's body.

* The exploration of self which she undertakes throughout her fiction does sometimes pose a challenge to Beauvoir's hypothesis, particularly with the case of Linda Burnell in 'Prelude'. Her characters, on the whole, can be said to possess less unity of self than Woolf's characters, but it is only Linda that completely counteracts Beauvoir's hypothesis. The psychosomatic symptoms which she displays, and the hysteria which is suggested throughout the story, pose a challenge to selfhood. She lives in a perpetually confused state, where imagined things appear alarmingly real to her. Rarely in the story is she seen as a fully rounded character, and there are few instances in which her mind and body are working in tandem with one another. Overall, she has very little control over her physical body, tormented as she is by the 'Other'ness which surrounds her in her bedroom, and the isolation which she feels from the world of her family. She is present as a physical body in the room which she inhabits, but her mind is so troubled that her thoughts and perspectives are beyond her expression. Linda's presence in the world is complicated by her mind; she has little awareness at times of what is real and

what is imagined, and therefore her thoughts are too confused for her to function in the world as well as she is expected to. Linda as a character therefore does not fulfil Beauvoir's notion that presence in the world can only be achieved if one is physically within it, and has perspectives regarding it.

The other female characters in Mansfield's fiction whom I have discussed have at least some level of control over their physical bodies, despite various complications of self. Beryl in 'Prelude' is aware of a multiplicity of self which exists within her, and this awareness demonstrates that she has at least some self-discipline and autonomy. Kezia, the young daughter focused upon in 'Prelude', has an awareness of her growing self, and has learnt the ability to control, or at least to hide, her feelings from the outside world: 'She sat with her head bent, and as the tear dripped slowly down, she caught it with a neat little whisk of her tongue and ate it before any of them had seen.' [2] This demonstrates self-preservation, along with as a sense of pride in the control which she is able to display. This gives her more security in her own self. In 'Bliss', Bertha evokes a firm control over her impulses, not allowing herself to perform the actions which she wishes to. This self-control exists in both the public and private sphere for Bertha, who has to entrust the care of her baby daughter to a nanny due to societal mores. Lastly, Miss Moss in 'Pictures' has a complicated impression of her self, picturing herself as far younger than she is. Although she tries her best to hold onto this vision of her younger self, there is no split which shows that she is separated with regard to her body and point of view.

In terms of the togetherness of material bodies and perspectives, the work of both contemporary authors either demonstrates a shift away from Beauvoir's hypothesis, or reinforces it. Of Winterson's work, I have written about *Lighthousekeeping* and *Written on the Body* in this thesis. The former is more traditional with regard to its struc-

[2] *Collected Stories*, p. 7

ture, as well as the coming-of-age story it presents of its young protagonist, Silver. Silver's body is changing as she grows, and she has a constant awareness of this, despite the way in which she tries to hide her physical self - when she washes in the dark, for instance. Throughout the novel, her body and point of view are unified, and the two are never separated from one another. In this way, Silver can be viewed as a character who fully supports Beauvoir's hypothesis. She is fully present within the world, both of the lighthouse in which she lives and on a grander scale, due to the harmony which her mind and body display.

Written on the Body is far more experimental in its style, and obscures the narrator's gender. In the novel, Winterson presents the physical body in a number of ways. She demonstrates that both the narrator and her lover, Louise, exist within the world, but only in a partial manner, as elements of themselves are obscured. The narrator continually voices his or her opinions about the world and relationships, but their physical body is hidden. Winterson has compared this body to both feminine and masculine gender markers throughout the novel, which effectively serve to cancel one another out. On the other hand, the narrator continually makes us aware of Louise's physical body, but she is rendered in such a way that she is only able to articulate her thoughts in brief conversations; her voice is therefore as obscured as the narrator's physical body. Whilst both characters exist in the world, they do so in different ways, and with different elements of their selves deliberately concealed. In this way, it can be said that neither character is presented as fully formed, and the way in which they exist and interact within the world is sometimes ambiguous. Neither character can be seen to be 'a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world', as in both cases, one of the elements has been almost entirely undisclosed.

The multiplicity of self which is apparent in Smith's short fiction has been explored alongside elements of transformation in her characters. The characters which I

have observed either support Beauvoir's quotation, or step away from it. Smith demonstrates that it is possible to separate mind and body in her fiction, and the two can work independently rather than having to be codependent. In her fiction, the self invariably reunifies, the physical body and point of view merged once more. In 'The ex-wife', a replica of Katherine Mansfield appears to the narrator as a body in the world. She is essentially a caricature of her real self, and Smith has mimicked her voice. Regardless, her visible presence - at least to the narrator - and the articulation of thoughts on the much changed world around her, allow Mansfield to appear as 'a thing of the world and a point of view on this world', therefore supporting Beauvoir's hypothesis. In 'The human claim', Ms Smith is the protagonist, the author having presented a copy of her own self. In this story, Smith the author and Smith the protagonist are distanced from one another, and the former observes the latter. In 'Writ', a similar duplicity of self has been explored, but from a different angle. Here, the present day protagonist meets and speaks to her younger self. Whilst the same character has been replicated, the two have so much of their base selves in common that despite knowing little of the younger self's thoughts and feelings, we are able to understand her from the perspective of the contemporary self.

All of the texts which I have selected within this thesis are useful as evidence to my central concern, as they portray the complex relationship between the mind and the body. For the most part, they show a mind-body synchronicity, and therefore support Beauvoir's claim. There are, of course, tensions demonstrated between the two at times, in which the physical body and mind are seen to separate from one another. I have found that there are elements of transformation - particularly with regard to bodily shifts, and even, on occasion, full metamorphosis [3] - within the work of all of the authors selected within this thesis.

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[3] 'The beholder' (in *Public Library and Other Stories*), pp. 43-56

* In order to be able to operate as a fully-formed character within the world, it is imperative to be 'both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world', as Beauvoir set out in *The Second Sex*. In those instances I have identified in which one's point of view or physical body is obscured, or transforms in some way, the characters can be seen as lacking, unable to fulfil the space in the world which they are expected to occupy. This is particularly true with regard to the narrator and Louise in Winterson's *Written on the Body*, whose physical body and perspective respectively are almost entirely obscured, and Linda in Mansfield's 'Prelude', whose hysteria manifests itself in psychosomatic symptoms, affecting the way in which her body behaves. Orlando's transformation in Woolf's novel also brings moments of crisis, in which Orlando in her female incarnation feels unable to exist within the new and unfamiliar landscape which her [removed: gender] change in biological sex has opened for her. The same can be said with regard to Smith's short work; her characters often undergo states of transformation, either bodily, or with regard to their perspectives, which have to alter along with the world around them.

During my research, I have come to the conclusion that for anyone to be fully present and engaged in the world, it is vital that their material body and point of view are connected. Only in moments of crisis for the characters which I have explored is there an appearance of separation between the two, when the self is fractured. The implication which comes with a separation of self is that characters cannot be vigorously present in the world without an awareness of both their physical bodies and perspectives. The two have to work in tandem if a character is to be fully able to comport herself in the manner expected of her in society. Examples which I have identified that contradict Beauvoir's statement do so largely due to the exploration of gender which they undertake, and the gender fluidity which is a continual motif.

My findings in this thesis indicate that Beauvoir's hypothesis is true; in order to fully and 'vigorously' engage with one's world, one must be able to both physically live within it, and to interpret it and form perspectives accordingly. Whilst I have examined Beauvoir's quote through the lens of female and gender fluid characters in different literary works, this positing of the body and point of view is crucial with regard to real life too.

By examining literary works from the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, I have been able to explore the complexities between the body and mind from varied angles, and by focusing upon different characters. These range from the problematic positions in society which women were made to occupy, and the characters who subverted this - Miss La Trobe who does so deliberately by dressing in masculine clothing and the suggestion of her non-normative sexuality in Woolf's *Between the Acts*, and hysterical Linda in Mansfield's 'Prelude', unable to fulfil her role as wife and mother due to her psychosomatic symptoms - to the deterioration of the body - Louise's cancer diagnosis in *Written on the Body* which changes her physical body irreversibly, and the transformation of the narrator in Smith's 'The beholder', who turns into a tree. There is also emphasis within the work of these four authors on coming of age, ageing, and shifts in the mind - the senility which Violet seems to be suffering from in Smith's 'Scottish Love Songs' for example. Particularly effective is when these elements come together; this is most clear in Smith's 'Writ', the story in which the protagonist meets and converses with her younger self.

The mind-body relationship was a central concern to each of the authors examined in this discussion. The female characters created by Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson, and Smith are, of course, diverse, both with regard to their emotional capacity, and to the place and time into which they have been written. Despite this, they can be compared and contrasted in terms of their exterior and interior bodies, as well as the points

of view which they project; they all have similarities and differences. There are clear trajectories between texts - for instance, the animal imagery in Woolf's *Between the Acts* and Winterson's *Written on the Body*; the motif of gender fluidity and transformation in *Orlando* and Smith's short fiction; and the use by all four authors of free indirect discourse, which allows one to slip in and out of a particular character's consciousness, and to view them both as subject and object. Free indirect discourse essentially allows one to gain a deep understanding of the given protagonist(s). All of these tropes in the writing of Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson, and Smith explore the notion of female embodiment, and help to examine the place within the world which the characters can or cannot be said to occupy.

The presence in the world of each of the characters examined in this thesis, and as denoted by Beauvoir's quote, relates entirely to the fact of their body and point of view existing together. Should one of these be lacking, obscured, or absent, or should the two be separated from one another, it cannot then be said that the character in question is fully present within the world. Any separation of self is an impairment, obscuring the way in which the character is able to behave within, and interact with, both the world and the other characters around them. It presents a contribution to knowledge in that whilst *The Second Sex* has been interpreted by many different critics, and from many different angles, I have not before come across a comprehensive assessment of whether 'Presence in the world vigorously implies the positing of a body that is both a thing of the world and a point of view on this world'. My aim in this thesis has been to examine new research against existing knowledge, and I have done so by examining Beauvoir's hypothesis with the use of fictional characters from selected works of literature.

Contribution to Research

I believe that this thesis makes a positive contribution to research. It examines why Beauvoir's work is still relevant in the twenty-first century, pointing out what an influence she has had on a slew of feminist thinkers, particularly those who have been writing since her work was taken seriously from the 1990s onwards. The last thirty years have seen a great deal of criticism about *The Second Sex*, some of it markedly positive, and other works highly negative, as I pointed out in my first chapter. Much of this criticism relates to feminism itself, or the rigid and oppressed place of the female within the world. Before conducting my research, I was unaware of the scale of feminist thinkers writing back against Beauvoir. She is a pivotal figure in the women's movement, but I was unaware that there were quite so many opponents to her work. I was also surprised to learn that she is little discussed in French feminism in the twenty-first century, as her ideas do not fit in with current trends.

There is comparatively little work which takes literature into account when looking at *The Second Sex*, as most of it tends to be theoretical. I have thus chosen to follow one of Beauvoir's tropes - about the interrelated material and interior body - and carry it through the work of four chosen female authors to explore her claim. This thesis therefore links together two different fields - that of feminism and women's studies - along with literature from two distinct periods. I have found no instances of all five authors - Beauvoir, Woolf, Mansfield, Winterson, and Smith - being discussed altogether before, or with such a fixed concept as corporeality to link them. By discussing and linking these authors together, I believe that I have made a new contribution to research. However, as it is a small-scale project, I am aware that it may have few, if any, implications in the field of Beauvoir studies.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Expansion

There are, of course, limitations to this project. Given the length of the thesis, I have had to be selective with regard to my primary texts, and was therefore unable to take into account more texts by the selected authors, which would have either supported or contradicted Beauvoir's statement. Particular omissions include comparisons between 'Prelude' and Mansfield's unfinished novel 'The Aloe', both of which feature the same characters; a study of protagonist Katharine Hilbery in Woolf's *Night and Day*; the gender ambiguity of Ali/Alix in Winterson's *The PowerBook*; as well as all of Smith's novel length work. Smith's *Hotel World* would be a valuable inclusion in this discussion, using as it does a disembodied, dead narrator. The narrator still exists in some form, although not a physically bodied one: 'Because now that I'm nearly gone, I'm more here than I ever was. Now that I'm nothing but air, all I want is to breathe it.' [4] The loss and separation of the narrator's mind and physical body would fit well within this discussion, and would add more depth to my thoughts about the body, and its portrayal in Smith's work. If this project were to be extended, these could all be advantageous inclusions in order to further explore Beauvoir's hypothesis.

Whilst I have aimed to create a thoughtful discussion and exploration of the female body and mind, as per Beauvoir's quote, this project could definitely be built on in future. A suggestion for expansion could be to hone in on the entire oeuvre of one modernist and one contemporary author, keeping the focus the same, but having more primary material in that instance to build my argument. I could look into theories of embodiment further, and perhaps use phenomenology as the main theoretical approach to my argument. Another way in which the project could be extended is to take into ac-

[4] Ali Smith, *Hotel World* (London: Penguin, 2001; repr. 2002)

count more of the ideas about the corporeal body and interiority which Beauvoir comments upon in *The Second Sex*, thus extending the discussion of Beauvoir's own work. Alternatively, I could have examined representations of mind and body using the same primary sources, but instead of Beauvoirian theories, Lacan, Derrida, or Descartes could have been used instead.

More could be drawn from Foucault's work on the physical and sexual body, particularly with regard to his terminology of bodies as 'subjects of desire'. [5] Foucault's extensive study about the body in terms of power relations, and the ability which power has to dominate bodies, would be a thoughtful avenue to pursue if this project were to be extended. Another possible extension to this thesis would be to include more of Freud's psychological theories, which could be of use when discussing the sexualised body. A Freudian reading could be applied particularly to the character of Silver in *Lighthousekeeping*, who has a growing awareness of her young body.

More emphasis could be placed upon the notion of the body as 'Other' in this discussion. With an opportunity for further research, I would look into the work of Lisa Blackman, and apply it to my thesis. When talking of the 'Other'ed body, she notes: 'When bodies are Othered, they are 'viewed as the site of animality, primitivism and irrationality.' [6] This would be a worthwhile element to build upon, and to explore Blackman's ideas would add more consideration to how Miss LaTrobe's physical body is viewed. This could also be extended to include the ungendered narrator in *Written on the Body*, and to the narrator of Smith's *Hotel World*.

Tied into the notion of the body as 'Other' is the animalistic body, which I have discussed at some length in this thesis, but could work on more thoroughly in an extended project. The work of Barbara Creed, who discusses homosexuality and the animal

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5 Michel Foucault, *The Uses of Pleasure: A History of Sexuality, Volume Two,* trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Viking, 1986), p. 5

6 Blackman, p. 48

body in tandem, would be particularly invaluable. Her chapter within *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism* is entitled 'Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts', and establishes links between lesbianism and bestiality. The historical links between both elements which she picks up on can be dated to the Medieval period. [7] Her ideas could be built upon in my discussion about Miss LaTrobe and her homosexuality in *Between the Acts*. One particular area of focus which I would like to look into, is when she writes: 'The image of the lesbian as part of the natural world - as distinct from the civilized - might repel some, but it is also immensely appealing.' [8] This notion of being separated from the human world, and having more in common with the animalistic, is fascinating, and I feel would lend itself well to this thesis. Of further consideration in Creed's work is the following: 'Historically and culturally, the lesbian body - although indistinguishable in reality from the female body itself - has been represented as a body in extreme: the pseudo-male, animalistic and narcissistic body.' [9] This could also be explored in my discussion.

I could also extend the idea of marine imagery in a longer discussion. Whilst I have written about each of the parallels which Winterson draws between human intimacy and creatures which live in the sea in *Written on the Body*, this idea could be extended to examine the language which she uses with regard to the sea and its creatures in *Lighthousekeeping*. Whilst marine imagery is not a trope which is apparent in the majority of the books which I have included in this thesis, I could try to pinpoint examples in other stories by Mansfield and Smith, and *The Voyage Out* by Woolf. I could include ideas about the sea as a physical body, and contrasts drawn between the sea and its

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[7] Barbara Creed, 'Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts' (from a chapter of the same name in Grosz, Elisabeth and Elspeth Probyn (eds.), *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1995), repr. Fraser, Mariam and Monica Greco (eds.), *The Body: A Reader* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2005; repr. 2007 (twice)), pp. 111-112

[8] Creed, p. 112

[9] Creed, p. 113

creatures, and the corporeal human body. Animal imagery could also be extended in a similar way, as far more depth has been given to it in my discussion of Woolf's *Between the Acts* in this thesis.

It could be explored in detail whether the mind appears to be biologically sexed or gendered in the primary texts. This would require far more research than I have done into the topic thus far, but it would certainly be a valuable inclusion in this project. This notion of whether the mind can truly be sexed or gendered is controversial, and I would need to do far more research into those who have written about it at length before formulating any kind of response or conclusion.

Each of these considerations would extend parts of this thesis, adding depth to my discussion, and further grounding some of the things which I have set out to explore.

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