"NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN":
WOOLF AND JOYCE, THE NEW WOMAN AND THE NEW MAN

A Thesis

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By

Cheryl Lynn Hindrichs, B.A.

The Ohio State University
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Master’s Examination Committee:
Dr. Sebastian D. G. Knowles, adviser
Dr. Valerie Lee, adviser
Dr. Morris Beja
Dr. Barbara Rigney

Approved by

Department of English

Department of Women’s Studies
The answer to the first of the Sphinx's riddles — "which two sisters are born, the first to the second and the second to the first?" — is also the title of Virginia Woolf's second novel, Night and Day. The parallactic structure of the riddle is duplicated in the composition of the text itself, which emphasizes a triangular structure of meaning. Poised on the threshold of modernism, James Joyce's Ulysses also stresses a parallactic structure of meaning, the necessity of seeing together, seeing the past in the present with the future. In texts published at the end of the Great War and set in the prewar period, Woolf and Joyce expose the oppressive nature of the fictions that human interactions revolve upon in order to sever the wounded attachments of the reader and writer to these past fictions, introduce new possibilities of meaning, and thus alter the trajectory of social narratives. The figures of the New Woman and New Man in these threshold texts serve as allegories of the struggle of the modernist writer to break from the tyrannies of the literary and social past, signified by the glaring sun of the Day, and step into an unwritten future, the Night. The ambivalence of the artist poised above reductive binarisms is portrayed in the failed connections between characters, the frustration of the New Woman and new womanly man, and the ambiguous conclusions of both texts. The parallactic visions of these texts ultimately suggest that literary and social change are as interdependent as night and day. In their critique of heterosexual romance and Oedipal quest fictions, both texts insist upon parallax — holding two conflicting visions simultaneously without absolutely bridging the visions, thus leaving open a space of possibility.
Woolf and Joyce particularly invoke the New Woman in order to emphasize how nostalgia for romance fictions and the absolutism of realism obscure alternative trajectories of human relations. Their re-vision of the New Woman (or new womanly man) and New Man, set against explicit evocations of New Woman fiction, Henrik Ibsen's drama, and Percy Bysshe Shelley's romanticism, depict the frustration of feminists, socialists, and artists of the First World War period. In addition to designating a liminal space marking the possibility of change, a threshold may signify a stumbling block, and in a period of tragic disappointments for feminism and socialism, Woolf and Joyce depicted how nostalgia for romance fictions and the appropriation of the New Woman and New Man by patriarchal discourses proved a stumbling block that threatened to trip the artist into a revivification of these fictions. The New Man in these texts signifies a threshold in terms of an obstacle rather than a liminal space of possibility; he is depicted as bound by romantic and masculinist notions of the solitary artist, thus perpetuating women's objectification as muse and monster. A maternal figure, representative of the patriarchal cult of domesticity that entraps men and women in nostalgia for gender conventions, colludes with the New Man. In Woolf's text, the mother and the New Man revivify the heterosexual romance plot; in Joyce's text, an avenging angel in the house haunts the New Man and revivifies the Oedipal quest plot. The New Woman and new womanly man of these texts, in seeking and feeling sympathy across differences, are figures of possibility that cross boundaries in order to connect.
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VITA

September 13, 1977..............Born – Colorado Springs, Colorado, U. S. A.

1997..........................American Foundations Program, Summer
Wake Forest University

1998..........................B. A. – Truman State University
Major – English; Minor – Women’s Studies

1996 – 1998....................Women’s Resource Center, Truman State University
Co-Director, Special Events Coordinator

1999 – present................Graduate Teaching Associate
English and Women’s Studies, The Ohio State University

2000 – present................Graduate Research Associate
The International James Joyce Foundation

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields:
English
Women’s Studies
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

(See Bibliography for full citations)

AROO Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*

CE 1-4 Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays* (4 vols.)

CSF Virginia Woolf, *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*

CW James Joyce, *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*

D 1-5 Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* (5 vols.)

E 1-3 Virginia Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* (3 vols.)

FW James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

JL 2-3 James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce* (2 vols.)

L 1-6 Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf* (6 vols.)

MB Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*

MD Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

ND Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day*

OED Oxford English Dictionary

P James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

TG Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*

U James Joyce, *Ulysses*
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In form and content, Woolf's text and Joyce's text unfold in a drama of eclipse, in which the descent into darkness provides a momentary illumination of a prospect of the possibility of the new when patriarchal ideology is put into relief. Woolf began writing *Night and Day* in 1915, and Joyce began writing *Ulysses* in 1914; both had been conceptualizing their works in years previous, and both novels were published after the war (1919 and 1922 respectively). The setting of Joyce's work is a single day, covering the morning of June 16, 1904 until the early hours of the following morning. Woolf's work is set in or about the year 1909 or 1910, covering a period of several months, ending on a June night. Woolf and Joyce stand on the far end of the First World War seeing with dread the return of the Sun King or the Son of Man—the patriarchal order wearing the mask of "civilization"—that will shut in the horizon and the vision made possible by the New Woman and the critique of patriarchy that the war inadvertently produced. Jane Goldman has shown how, in Woolf's fiction, "daylight, and, by association, the solar light of masculinity, prevents [...] other worlds from being visible at all" (93). Likewise, the women of Joyce's *Ulysses* must act as moans imperfectly reflecting and thus defining the authorial men; the women and men under the home-rule sun grope for what Martha Clifford mis-writes to Leopold Bloom as "that other world," alternative worlds which are tied to the "word" (5:245-46), and which are also sought in Stephen Dedalus's search for the unsayable, the word known to all men that dare not speak its name.
Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, and Ralph Denham, the three protagonists of Woolf’s novel, are struggling to create identities that transcend conventional types, and the struggle is portrayed through their frustration with the limitations of form and existent narratives and language itself. Whereas *Night and Day* emphasizes the lack of alternative narratives to the relentless return of a consent to femininity through a parallactic juxtaposition of two women and a man (Ralph, Mary, and Katharine), *Ulysses* stresses the lack of alternative narratives to the relentless return to the boy’s consent to masculinity through a parallactic juxtaposition of two men and a woman (Stephen, Bloom, and Molly). The triangles of the texts are multiple, but in this study I will focus on how the missed connections between Mary and Katharine interrupted by Ralph parallel the missed connections of Bloom and Stephen interrupted by Molly. Bloom, like Mary to Katharine, is cognizant of the connections possible between himself and Stephen and endeavors to forge such a connection. Bloom and Stephen, Mary and Katharine, follow parallel paths in rejecting orthodox doctrines, and their near connections represent each character’s need for a sympathetic but different perspective to create their visions outside of those doctrines.

I will argue that re-vision of the New Woman and New Man enables Woolf and Joyce to engage in the first step of a feminist deconstruction of the trajectory of heterosexaul romance and Oedipal quest plots in order to create a mental and material space for the creation of alternative trajectories. Nonetheless, the New, the Night as opposed to the Day, is not unequivocally posited as a possible utopia; instead, the dichotomy is itself questioned. The tension of ambivalence creates a threshold or borderlands position for Woolf and Joyce to expose and refuse gendered prewar fictions while simultaneously identifying the power of nostalgia. Both texts enact the first step of feminist deconstruction by revealing the interdependence of literary and social change. Woolf and Joyce invoke and fracture Day conventions, thus exposing how the persistence of masculinist romance fictions, the inability to draft new fictions, and the inadequacy of communication due to its subordination to ideological structures thus perpetuate race, class and
gender oppression. Through their strategic use of satire, parody, and ambivalence, these texts broach but cannot yet enact the second step of feminist deconstruction, the creation of alternate trajectories. The ambiguous conclusions of both texts signify the ideological obstacles hindering this second move, a paralysis that both authors recognized, emphasized, and confronted.

The notion of a liminal border space, which Woolf and Joyce worked from, continually recreated, and critiqued, is also a key to this examination. Despite critiques of Woolf and Joyce as antirealist and apolitical, these texts reveal that Woolf and Joyce sought and employed a threshold or borderlands space precisely in order to engage with politics. The threshold spaces they sought in their lives and depict in their works are ones which enable a perspective for critique and imaginative possibility, since such a borderlands position enables a parallactic vision of politics and aesthetics in which change is conceivable and stasis resisted. In Woolf’s work, “there is no resolution to ambivalence, there is only transition, or transitional space, between two sides,” as the metaphors of “granite and rainbow” imply (Rosenfeld 7). As Michael Seidel has demonstrated, Homeric scholar Victor Berard’s theories provide a path for Joyce from centers of known lands to borders of the unknown, characteristic of Odysseus’s movements in the Mediterranean, as a parallel to Bloom’s epic journey in Ulysses. In his conversations with Arthur Power, Joyce reflected on Ulysses as having “opened the way,” producing “a new orientation in literature—the new realism” (53). Echoing Woolf’s aesthetic theories, according to Joyce, the “modern mind” is interested in “the subterranean complexities which dominate the average man,” and the task of the modern author must be “to create a new fusion between the exterior world and our contemporary selves, and […] to enlarge our vocabulary of the subconscious” (Power 74).

Finally, I will examine the New Woman as the tragi-comic allegory of the modernist artist in need of a new language and form. Nearly a decade following the hey-day of the New Woman, modernists found in her a site to articulate the ambiguity of gender relations creating social and literary anxiety during the period surrounding the war. The trampled career of the
New Woman is sympathetic with the prewar aesthetic aspirations of modernist authors. Margot Norris reads Joyce’s portrayal of the New Woman as a representation of her as “a historically unrealizable construct,” and similarly “Virginia Woolf could construct her only as a self-problematized fiction; Gertrude Stein as an exuberant, self-incriminating, and self-ironizing egoist; and Djuna Barnes as her somnambulistic antonym” (“Mamafesta” 2).

From their threshold positions that hold a vision of the past which exposes the fictions that bind the New Woman alongside a vision into the dark future, Woolf and Joyce attempt to plot a trajectory into the heart of darkness, the Night of modernism, by re-appropriating the New Woman and new womanly man figure from conventional fictions. The success or failure of a new trajectory for the New Woman and her socialist and feminist beliefs is shown in these texts to be interdependent with a new form of connection made possible through seeing together. Ultimately, through their focus on journey rather than closure, their emphasis on liminal spaces and threshold figures such as the flaneur and the New Woman, the palimpsest layers of their texts, and their critique of heterosexual romance and Oedipal quest fictions, both texts enact a parallax of the present moment. Parallax, holding two conflicting visions simultaneously without absolutely bridging the visions, thus leaves open a space of possibility by enabling a third perspective.
Feminist Deconstructionists: Writing as Re-Vision

Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past. (U 9:89)

In attempting to achieve a threshold position, these texts map the parallax of the real, gauging the interface of the seeing and the seen. Returning to modernism's project of parataxis—exploring the suppressed connections of modernist poetics that break down binaristic readings yet also point to the circulation of power—is an important connection for current generations of readers and writers. As readers on the threshold of the twenty-first century, our visions of Woolf and Joyce re-visioning their own immediate pasts thus enable us to make a further measure of parallax. Our critical distance enables us to hold two simultaneous visions of human interaction (Woolf's New Woman and Joyce's new womanly man) in order to make a parallactic measure of the trajectory human relations have taken since World War I.

My use of parallax thus functions similarly to Nancy Fraser's notion of "axes of power," a concept which allows her to posit broad systemic logics—such as patriarchy and capitalism—without seeing these discourses as totalizing, precisely because her analysis highlights "the interactions and potential contradictions between different power hierarchies without, however, dissolving and dispersing the notion of power completely" (Felski 32). Since Woolf's and Joyce's texts make possible alternative perspectives on the New Woman by subtly and satirically exposing the various discourses producing and regulating her production, these texts posit the plurality of vision which "axes of power" or parallax signifies—to see the power of hegemonic and interpenetrating discourses in society and to see the negotiations of resistance that are made daily by the modern citizen.
The concept of negotiation, borrowed from cultural studies, is particularly useful in analyzing the interplay of text, writer, and reader in re-visioning the New Woman. According to Christine Gledhill, “the term ‘negotiation’ implies the holding together of opposite sides in an ongoing process of give-and-take [...]. Meaning is neither imposed, nor passively imbibed, but arises out of a struggle or negotiation between competing frames of reference” (qtd. in Pykett 210). This study examines how these modernist writers negotiated literary discourses (audience, convention, and new aesthetics), in what ways their characters are portrayed negotiating discourses of the New age while still mired in the old, how as individuals Joyce and Woolf negotiated their marginal positions in society through their writing, and how these negotiated discourses are specifically gendered.

If “History [...] is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake,” as Stephen claims in Ulysses (2:377), then understanding the matrix of that nightmare is essential to opening the possibility of new dreams. Reflecting on the period in which Night and Day is set, Woolf writes of her ambivalence regarding feminism and modernism: “But while we looked into the future, we were completely under the power of the past” (MB 147). Woolf’s novel suggests that the power of the past obscured any vision of an alternate future, and that feminist and socialist writers required a broader and deconstructionist vision; the imposing canvas is not easily filled without recourse to earlier modes of representation, ways of seeing, which required radical reconfigurations (or decompositions) to adequately clear a prospect for the future.⁴ On July 23, 1918, Woolf writes in her diary, “But to look ahead is disastrous, considering how much has still to be recorded of time past” (D 1:172). Until that past, both literal and literary, is recorded and attachments to it severed, human relations would continue sutured to the nightmare of history.

In placing the re-presentations of the New Woman in Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts side by side, I am attempting to emulate Adrienne Rich’s notion of “re-vision,” “an act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes” in order to expose the trajectory of gendered human relations and its
relationship to fiction (35). Rich’s essay, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision” provides a frame for my project; its 1971/78 publication delineates a link in the chain of feminist-socialist movements and frustrations, the necessarily continuous project of consciousness raising, that can be traced back through these texts, and to which our present re-visions contribute.

My choice of Night and Day is the result of its strikingly ambivalent re-vision of the pre-1910 period. Katherine Mansfield’s review of the book, describing it as “Miss Austen up-to-date,” initiated a tendency for critics to ignore the work as a plotted Victorian comedy of manners in favor of Woolf’s more experimental fiction (108). As Woolf writes of Conrad in a 1918 review of Nostromo, variously described by critics as “astonishing” or a “failure,” “it is illuminating to know that it is the work of a writer who has become aware that the world which he writes about has changed its aspect. He has not got used to the new prospect. As yet it is a world in which he does not see his way” (E 2:227). D. S. Savage describes Woolf’s Night and Day, as well as The Voyage Out, as failures: “dull, third-rate novels in the conventional manner, interesting only because they reveal quite plainly the nature of the disabilities under which Virginia Woolf laboured” (284). Contemporary critic Jane Marcus reads the novel as an astonishing comic opera following Mozart and ultimately affirming the voyage into marriage.

However, my reading follows Shirley Nelson Garner’s in emphasizing the dark satire of the text. Kathy Phillips similarly concludes her examination of the novel and its concern with empire, “In 1919, however, Night and Day cannot conclude but only pause, with women still rarities at Oxbridge and the colonies still on leashes, despite a few stirrings of protest, including Woolf’s” (94). Although there are several interesting studies of the New Woman in modernist literature, particularly Marylu Hill’s Mothering Modernity: Feminism, Modernism, and the Maternal Muse, nearly all, including Hill’s text, overlook Night and Day and instead examine The Voyage Out, To The Lighthouse, and Orlando perhaps partially as a result of the critical
prejudice Mansfield’s review inaugurated. Nonetheless, Night and Day’s ambiguous parodies and pointed attacks on previous literary and social conventions have begun to attract scholars of modernism and feminist scholars exploring the historic dynamic of the personal and political. David Daiches sees Woolf becoming “enmeshed” as she struggles to make the novel what presumably it was “intended to be—a heavy, protracted piece of work with a quite glaring disparity between form and content” (236).

Joyce’s Ulysses would not seem, on first glance, an obvious match for Woolf’s “most traditional realist novel” (Blain 128). Although read as a collection of fragments by some, Ulysses is meticulously plotted, sinuously unfolding in eighteen Homeric episodes, weaving in and out of the lives of a collection of Dubliners. Michael Groden notes that to a certain extent, “it is a novel in the traditional sense” particularly in its early development (13). Furthermore, the striking similarities of key points of the texts—particularly the triangular construction of desire and characters, the interrogation of fictions of love and human relationships, the parallactic nature of the texts themselves—impel a second glance. Just as Ulysses is Joyce’s threshold text between A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Finnegans Wake, Night and Day is a threshold text for Woolf, which becomes clear in the context of her more experimental short fiction, such as “Sympathy,” and her later high modernist novels, such as Mrs Dalloway. I will be following Michael Groden’s thesis that Ulysses is constructed deliberately as a “palimpsest” that reflects three stages of composition which trace Joyce’s authorial concerns as they evolve during the 1914-1922 period, in which Joyce also crosses over this threshold: the middle stage, “Wandering Rocks” to “Oxen of the Sun,” serves as “a bridge between his early interest in character and story,” seen in the first stage, “and his late concern with schematic correspondences,” seen in the last stage of “Circe” to “Penelope” (Groden 4). Although scholars have productively compared Woolf’s later novels with Joyce’s Ulysses, I am interested here in exploring the parallel paths of these First World War period texts in staging the drama of the threshold.
In “Philosophy in Fiction,” Woolf argues that as readers we have a “grooved a road in our minds” that requires each story we read to follow the same path, “nor are we often disobeyed” (E 2:208). Consequently, the “finished product” rarely bears a likeness “with reality, to what we feel for ourselves” (E 2:208). She mocks the current bold assertions of the triumph of realism, arguing instead that “the material of life is so difficult to handle and has to be limited and abstracted to such an extent before it can be dealt with by words that a small pinch of it only is made use of by the lesser novelist,” whose only recourse is to “mould” and “remould” the genius of previous generations (E 2:208). These “moulds” are “so firmly set, and require such effort to break them, that the public is seldom disturbed by explosions in that direction” (E 2:208). She praises L. P. Jacks’s work, which manages to break from the mold as a result of his interest in philosophy and religion since it “carries him to blank spaces where the path has not been cut nor the name chosen” (emphasis added, E 2:209). It is the admixture of an alternate perspective or “angle” that allows an author like Jacks, or Joyce as Woolf will discover, and the reader to diverge from the grooved road—to angle off from the current gyre into the blank spaces beyond the glare of the sun.

The eclipse in social structures is mirrored in the authors’ attempts to find a new form or language to express the changing perspective. Michael Groden has mapped the middle stage episodes of Ulysses as representative of “Joyce’s attempt to filter his story through established forms of narration (including his own initial style), always distorted by his instinct for parody,” a strategy which culminates in “Oxen of the Sun” (51-52). The episodes that follow are a departure from the technique of parody and a move toward “new styles of his own” (Groden 52). It is the middle stage of the text, in which Joyce transitions from a focus on story and character to form and structure, where his project strikingly corresponds to Woolf’s transitions by the end of Night.
and Day. In the writing of “Wandering Rocks,” “Sirens, “Cyclops,” “Nausicaa” and “Oxen of the Sun” Joyce turns to parody and satire in order to break the hold of past literary traditions and prepare himself and his reader for a new direction of the novel.5

The “both/and” of these episodes emphasizes Joyce’s virtuosity in forcing style to serve his subject (for example, Bloom as quest hero), a technique which allows him to reveal much of character, plot, and socio-historic context through ironic juxtapositions, while simultaneously pointedly indicating how the limitations of narrative grooves circumscribe a portrayal of the story’s and characters’ complexities. “Oxen of the Sun” unfolds chronological parodies of literary styles, marking Joyce’s move from a focus on the story and interiority to a concern with how the method of narration influences the content—what can and cannot be seen or said—of the story. It is important to note, however, that each parody includes a spoken or unspoken commentary. The initial half of “Nausicaa,” which seems uninterrupted parody of sentimental popular women’s fiction, is not only checked by Bloom’s interior monologue but also checks itself throughout as the reader is made aware of Gerty’s negotiations of various discourses (romantic, sentimental, religious, New Woman, etc.) to shape her sense of subjectivity.

In Paperspace, Patrick McGee also plots the subversion of narrative consistency in the episodes of the middle section of Ulysses. “Wandering Rocks” displays the “disjunction between style of representation and technique of arrangement,” which continues in “Sirens,” an episode which invests “musical language with ideological value as an imaginary resolution of real social and sexual conflicts” (McGee 185). “Cyclops” then explores the disjunction “between story and discourse, between narrative and the word of a speaking subject,” the nameless one’s attempt to manipulate the narrative according to his political standpoint against Bloom’s pregnant silences (McGee 185). Similarly, “Nausicaa” explores the “inadequacy of form to content in the ideological representations of sexual difference” as “gender reappears as a distinction of genre” (McGee 185). “Oxen of the Sun” rounds out the middle section in “presenting the history of
literary style as the history of its ideological fractures, eruptions, and displacements” as the male literati speculate on women who labor, thus exposing again via what literature has not said, “the violent ground of its production in the maternal/material space of symbolic differentiation and process” (McGee 185-86). Woolf’s text similarly engages with this subversion of style and subject in its crafted three parallel paths of wandering and epiphany, and its juxtaposition of each protagonist’s experiences with the plots of Mozart’s operas, Dante and Milton, and the style of Ibsen’s drama, Shelley’s poetry, and Austen’s novels.

The fecundity of both the Woolf and Joyce industries provides evidence of the rigorous ambiguity inherent in their work. The kaleidoscope quality of their texts allow reader and critic to turn (and return to) the text over and again, revealing a variety of readings of both text and context, held up to the light of the various writerly selves Woolf and Joyce projected, and the various ideologies the content of their work prompts. Their texts circulate such positions as modernist, feminist, socialist, and new realist, and each angle offers a new point of entry that creates a new refraction of readings. I would extend Sonita Sarker’s useful analysis of Woolf’s self-positioning as applicable to Joyce: refusing to locate her as “romantic aristocrat elitist nor populist utopian, and neither as movement intelligentsia nor dissenting intellectual.” Sarker describes Woolf “as an ‘incorporated’ intellectual” (38-39). By attempting “to remain unincorporated by negotiating from the borders between various ‘-isms’,” such as Victorianism, Edwardianism, modernism, and formalism, Woolf is able “to remain separate and stir things up simultaneously” (Sarker 46, 47). Quoting Edward Said, Sarker concludes that Woolf’s ambivalent political identity is founded upon “a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready-made cliches” (47).

A possible objection to pairing Woolf and Joyce as a capital couple of feminist deconstructionists is Joyce’s status in regards to feminism. Christine Froula offers an extensive review of feminist critical positions regarding Joyce in her preface to Modernism’s Body: Sex,
Culture, Joyce: she outlines a spectrum of feminist readings ranging from Joyce as perpetrator of patriarchy, misogynist, masochist, and gender essentialist, to a masochist against the father, and inventor of *écriture féminine*. My feminist reading of Joyce is most similar to Froula’s own, which holds that “Joyce’s critique of gender consists less in his liberation of female or ‘feminine’ voices” as French feminists have argued, “then in his self-deconstructing virtuoso performances and critical diagnosis of masculinity as a ‘symptom’ of the cultural law of gender” (xiii). In her preface, Froula also notes an interest she is unable to pursue in the text at hand: “While thinking about Joyce’s autobiographical artist-figures as resisting, critical subjects who dissect and challenge the social forces that shape them, I was simultaneously working on Virginia Woolf,” finding that “these exactly contemporary (1882-1941) authors explore the social construction of sexuality and gender” in strikingly similar ways (xiv). “Each artist writes from the standpoint of a historical subject differently placed in respect to the law of gender,” writes Froula, “and each critiques that law from a different side of the radical social and cultural divide it produces. In doing so, each pursues the modernist project of forging a critical conscience as yet uncreated in their time and still evolving in ours” (xiv). Like Froula, I am not arguing for a biographical analysis of these texts, but for an understanding of how Woolf and Joyce reflect and critique the social, political, and cultural context and what their differing positions within these contexts enable them to see, diagnose, and respond to in their writing.

Both *Night and Day* and *Ulysses* enact the feminist deconstructionist project of re-vision. Woolf and Joyce require the reader to see the past and present alongside one another, thus enacting the first step in feminist deconstruction by exposing the construction of categorical difference and its perpetuation due in part to delimiting visions of existing literary discourses. Having constructed such a vision, the texts demand the reader ask “how we can begin to see and name—and therefore live—afresh” (Rich 35). From our vantage of the future realized, in which we have witnessed “the old political order reassert itself in every new revolution” and looking
back on texts that look backwards and forwards, it becomes clear that these texts underscore Rich’s assertion that a “change in the concept of sexual identity,” which is written and rewritten in fiction, is necessary to awaken us from the nightmare of history: “We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us” (35).
Which New Woman?: A Dream and a Terror

*girls now riding the bicycle and wearing peak caps and the new woman bloomers God send him sense and me more money* (U 18:839-40)

Rich quotes Jane Harrison, the classical anthropologist and a contemporary of Woolf and Joyce, who questioned in 1914, why in literature “is Woman a dream and a terror to man and not the other way around?” (36). Harrison’s question unmasks the foundational questions that shape *Night and Day* and *Ulysses*: how have “the myth-making tradition, the romantic tradition,” as Rich writes, governed “what women and men have been to each other” (36). Both Woolf and Joyce stage the male artist’s projection of “Woman” as muse and monster and portray women’s conflict with and internalization of the objectified stereotypes of “Woman” that appear in literature and popular discourse. The New Woman figure and fiction, which span the 1880s to the flappers of the 1920s, developed as counter-hegemonic discourse, an attempt of women writers (and some men) to negotiate the Scylla and Charybdis of Woman as she appeared in literature—passive short-lived (or chaste) muse versus fearsome corpse-chewing vampire.

Although New Woman fiction evidenced profound popular success, the novels themselves were generally denigrated and aligned with decadence, sentimentalism, or Punch-like caricatures of shrieking suffragettes. Furthermore, most New Woman fiction texts concluded in despair, ultimately suggesting “the ‘impossibility’ of women’s situation” (Pykett 148). The New Woman as a type could be tolerated by the male literary establishment and society in general, as long as,
to paraphrase Rich’s description of feminist scholars in the seventies, her words and actions did not threaten men’s “privilege of tolerating or rejecting” the New Woman and her work “according to their ideas of what a special woman ought to be” (38).

Although the term was not equivalent to “feminist,” the New Woman was characterized as likely to hold feminist convictions such as rejecting many of the conventions of femininity by reading “advanced” literature, smoking, bicycling, and traveling alone (Bland 144). Literally, she became a kind of poster-'girl' for the period’s discontents and aspirations. The English and Irish turn of the century culture conveyed in its obsession with the “New,” New Art, New Psychology, New Politics, New Theatre, New Fiction, New Realism, New Journalism, and New Woman, a sense of “urgency and heightened expectancy, of being poised on an epochal threshold” (Felski 146). This ambivalent threshold (both a fecund space for producing discourse, and a space of exile) is figured in the New Woman. A sense of civilization in decay, particularly in the dandyism and decadence vilified in the trials of Oscar Wilde, appeared alongside progressive appeals to a New future and images of emancipation infusing the New Woman. Although the spirit of dandyism and New Womanhood were often at odds, conservatives generally yoked them as unholy twins boding forth the degeneration of civilization.

Characterized as middle or upper class, the New Woman’s “hallmark was personal freedom” (Bland 144). The novels of Grant Allen, Thomas Hardy, and George Gissing and the realist drama of Henrik Ibsen in the 1890s depicted female heroines engaged in direct conflict with the values of conservative society. Despite depicting more sympathetic portrayals of women’s struggles in later decades, a Punch cartoon of 1984, “Donna Quixote,” is an interesting iconic representation since its tone holds neither straight sarcasm nor sympathy but generally indicts New Woman fiction and its female readers. A scholarly, strong woman sits as if on a throne, reading and holding aloft a key—allusive of Egerton’s Keynotes, surrounded by books by Mona Caird, Tolstoi, and Ibsen, pamphlets on feminist topics, and sketched “disorderly notions”
such as the looming head of “Tyrant Man,” a helmeted soldier bearing the banner “Volunteer,” a knightly woman jousting a windmill that is labeled “Marriage laws,” another woman bearing the banner “Divided Skirt” against a dragon “Decorum,” a third wielding an ax against the three-headed dog (Mrs Grundy, Mamma, Chaperon) “Mrs Cerberus.” Although the New Woman figure had been watched with interest as a caricature that flaunted convention by smoking, reading French novels, and engaging in an athletic lifestyle; by 1900, many feminists were demanding the vote, rights to higher education, the right to earn an income, and a destruction of gender spheres. Consequently, male writers of New Woman fiction were “disorderly” in their reactions to the figure they commented on and created; they vacillated between an appropriation of the New Woman figure as a masthead of rebellion and a harbinger of the fresh air of the New, as in Ibsen’s drama, and misogynist portrayals that depicted the struggles of the New Woman figure only to punish her and underscore her unnaturalness, as in Grant Allen’s work.

Furthermore, both male and female New Woman fiction writers and popular press image makers tended to evidence an ambivalence that included both desire for and dread of the New Woman.

As largely a discursive phenomena, the New Woman is difficult to describe as a particular type. Sexologists and psychoanalysts projected her pathology; she is pathologized as asexual and mannish in refusing her reproductive function and insatiable or vampiric in the association of her with free love and the liberalism of Shelley’s set. Male New Woman fiction writers frequently emphasized the latter, alternately praising and punishing the supposed sexual freedom that marked the New Woman. Female New Woman fiction writers varied widely in their stances on female sexuality in addition to a spectrum of feminist concerns; whereas Sara Grand is reformist in upholding traditional tenets of womanhood in her critique of a male-corrupted institution, Mona Caird is radicalist in relentlessly attacking the restrictive function of marriage and maternity. Despite the disparities, indeed, as a result of the disparities, the supposed congruity of Victorian beliefs of gender propriety were brought into question and patriarchal
institutions threatened. The very lack of a language with which to confront the questions raised by the New Woman figure and the new relations she sought to propose proves the crux of many prewar New Woman novels.

Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts are set on what many perceived as a threshold period of the women’s movement, a movement which in July 1909 began to fracture and thus became susceptible to reactionary anxieties that the rupture of the war would create. The movement turned from a nonviolent and broad-based movement concerning legal, educational, psychological, economic, professional, marital, and political equal rights holistically pursued, to such diverse and specialized branches as militant activism for the sole cause of suffrage, a move for the revitalization and purification of marriage and motherhood by upper and middle class women, a move for women’s freedom of sexual choice and access to birth control, and women’s trade union militancy. In the period of 1911-1914, the women’s movement divided into two camps, Christabel Pankhurst heading the W.S.P.U. and Sylvia Pankhurst organizing the working women of London’s East End. Night and Day proves a commentary on the ruptures within the women’s movement in the portrayal of Mary Datchet’s departure from the S.G.S. and focus on “work” with the socialist Mr. Basnett, which is further accentuated by her distance from Katharine and Ralph’s engagement. As the suffrage movement became increasingly specialized, many feminists sought broader-based appeals for change in socialism. Mary Datchet’s character parallels feminist Dora Marsden who felt disillusioned by the increasingly narrow vision and militant emphasis on suffrage and thus renounced her position in the Women’s Social and Political Union to found the journal The Freewoman in 1911. According to Marsden, although the W.S.P.U. and Pankhursts were criticized in The Freewoman, her journal did not oppose suffrage, but rather sought to champion the idea that “Feminism is the whole issue, political enfranchisement a branch issue” (qtd. in Hall 225). However, significant discontents surfaced even within the socialist branch of the women’s movement; although activists of the Fabian
Women’s Group and Social Democrat Federation won victories in labor and the political arena, other feminists argued against the masculinist bias of many socialists and socialist organizations, men and women’s clubs, and publications (Richardson and Willis 27).

Frank Swinnerton describes the election years of 1906 to 1910 as a slow gaining of ground in the suffrage movement, supported by males that either were sympathetic as a result of their “care for justice” or who “hope, as Bernard Shaw hoped” that, given the vote and reasonable work, women “would cease to be obsessed by the notion of love” (359). Swinnerton also acknowledges the persistence of the muse/monster dichotomy, noting that the majority of the male population did not support the movement, since they “believed that women were a mystical cross between angels and drudges” (359). It is “in or around 1910,” that women “began to break windows, and burn letter boxes,” which caused ruptures within the movement but might have succeeded in “winning the day” had not the coming of the War convulsed life entirely (Swinnerton 359). Women’s winning the vote proved a mere token, a symbol earned as a result of women’s war work. The prewar feminist and socialist hopes were subsumed in the catastrophe of the war: these novels recall that prewar spirit and turbulence in order to set it against the darkness of the war and its consequent disappointments.

Describing the rise of the utopian novel at the turn of the century, Matthew Beaumont writes that “the epoch of the politics of fellowship,” the feminist and socialist movements, “is in part the story of an impossible attempt both to adduce and induce evidence of an as-yet non-existent new world” (214). According to Brougham Villiers in his 1908 study of the socialist movement in England, socialist meetings enabled “men and women to meet on a footing of perfect freedom and perfect equality. They have no material obligations to one another, the non- or imperfect fulfillment of which, culpable or otherwise, can breed jealousy or debate. There is left to them their spiritual fellowship and all that it implies” (310). The idealism of Villiers depiction echoes the goals of the heroines of New Woman fiction; the conclusions of the
majority of New Woman novels written by women and the reality of postwar relations between
men and women as well as socialism and feminism reveal a mucharker perspective. Beaumont
has argued that this idealistic “politics of fellowship,” characterizing a belief in women’s
liberation and socialism that was an undercurrent of the end of the nineteenth century, “emerged
from a frustrated sense that the late nineteenth century, obsessed as it was with its own
transitional historical status [...] was somehow stuck on the brink of that as yet obstinately absent
alternative future that it variously desired” (emphasis added, 213). Bloom’s declaration of “New
worlds for old” in “Circe” (15:1686) and his meditations on utopia and the fact of “nought
nowhere was never reached” in “Ithaca” (17:1068-69) recall this socialist-feminist reformism
which sought ways of “constructing a New World inside the shell of the Old” (Taylor qtd. in
Beaumont 213) and the failure of progressive movements to reach the “nowhere” of utopia.

Victor Luftig examines several key male authored New Woman novels of the 1890s,
patternicularly Grant Allen’s best seller, The Woman Who Did. In these novels, “friendship is no
longer that which is not sex” as it was earlier in the century, but rather friendship often includes
sex and is defined in opposition to “marriage and related social conventions” (95). These novels
ultimately fail, a failure the novels themselves recognize, to produce a viable idiom for
friendship. Luftig argues that this failure “follows from the texts’ inadequate demarcation of any
sphere of shared heterosexual activity that might provide adequate grounding for viable terms”
and by closing off friendship from the space of representation (95). These male-authored texts
are confident and resigned in pronouncing that they have either achieved an accurate vision of
friendship or that such a vision is doomed.

Female authored New Woman novels offer a different tenor, as evidenced in Sarah
Grand’s The Beth Book and The Heavenly Twins, which maintain an “anguished uncertainty”
(Luftig 96). The rage of female New Woman novelists, which Ann Ardis has noted, differs from
the male New Woman novelists and their successors who brandish dramatically their sense of
experimentation and heroic defeat. This latter tone, Luftig shows, is most clearly seen in the male novelists’ repetitive invocations of Percy Bysshe Shelley. The late-Victorian return to Shelleyan friendship “is less modernizing than muddling: it is a means for commentators to validate ostensibly novel social models without distinguishing them from earlier models of transcendence and sin—without, in fact, delineating them at all” (Luftig 96). Female New Woman novelists’ invocations of Shelley are more pointedly critical; the sacrifice of women to the idealistic heroism of their New Men counterparts that Shelley represents in his writing and his well-documented lifestyle choices serve these novelists to underscore the impossibility of the New Woman’s situation. As compared to the more proactive female authored texts written by so-called Shelleyan Socialists, the invocation of Shelley in male authored New Woman texts, such as Thomas Hardy’s The Well-Beloved and Grant Allen’s The Woman Who Did, functions to restore Woman to “Idea, in Platonic phraseology” (Hardy 118). Woman, and thus the New Woman, is obscured by the so-called New Man’s romantic preoccupation with the extraordinary diction necessary to describe Woman and the terms of affection she inspires. Shelley’s idiom for relationships proves as obscure as “platonic”: “Late-Victorian Shelleyans and anti-Shelleyans shared a common ambivalence about the precise function of Shelley as an exemplar for and contributor to discourse on heterosexual relations” (Luftig 111).

New Woman fiction attempted to negotiate the failed liberalism of Shelley’s romanticism, and Woolf and Joyce critically engage in this process of re-vision by attempting to gain a critical perspective of the matrix of the dreams and realities, romanticism and the real, which create experience. In describing her goals in writing Night and Day on September 18, 1918, Woolf wrote that she sought “to discover what aims drive people on, & whether these are illusory or not” (D 1:196). Rich describes the evolution of her own writing, awakening from the internalization of patriarchal ideologies and tropes, noting that during her threshold period her poetry is still symptomatic of the dichotomous choice “between ‘love’—womanly, maternal love,
altruistic love—a love defined and ruled by the weight of an entire culture; and egotism—a force directed by men into creation, achievement, ambition, often at the expense of others, but justifiably so” (46). The gendering of these choices is part of the romantic tradition of Western literary history, and the false dichotomy is questioned by both Woolf in her portrayal of Katharine Hilbery (pressured to choose between altruistic and egotistic love) and Ralph Denham (masculine artist) and by Joyce in his portrayal of Leopold Bloom (maternal altruistic love) and Stephen Dedalus (masculine artist). The feminist both/and must replace the patriarchal either/or in order for literature (and thus history) to move in a new direction.8 The personal is political in both texts, the couples circling around Cheyne Walk in Woolf’s text and the wanderings of an assemblage of Dubliners on June 16, 1904 in Joyce’s text are microcosms of larger political realities; these microcosms interrogate multiple forms of patriarchal oppression (racism, nationalism, imperialism, classism, and heterosexism) via decompositions of the romance quest plot. Furthermore, as both texts deconstruct the heterosexual romance plot, they suggest over and again that “the word ‘love’ is itself in need of re-vision” (Rich 47).

Margaret Mills Harper argues that the structure of Joyce’s text, a “parallax on the level of story in the dual narratives of male adventure moving toward conclusion and female delay and prevention,” ultimately reveals that both the Odyssey and Ulysses itself “hold in suspension two incompatible views of reality: an emphasis on the making of meaning and a sense of the futility of such meanings” (171). Thus Joyce’s constructed parallax within Ulysses may be read as revealing the gendered construction of language and narrative therefore creating the possibility of destabilizing these constructions. The “slippage in the gendered systems” occurs through the multiplication of perspectives, the play with narrative, and manipulation of given categories (Harper 171). However, Joyce’s wondrous revealment is pointedly incomplete. As Harper argues, slippage and satire “intimates alternate conceptual and ethical positions”: however, “other systems are not posited and thus subsumed into the already created arts of heroic epic or
modernist novel” (171). It is inappropriate to look to Molly’s monologue as a triumph of alternative linguistic and social discourse. As in the Odyssey, women’s “weavings” do not replace the master male narratives, and only “tantalize the hearers of them with a sense that alternative constructions are possible” (Harper 173). This first step in feminist deconstruction, which Joyce’s text enacts, forces readers to reconsider the previous failures of the genre of New Woman fiction that failed to displace the master narratives they sought to subvert from the inside out. The parallactic visions of Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts puts the impossible position of New Woman writers into relief: radical content injected in conventional form suffered from necessary contortions, and radical form expressing radical content was contained as a tantalizing curiosity.

The failed connections in the texts of Woolf and Joyce nod toward the failures of New Woman fiction, the realities of what readers desire (and have been socialized to desire) and the anxieties of the socio-historic period in which these authors wrote. In A Room of One’s Own, Woolf’s narrator asks, “Shall we lay the blame on the war? When the guns fired in August 1914, did the faces of men and women show so plain in each other’s eyes that romance was killed?” (15). The inspiration of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti is a rarity in modern poets, and the narrator reflects, “Why, if it was an illusion, not praise the catastrophe, whatever it was, that destroyed illusion and put truth in its place? For truth . . . those dots mark the spot where, in search of truth, I missed the turning up to Fernham” (15). Those dots also mark the interruption of the war, an upheaval that disrupted authors’ attempts to re-vise romance and readers desire to encounter a radically different foundational fiction. Rather, readers became particularly predisposed to order their experiences in terms of a familiar fiction. Northrop Frye has characterized the quest romance as beginning with a loss of the “green world,” a “pastoral and Arcadian world” associated with “the moon” and “the female or maternal aspect of sexual imagery” (199-200). The hero embarks on an internal and external journey toward regeneration, “the victory of fertility over the waste land”: the ritualistic dialectical synthesis is pursued in
“food and drink, bread and wine, body and blood, the union of male and female” as the “desiring self” searches “for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality” (Frye 193-94). Woolf and Joyce expose the power of this narrative, the inadequacy of attempting to write the demands of the New Woman and New Man within such a structure, and through satire and parody attempt to expose the wounded attachments of readers and writers to these gendered fictions.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the romantic poet had begun a transformation of the “weapon-wielding conqueror” to the “word-wielding visionary” (Doyle 52). Poets of the nineteenth century paralleled scientists in a need to balance the materiality of the world with a transcendence of that world: “To conquer the natural world with words rather than weapons, they must observe it closely. But they must not lose themselves in it. Like Lord Byron’s Don Juan, they cultivate intimacy with feminine, other-kin bodies, but only to prove superiority, difference, and autonomy” (Doyle 53). The tension between Stephen and Bloom as well as between Ralph and Katharine may be read not only as an extension of the romantic poets’ desire to transcend by cultivating a distant intimacy with the feminine, but also as the competitive tension produced by the anxiety of the influence that the sciences created. This tension, furthermore, is gendered. Percy Bysshe Shelley uses a gendered rhetoric in a typical argument that science needs poetry to achieve “full and good dominion”: “The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world” (qtd. in Doyle 56).

Woolf and Joyce not only put into question the dichotomy of romanticism and realism through their satire, but also its gendered aspect. Woolf’s Mary Datchet and Joyce’s Leopold Bloom are characters that push toward androgyny or bi-sexuality, orientations set against the romantic would-be poets of the texts (Ralph Denham and Stephen Dedalus) as well as characters desiring the absolutism of pure science (Katharine Hilbery). In A Portrait of the Artist as a
Young Man, Stephen’s identification with Shelley is most obvious. Struggling not only with the threshold of adolescence, Stephen is also attempting to forge an identity counter to the mold of his literal and literary fathers. As a struggling artist, he evokes images of “the barren shell of the moon” to describe his identity as disconnected from either the fathers or his male peers and quotes Shelley’s fragment from “To the Moon”: “Art thou pale for weariness/ Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth/ Wandering companionless...?” (p. 96). Interestingly, Stephen here most resembles Katharine of Woolf’s text (ultimately he parallels Ralph Denham) in finding a transcendental solace in Shelley’s fragment, as the imagery chills him and allows him to “forg[e]t his own human and ineffectual grieving” (p. 96). In the December dusk, he works a mathematical equation which becomes an artistic creation, “eyes and stars” moving in an opening and closing rhythm which becomes the “vast cycle of starry life [...] a distant music,” recalling Shelley’s fragment, and moving his soul “outward and inward” into “cold darkness filled chaos” (p. 103). Shelley’s fragment, likened to mathematics and astronomy, serves to move Stephen to a “cold indifferent knowledge of himself” (p. 103). Katharine seeks the same knowledge, the same distance of perspective forbidden in her parlor education, in mathematics and astronomy. Katharine gazes at the stars in the December dusk of Disham, where the stars do their usual work in that they “froze to cinders the whole of our short human history” and dilate “the pupils of her eyes [...] with starlight [so] that the whole of her seemed dissolved in silver and spilt over the ledges of the stars for ever and ever indefinitely through space,” until rebaked by her body that grows cold (ND 164).

The difference, typical of the difference between male authored New Woman texts as opposed to female authored, is in Stephen’s desire to harness the cosmos in order to perpetuate a romantic aestheticism, whereas Katharine seeks an escape from the confines of gendered spheres, aestheticism, and her part as hostess in the poet’s drawing-room. Stephen wanders lonely and companionless like Shelley’s melancholic moon, envisioning a Luciferian fall into the chaos of
primordial (feminine) matter and the cold darkness of Dante’s innermost circle of hell; Katharine, since her identity is attached to the feminine, cannot stage the same romantic narrative. Indeed, Woolf’s narrator explains that it is her sex that not only creates her desire for science but also creates her need to keep secret that desire for “the unwomanly nature of science,” the truth that “infinitely she preferred the exactitude, the star-like impersonality, of figures to the confusion, agitation, and vagueness of the finest prose” (ND 34). This is depicted in a later scene when Katharine surreptitiously begins to unfold a mathematical diagram, “her hand, descending, began drawing square boxes halved and quartered by straight lines, and then circles which underwent the same process of dissection,” as her mother devises a plan to bring her into a romantic relationship (or plot) with William by staging a performance of Shakespeare, and Katharine finds she must hide her sheet of figures under “the old letter about Shelley in front of her” (ND 260).9

Whereas Katharine seeks a widening of perspective and loss of self in astronomy and mathematics, Stephen and Ralph Denham seek a reflection of themselves immortalized in the feminine reflecting cosmos of their heroic aesthetics. In opposition to this dichotomy, Mary and Bloom are depicted struggling to relinquish a romantic or Hegelian plot of human transcendence. They resist both Stephen’s romanticism as well as the romanticism Katharine is cornered into assuming, narratives in which the hero necessarily struggles within the body, gaining wisdom for a final transcendence of the body “into the heavenly world of impalpable soul, of imperishable art, or of the Universal” (Doyle 76). It is the ability to equally value the body within the world with a vision of universal transcendence that makes Bloom’s and Mary’s characters characteristically New and which gestures toward an alternative narrative.10

Christine Froula’s reading of Ulysses argues that Joyce “rewrites the Odyssean masterplot” in order to expose how “the law of gender and masculine quest romance” are suppressive of the “mother/self” not only “in the artist/son” but also in the “collective
unconscious” of the culture (22-23). The progression of episodes captures the drive to uncover and recover the repressed of the unconscious into artistic and social forms. For Froula, “Telemachiad raises its ghost, ‘Scylla and Charybdis’ theorizes it,” whereas “Nausicaa” and “Oxen” parody the recovery and expression of the repressed; “Circe” projects the drama into the psychological and social arena of Nighttown; the closing three chapters “follow it to a bravura symbolic fulfillment that reverberates with desolation in the very midst of comedy” (22-23). Stephen, the “artist-son who symbolically gives birth to and contains” Bloom and Molly, marks Ulysses as “a self-ironic family/quest-romance, fashioned by a modernist author-god who, even as he becomes ‘all in all,’ cuts himself open to expose a perverse psychohistory and the cultural psychodynamics that engender it” (Froula 90). Laura Doyle distinguishes between a Victorian “Romantic-transcendental plot which subsumes the mother figure in its movement away from her and the late-Romantic plot, which circles back in a final arc toward the mother figure, the effect of which is to reify rather than reconfigure the mother’s position” (139). According to Doyle, Woolf engages with and challenges this plot, and unlike other twentieth-century modernists, envisions alternatives to it. However, Woolf’s 1919 text, as this study will reveal, like Joyce’s text, succeeds in challenging and subverting the family/quest-romance, but pointedly depicts the inability to author alternatives to this fiction. Woolf and Joyce deconstruct via their depictions of the New Man the “female fantasy” of earlier New Woman fictions—the notion of “the-man-who-would-understand,” Adrienne Rich’s term for the man who “would combine maternal nurturance with paternal power,” who does not threaten death in marriage but does supply the necessary progression of plot (Hirsch 57-58). The limitations and dangerous desirability of the New Man imposiblize the alternative plots that the metaphoric New Woman seeks.

The discourses expressing the anxiety created by (or signified by) the New Woman figure also intersect a convolution of anxieties that feared that the destruction of gender hierarchies would be coterminous with racial contamination and literary degeneracy. After the Oscar Wilde
trials of 1895, conservative writers “yoked together the New Journalism, the New Woman, and decadence into an unholy trinity of radical degeneration” that threatened marriage and reproduction (Ledger 95). The periodical press represented the New Woman as mannish, humorless, and overly educated, and paired her with the womanly-man, effeminate, decadent, and foppish. In Revolted Woman: Past, Present and to Come from 1894, Charles Harper warned that “nature” would revenge itself on the New Woman that aspired to be “learned” or “muscular,” since “the New Woman, if a mother at all, will be the mother of a New Man, as different, indeed, from the present race as possible…. peopling the world with stunted and hydrocephalic children… and ultimate extinction of the race” (qtd. in Ledger 18).

The tragic flavor of most New Woman novels, as Woolf’s and Joyce’s re-vision underscores, proves the “inability to think beyond heterosexual marriage as the only available route to happiness and fulfillment for women” (Ledger 23). Although feminist writers were reacting against such narrow vision, they lacked a new language and a new shape of the novel to envision alternative plots for their heroines who figure as victims of social and ideological traps. Consequently, masculinist writers and the popular press could appropriate the New Woman figure as a tragi-comic symbol of misguided desires. Recognizing that such colonization of the New Woman figure, an appropriation by dominant patriarchal discourses which feminist New Woman fiction writers often inadvertently reified, Woolf’s and Joyce’s portrayals disclose that the New Woman as she appeared in popular stereotypes bears little resemblance to the complexity or diversity of gender, class, and race relations in the modern world. Rather than simply inverting popular press appropriations of the image, Woolf and Joyce question the interests of the various sources producing the image in order to arrive at a broader perspective of the New Woman, her discontents, and why these discontents perpetuate generation after generation.11
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar charge the scanty appearances of the New Woman in Joyce’s texts as evidence of his sexism, arguing that his view of women, reflected in Bloom, is that women are “both linguistically and biologically, wholly orifice” (1:232). However, Margot Norris more convincingly argues that the New Woman’s emergence (I would say re-emergence) at the socio-historic juncture of “Victorian utilitarianism” and “Nietzschean and Freudian antiprogressivism” made her “a figure that Joyce himself might have called ‘impossibilised’ — a historically unrealizable construct” (“Mamafesta” 2). It is this very impossibility that makes the New Woman such an attractive and divided subject to both dominant and subordinate discourses during the World War I period. To feminists and to those invested in patriarchal ideology as well, but for different reasons, the brief illumination and fall of the New Woman served respectively as an epiphany and as a warning of sorts. By the time the New Woman “appeared on the scene,” the fallout of the war had “pulled out from under her” a carpet woven of any philosophy of individualism, subjective authority with its possibility of self-knowledge and heroic action, or “faith in historical change and progress” (Norris “Mamafesta” 2).

In order to understand Joyce’s texts as working toward feminist deconstruction it is essential to realize the irony in his portrayal. Martha Fodaski Black, in her reading of Ulysses as an indictment of a polarized and sexist society which is countered by Joyce’s open-ended structure, usefully explains that the “females are parodies of masculinist models” in Joyce’s texts: “Gerty MacDowell the deluded ‘womanly woman,’ Bella Cohen a caricature of the ‘manly woman,’ and Molly a narcissistic retort to and text of the ‘New’ self-realizing woman of the turn of the century” while Bloom serves as “a model of androgyny, whose ambivalence reflects and refracts the structure of Ulysses” (62). Bloom is thus read as the integrated being that counterpoints the split subject symbolized by Stephen and Molly, one struggling to overcome the Cartesian split and the other struggling with the split of surveyor and surveyed.
New Woman works portrayed the impossibilities of both senses of the split subject. The works of Mona Caird, Gertrude Dix, and Isabella Ford are precursors to *Ulysses*, and to *Night and Day* particularly, in terms of an ambivalence about a feminist and socialist future, the frustration of same-sex friendship brought together and ruptured in a triangular relationship with a third individual of the opposite sex, the frustrated desire to cross class boundaries, and an uneasy awareness that a new kind of heterosexual relationship is impossible within the father’s dichotomizing house. As Adrienne Rich writes, “The awakening of consciousness is not like the crossing of a frontier—one step and you are in another country” (48). Woolf and Joyce capture the simultaneous exhilaration and bleakness of stepping into borderlands, a no man’s land fraught with possibilities and pitfalls for the New Woman and New Man on the threshold of the turn of the century. Their works had to expose the failure of New Woman texts, both Shelley’s romanticism earlier in the nineteenth century and Ibsen’s and female authored New Woman realism at the end. The failures of these previous texts signified by their overwhelmingly pessimistic or reductive conclusions, as Gail Cunningham has argued, resulted from their inability to detach themselves from “social realities” and thus from “a theoretical framework which accepted the subordination of female to male terms” with its “system of binaries which continued unquestioningly to privilege the male” (95).

Achieving balance, achieving a creative space beyond social realities while also exposing the patriarchal order of social realities that shaped existing dreams and realities, proved the modernist challenge for Woolf and Joyce. Virginia Woolf wrote of her attempts in *Night and Day* to negotiate this threshold: “the spectacle is a profoundly strange one; & as the current answers don’t do, one has to grope for a new one; & the process of discarding the old, when one is by no means certain what to put in their place, is a sad one” (D 1:259). The answers that Arnold Bennett and Thackeray suggest, “Happy ones—satisfactory solutions” are inadequate (D 1:259). Although the spectacle is dispiriting, Woolf and Joyce also reveled in it, and it is on this
threshold that modernism finds a fecund space of possibility. In looking back at the prewar period, these texts emphasize the painful slowness of change, the destructiveness of the perpetuation of patriarchal social structures, and the necessity of continual deconstruction, of questioning “what women and men have been to each other” in order to change the trajectory of that relationship through literature (Rich 36).
CHAPTER 2

FLEETING ENLIGHTENMENT

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
[....]
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again [....]
(Yeats, “The Second Coming,” January 1919)\(^1\)

Our age, in the novel, has been the Age of (Fleeting) Enlightenment. (Beja, Epiphany 45)

Jane Marcus reevaluates Night and Day as “a pleasure to read,” and I will argue that an element of that pleasure is not so much the conventional comedy of the novel as the bleakness of the prospect that Woolf’s parody reveals, the darkness, at the heart of the novel (97). Marcus shows that Woolf patterns the novel “around the initiation, quest, and journey myths of The Magic Flute” (97). Although a “search for order” may be a factor in Joyce’s and Woolf’s choices of mythological structures to shape their work (Marcus 97), I am interested in how the movement of the eclipse proves an apt structural metaphor with mythic resonances for the modern artist’s position within the historical, social, and literary context of the Great War period. The pleasure of reading Woolf’s text, I would argue, lies not in its mythic transmutations but in the ambivalence of Woolf’s re-vision of previous cycles. Placing Woolf’s text alongside Ulysses, which more obviously indict the reader in the gyre of convention, and alongside first generation
New Woman fiction, which hold the romantic illusion of wearing no masks, puts the dark play of Night and Day into relief. The abject pleasure in Woolf’s text parallels the pleasure of Ulysses; not only are the authors and texts self-ironic, but also they require the reader to realize his or her collusion in the conventions that make such irony possible. The pleasure in reading is not simply a masterful form and a carnivalesque play. Rather, it is this highly wrought comedy coupled with a desperate, deliberate, and angry attachment to form and content on the part of writer and reader, and the authors’ awareness of that attachment, which thus creates a tragic manipulation of masks.

Both Ulysses and Night and Day offer descents into hell. Joyce’s admiration of Dante Aligheri, also an exile writing against church and state, is well documented. Woolf’s use of Dante, particularly in Night and Day, has received less attention. In a conversation with Adolf Hoffmeister about his interest in numerical symmetry, Joyce comments on his use of the tripartite structure that appears throughout Dante’s The Divine Comedy in Ulysses: “Dante was obsessed by the number three. He divided his poem into three parts, each with thirty-three cantos, written in terza rima” (qtd. in Potts 129). Night and Day also, and perhaps more rigidly, follows the tripartite structure, the mythic cycle that spirals into darkness and ascends again, and is inclusive of thirty-four fixedly plotted chapters. The system of three is compounded, however, as each character—Katharine, Mary, and Ralph—experience individual descents into darkness. Woolf and Joyce rewrite Dante’s revelation into epiphany, resisting both the absolutes of rationalism on the one hand and religion on the other in order to record epiphanic revelations prompted by the sight or experience of the quotidian.

Both Woolf and Joyce, in their lives and in their works, show the attraction of revolutionary movements but warn against unquestioned devotion to one perspective—this depiction follows the structure of eclipse. Socialism, Fenianism, and feminism are necessary correctives to patriarchal tyranny; however, the romance of both patriarchy and revolution are placed in alignment to reveal how the grooved illusions inherent in both restrict the artist’s ability
to envision and thus write alternative narratives. The epiphanic moment—at once spiritually enriching and an abject comment on the present socio-historic moment—is a means of putting into relief patriarchal structures and the counter-movements impelled by those patriarchal structures. In putting these structures into relief, just as an eclipse makes the familiar strange, the artist secures a third space that cannot be collapsed into either side of a binary.

I am not arguing that Woolf and Joyce merely mine Dante’s structure for a classical foundation; rather, I am interested in how the descent, the black hole at the center of their texts, and the prospect after the reemergence differ in these modern texts from mythological, classical, and pastoral conventions. If it is possible to read Katharine Hilbery as the Dantean Pilgrim of Night and Day who is first led through hell by her engagement to the would-be poet William Rodney and then to paradise by her Beatrice, Ralph Denham, then I would want to focus on Woolf’s subtle refutation of this classical dualism in the near-connection of Katharine with Mary Datchet, who represents an alternative to “the old story” (Hardy Jude 401).14 Whereas Dante chose the title of his work, The Divine Comedy, to emphasize its movement from adverse conditions to final happiness, beauty, and light, Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts end in a seeming affirmation of a return to paradise in heterosexual union that is ultimately self-ironic. Molly’s “yes” and Katharine’s “Good night” spoken on the thresholds of dawn in both texts are each overdetermined and undermined by the circles of sorrow and oppression that these characters are unable to escape from, the tragic comedy of the layers of the texts themselves.

In Epiphany in the Modern Novel, Morris Beja provides a working definition of epiphany: “a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind—the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance or strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it” (18). The eclipic visions at the center of both texts, the epiphanies, represent definitive characteristics of modernist literature, and thus also mark Woolf and Joyce as artists distinguishing and pushing the threshold of modernism. This
shift which borrows and departs from both romanticism and realism represents the modernist concern with psychology, preoccupation with the impossibility of true connection with others, and a move toward the techniques of poetry (47).

Beja finds in Conrad a dread of the epiphany, as in Kurtz's “The horror! The horror!,” since the epiphany interrupts an individual’s constructed foundational illusions (54). This paradox is particularly represented in Marlow’s observations in *Lord Jim* that it is perhaps “just as well” that we “fall back again into our agreeable somnoence,” and later Marlow’s observation when Jewel tells him about her mother’s death: “It had the power to drive me out of my conception of existence, out of that shelter each of us makes for himself to creep under in moments of danger, as a tortoise withdraws within its shell.” Marlow’s next observation describes the eclipse experienced by the characters of Woolf’s and Joyce’s text as well: “For a moment I had a view of a world that seemed to wear a vast and dismal aspect of disorder. . . . But still—it was only a moment: I went back into my shell directly. One must—don’t you know?” (qtd. in Beja *Epiphany* 53-54). The moderns, particularly during the darkness of the Great War, examine an ambivalence for the very technique they favored since the ambivalence of form (the desirability of destroying the patriarchal sun coupled with the incertitude of the night) expresses their ambivalence for the content—the reality of experience they sought to express. In these texts, the eclipse represents a self-ironical view of the epiphany—the desirability of revelation and the “vast and dismal aspect of disorder” that sends Bloom back to bed and Stephen to the street, Katharine back into the Hilbery’s drawing-room and Ralph to the street, and Marlow back into his shell.

In form and content, Woolf’s text and Joyce’s text depict a drama of eclipse, in which the descent into darkness provides a momentary illumination of a prospect of the possibility of the new when patriarchal ideology is put into relief. As Yeats’s poem might suggest, the New Man, while to a certain extent sympathetic with the desires of the New Woman who has been “vexed to
nightmare by a rocking cradle,” finds in this illumination the abject, a “beast,” who has waited silent as the sphinx, about to spring into its “Second Coming.”16 The point of view of the New Woman as depicted in Woolf’s texts, however, reveals a movement of hope and possibility that passes into a sudden retrospective regret and frustration. Since the process of writing is sympathetic with the socio-historic moment that it takes place in and since both Woolf and Joyce were consciously attempting to get at the reality of experience, it is possible for readers to trace the insinuation of the rupture of the war in the weaving of their texts. Although the revelation has come, the revolution does not. The authors strip conventional narratives and “things fall apart” in Joyce’s “Circe” and within the Hilbery’s drawing-room, but these authors also end their texts with an ominous intimation that the center does indeed hold.

Although Woolf and Joyce depict the anxiety of the fall from the present order into what Yeats calls “mere anarchy,” this unease is depicted only to be eclipsed by the greater dis-ease of the restoration of order. Whereas Yeats’s narrator fears the Second Coming on the threshold of a different cycle of history in which the Son of Man will be eclipsed by some earlier chaotic or perhaps matriarchal gyre, Woolf and Joyce stand on the threshold of the Great War and depict their dread of a turning again within the same cycle of history. It is the re-turn of the Day conventions and glare of masculine romance fictions coupled with rational notions of civilization that will shut in the prospect opened by the New Woman and the critique of patriarchy the war inadvertently produced that Woolf’s and Joyce’s work depict with both dread and desire. The sublime and abject illumination of deconstructing patriarchal ideology is a momentary glimpse of night caught within the day, a fleeting enlightenment ultimately extinguished in the glare of daylight, the return of business as usual after the war.17

The resonance of night and day in Joyce is meta-textual. Nino Frank describes Ulysses as Joyce’s attempt at “giving an idiom to the night, thus to the ineffable, by dynamiting the language” and “abandon[ing] the prey for the shadow” (Potts 88). This assertion is supported by
Michael Groden’s reading of the text as a palimpsest tracking the move from prey (content) to shadow (narrative). As a threshold text between Portrait and Finnegans Wake, Ulysses marks the transition in Joyce’s work; Finnegans Wake would seem to be, in Nino Frank’s words, “man’s answer to the sphinx” (Potts 103). Joyce saw his books as a “seamless whole,” but in a play on their contrasting subjects he told Ole Vindig of his last book, “I want to describe the night itself. Ulysses is related to this book as the day is to the night” (Gillet 63, Potts 149). Embarking on his task to write the night, Joyce told Vindig that he felt he could no longer express what he wrote in any other way than in “dream talk”: “With day-time talk such as I used in my youth, I would not achieve anything” (Potts 151).

In addition to Joyce’s Ulysses, Woolf’s Night and Day follows this pattern of eclipse. The photological trope, a foundational metaphor of Western metaphysics and mythology, is hardly an innovation of modernism or feminism. However, the perspective the reader is faced with upon the return of the sun in these texts marks a difference in connotation. This study seeks to examine how the specific use of night and day imagery in these World War I texts is shaped by the socio-historic moment—not only how the war’s association with darkness influences these authors’ works, but also how these works are influenced by the appropriation of sun imagery in the suffragette movement as well as the modernist preoccupation with cosmos, of wheels within wheels, in characterizing their new vision.
The interregnum of civilization (ND 407)

The suffrage movement of the prewar period appropriated the symbol of the dawning day as its banner. Dangerfield notes that “the Women’s Rebellion—the outrageous Suffragette Movement of 1910-14—was above all things a movement from darkness into light, from death into life,” which became “militant” in November 1910 (138, 153). Paradoxically, the image of the dawning sun is also a symbol of the reign of patriarchy, as in the age of King Louis XIV, the Catholic church, and the British empire. In the 1910-14 period, the reactionary and obstructionist House of Lords, with greater powers than it has today, faced demands for redress by the Irish, feminists and labor unions for long neglected grievances. Martin Green and Modris Eksteins have analyzed the precipitous climate of London in the prewar period, when the death of the old order seemed imminent in the face of not only political and social unrest but also aesthetic modernism. The Russian ballet star Vaslav Nijinsky, the music of Igor Stravinsky and early operas of Richard Strauss, the theatre of Sergei Diaghilev and Frank Wedekind, the fiction of Oscar Wilde and Marcel Proust marked the rise of a new breed of New Man, children of the sun against the fathers. The post-impressionist exhibit in Britain and the New York Armory Show showcased cubism, futurism, primativism, modernism, and a general decomposition of boundaries.¹⁸ Not coincidentally, Woolf famously chooses on or about 1910 to mark a change in human relations: “All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910” (E 3:422).¹⁹
As the ruling Liberal Party failed to orchestrate meaningful compromises, extremists on the left and the right grew more powerful. Faced with arson campaigns and general strikes at home and civil war in Ireland, the British government seemed on the threshold of collapse—on the verge of a new gyre—when the Great War broke. Lucy Bland argues that an accumulation of failures contributed to the decline of the women’s movement after the year 1918, including, the “anti-climatic effect of gaining the suffrage in 1918; the devastating outcome of the First World War, the human carnage which resulted in many erstwhile feminists redefining themselves as ‘humanists’, feminism seeming too divisive; and […] the influence of eugenic discourse in constructing women’s ideal role as that of mother” (308). The re-naming of The Freewoman as The Egoist (Mary describes Katharine as an “egoist” early in Night and Day (47)) in 1914 in deference to Ezra Pound is also symptomatic of this postwar shift. In reference to the Boer War, Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote, “Two fires cannot burn together, and the most ardent of the suffragists felt that, while the war lasted, it was not a fitting time to press their own claims and objects,” a sentiment reiterated by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst at the outbreak of the First World War (qtd. in Ledger 71). Martin Green has described the ascendancy of a “Sonnenkind cult” after 1918 in England, “a cult of the young man and the artist in revolt” against mothers and fathers, “against the world of men in all its forms, political, religious, moral, sexual,” but itself narcissistically male-centered and severed from the New Woman that had been a comrade seeking rebellion against Victorianism and patriarchy with the New Man in the 1890s (26).

Unlike pastoral elegy or mythology, in which the return of the sun/son is celebrated, the return of light in Woolf and Joyce comes with a difference enabled by its eclipse—the glimpse of the prospect “in the baldest coldest way” “before it has taken on any of the disguises of life” (Joyce qtd. in Budgen 257, Woolf CSF 104). Nonetheless, Woolf does not suggest that the “Queen of Night’s temple to Isis” should replace “Mozart’s Masonic temple to the sun” in the novel; rather, it is when night and day “are at peace with one another, at dusk” or in sympathy
that a break with old structures is possible (Marcus 106). Jane Goldman reads Woolf’s “The Sun and the Fish” as a kind of “feminist elegiacs,” that departs from the masculine norms of “Milton, Gray, Shelley, Arnold, and Tennyson” (86). Although the eclipse of the sun intimates the pastoral elegy, a movement from light to darkness to light again, Woolf’s sense of lyric consolation is not from a transcendence of the material. Rather, Woolf departs from “transcendent, self-reflexive masculine sovereignty” associated with the return of the sun/son of pastoral elegy, and instead bases her sense of “lyric consolation” in the reinvigoration of the world itself when the “the king” or “the sun” returns not in power but rejuvenated and “subsumed into feminine elements” or “the landscape” (Goldman 85). However, the close of Night and Day reveals through bitter satire the danger and power of “lyric consolation,” the ease with which the old story subsumes the revelation made in the eclipse in order to create a satisfactory fiction of symmetry and return.

In a 1917 review, Woolf notes that the war is attributed to breaking down class barriers as well as barriers within individuals’ own personalities: “They have been made aware, to their delight, that they possess powers and desires which are entirely at variance with each other and with their accepted beliefs about themselves,” as in the case of “Miss Spearing, a late Fellow of Newnham,” who left research work on Elizabethan drama to become a V.A.D. at Cambridge (E 2:112). The war, as Woolf shows, opened vistas for women in terms of not only public and private labor spheres but also internalized gender ideology. In her review of Spearing’s book, Woolf quotes Spearing’s observations that camp life is “decidedly congenial” to the women, who forge strong bonds of friendship there (E 2:112). Spearing and the nurses “live very much for the day’[…] for it is a short one,” and the soldiers prove “puzzling” to Miss Spearing in their desire for nostalgic songs about “home and mother and sweetheart,” the familiar form of masculine bonding over the possession of the feminine (E 2:113). Woolf hauntingly predicts the postwar regression of women’s advances, which would occur under the banner of business as
usual. In the eclipse of the war, women such as Miss Sperring find in this “concentration of life” the “best qualities, and the most real, which might be hidden in the slow intercourse of normal life” (and which only find their “readiest expression, so far as the English are concerned, in humour”) (E 2:113). Ultimately, however, the conflicting impressions that Miss Sparring provides will be overpowered by “the love of poetry and the love of England,” the latter being “the English country, the Cambridge country—’the slow, quiet river… the old Roman highway… the yellow cornfields, the pleasant green meadows’” (E: 2:113). The eclipse of the war is thus echoed in the eclipse of Woolf’s short story “Sympathy” and Night and Day, written in the same period, in which the prospect opened is abruptly closed again with the return of the “day,” the return of a romantic and nostalgic, gendered nationalism. Woolf seemed already to perceive the answer to the questions which Siegfried Sassoon’s poems prompt the reader to ask by offering “a new vision of the world; how is the light about to fall? What ranges, what horizons will it reveal?” (E: 2:119). Her answer is that the light is about to return, the home-rule sun has not set, and those that have been violently wakened by the eclipse will be silenced.20

Although I shall argue that Woolf depicts the interruption of a tenuous connection between women by a New Man as a return of the sun/son, I am not pleading that the New Woman is a victim of the New Man. Such an argument ignores the fact that the New Woman herself is a construction and thus serves several fictions (the embodiment of enlightenment for feminism on the one hand, and the embodiment of chaotic darkness for conservatives on the other). Rather, I am attempting to show how wounded attachments to the conventional narratives that serve patriarchal structures result in the victimization and exploitation of both the New Woman and New Man figures, by impossibilising the sympathy between women (from intervention by the New Man) and impossibilising the sympathy between the New Woman and the New Man (from the return of patriarchal romanticism).
The phrase “impossiblising” is used by Joyce in his early reviews and has particular resonance with his depiction of the New Woman. Sally Ledger posits two generations of the New Woman: “the first living and writing in the 1880s and 1890s, the second in the 1920s and 1930s” (1). Woolf and Joyce, writing on the threshold of these generations, might be looking backward in order to guide the New Woman’s postwar rebirth. Recognizing the intersections central to understanding the New Woman, “decadence, socialism, imperialism, and homosexual identities” (Ledger 4), Woolf and Joyce have entered these discourses in order, perhaps, to alter the New Woman’s and New Man’s previously disappointing trajectory by revealing them as figures who have been unable to negotiate an “impossible” matrix. There is a continuum of grief in the elegy of the eclipse. If the war meant for the New Man “This is War/ Boys flung into a breach” as Amy Lowell wrote, then the war meant for the New Woman an opening and shutting in of the horizon in the women’s movement that disclosed the horror of a gradualist conception of change, depicted by New Woman fiction writer Mona Caird as “a vast abyss, black and silent, which had to be filled with the bodies of women, hurled down to the depths of the pit of darkness, in order that the survivors might, at last, walk over in safety” (451).21

The home-rule sun beats down not only on the colonized Irish but also on the women at home and abroad. In a 1910 article written for a Trieste newspaper, Joyce captures the social and historical moment(s) of frustration that Ulysses and Night and Day look back upon in order to throw into relief the development of the postwar period. In this article, “The Home Rule Comet,” Joyce likens the “idea of Irish autonomy” to a comet, “vague, distant, but as punctual as ever” that has reappeared “dawning in the east” at the decree dissolving the English parliament: “The sovereign Word which in an instant made twilight fall on the demi-gods at Westminster had called from the darkness and the void the obedient and unknowing star” (CW 209). This cyclical but startling star parallels the hopes of women’s suffrage, a movement that adopted the motif of a dawning sun or star, and which also struggles for clarity in the cloaking fog that “usually covers
the British shores” (CW 209). Joyce’s tone regarding the hope the comet’s appearance signifies is cynical; despite the “discord” of the electoral elements, which no doubt includes the raucous assaults of suffragettes alongside the “passing phrase on the Irish flutes,” Joyce seems to suggest that the “cloud bank” will succeed in its ability to cloak (CW 209).

The movements calling for the “new” (feminists, socialists, and Irish autonomists), despite their sympathetic interests in deconstructing patriarchal structures, were unable to see through the cloaking mists of patriarchy to realize a sympathetic vision that would conquer the patriarchal manipulations of these structures which kept them isolated and obscured from each other, and thus each alone was doomed to failed trajectories. The “Homerule sun rising up in the northwest” of Bloom’s thoughts in “Lestrygonians” which comments on patriarchal nationalism (8:473-74) is also the “Homerule sun setting in the southeast” in “Nausicaa” which comments on patriarchal sexism (13:1079), and in both episodes, as the sun disappears behind a cloud or the horizon, Bloom glimpses a cynical (cyclical) prospect: “Useless words. Things go on same, day after day” (8:476); “History repeats itself. [...] The new I want. Nothing new under the sun” (13:1093, 1104-05). Both Woolf and Joyce depict their positions as artists poised, or perhaps stuck, on a threshold observing the eclipse. On the one hand, Woolf and Joyce deconstruct the cloaking veil of romanticism—Shelley’s fading coal, Shakespeare’s Romeo’s sun, Ibsen’s New Woman as the light of inspiration for the New Man, and the nostalgia and romance of nationalism. On the other hand, Woolf and Joyce also deconstruct the bedrock of rationalism and realism—the bleakness of Darwinism, the fallibility of the Absolute, the aesthetic failure of the will to create and continue without the light of illusion.
"Sympathy": Queerly Divided

in the story "Sympathy," written in the spring of 1919, Woolf makes an extended simile of "an eclipse of the sun" (CSF 103). A close reading of "Sympathy" and its use of the imagery of eclipse provides a context for my reading of Night and Day and Ulysses. "Sympathy" affords a supplement to Woolf's Night and Day since the episode form allowed her a freedom she had not yet been able to integrate into the novel; indeed, Woolf's shorter works written alongside Night and Day track her movement from the constraints of Victorianism into high modernism. Whereas Joyce's evolution of style is evident in the palimpsest layers of Ulysses, as Michael Groden has argued, Woolf's expression of the discontents she felt with form seem to have been frustrated as she crafted Night and Day. "Sympathy" provides Woolf with a venue to pursue experimental narrative form when she felt confined by the tight form of Night and Day. Joyce's attitude toward his "failure" (as critics have described his play written in 1915 and published in 1918) Exiles, parallels Woolf's retrospective attitude toward her novel—a necessary exercise or passage in handling the material of alternative triangular relationships.22

In "Sympathy," the narrator has read of the death of a friend's husband in the newspaper, and the narrator's detailed reverie about the widow follows. The narrator first reflects on the sudden absence of the husband, Humphry Hammond, retrospectively projecting upon him a mysteriousness, recalling that perhaps he meant something "he could not say" when he merely commented vaguely about "liking furniture" (CSF 102). Nonetheless, her imagination fixes him and thus moves past him: "male and unyielding stiff he lies upon his bed" (CSF 102). The narrator's thoughts turn to the widow, but are notably more speculative: "Celia. Yes... I see her,
and then not” (CSF 102). Something blocks the narrator’s imagination; her fancy closes its eyes as Celia dresses and then finds her “equipped for the world” either in widow’s weeds or in white, “as if the light cleft itself asunder on her brow” (CSF 102).

As if tracking the sun’s path between clouds, the narrator of “Sympathy” depicts an oscillation of possibilities, and serves as an example of the theory of dual vision Woolf implicitly posits at the end of Night and Day. The narrator plans to watch Celia “enviously,” to “mark her silences and her severities”; the narrator “shall fancy her eager for the night to come with its lonely voyage” (CSF 102). However the vision shifts and becomes more distinct as Celia “comes to the window,” and the sounds of the street intrude (CSF 103). In a bracketed passage, the narrator describes a missed connection even in her projected reverie as she sees herself attempting to “cast myself out to her [Celia], but only to be drawn back again to flow swiftly on with the stream” (CSF 103). The narrator imagines a “day’s walk in the hills” in which she watches Celia move impetuously, “sturdily,” and perhaps with freedom and elation: “We sit down and look at the triangular space of yellow-green field beneath us through the arch of bramble twigs which divides them so queerly” (CSF 103).

The reverie is broken as the narrator reflects, “But it’s all fancy. I’m not in the room with her, nor out in the wood. I’m here in London, standing by the window, holding The Times” (CSF 103). Death is blamed (and commended) for the change in the prospect:

But how death has changed everything!—as, in an eclipse of the sun, the colours go out, and the trees look thin as paper and livid while the shadow passes. The chill little breeze is perceptible and the roar of traffic sounds across a gulf. Then, a moment later, distances are bridged, sounds merged; and as I look the trees though still pale, become sentinel and guardian; the sky arranges its tender background; and all remote as if exalted to the summit of a mountain in the dawn. (CSF 103-104)
Death composes the prospect before “it has taken on any of the disguises of life,” and in the
eclipse, “Some burden has fallen; some impediment has been removed” (CSF 104). The death of
the young man has “removed the boundaries and fused the separate entities,” and his withdrawal.
“cleaving the dawn asunder,” makes possible a glimpse for “us grouped on the very limit of the
verge” (CSF 104).

This story suggests an allusion to Ibsen’s The Master Builder and When We Dead
Awaken, plays which Woolf also alludes to in Night and Day: commenting on Ibsen’s Solness’s
fear of the younger generation knocking at the door to claim their kingdom, Mrs Hilbery quips,
“Oh, but the younger generation comes in without knocking,” and in other scenes Mary is
depicted walking beside “some sleep-walker, whom she thought it right gradually to awaken”
(ND 78, 151). In “Sympathy,” the description of Celia as clothed in white or in black recalls
Irene and her sister from When We Dead Awaken. At the end of his play, two couples are
“grouped on the very limit of the verge” (CSF 104), on the summit of a mountain at dawn, as are
two couples at the conclusion of Night and Day. Both Ibsen plays explore the entrapment of a
woman by convention and the literal falling of a New Man artist (likened to a sun god—master
builder Solness and the master sculptor Rubek as Phaetons falling from their chariots) occasioned
by the looking-on of a New Woman.

Woolf’s diary entry of 11 January 1918 expresses the hollowness of the passage of the
Suffrage Bill, suggesting that “Woolf did not see the feminist battle as won, not only because full
enfranchisement was yet to happen. The twenties was a period when women were being urged to
relinquish their recent gains in the public sphere and return to domestic duties. It was still a
man’s world. The sun was still masculine” (Goldman 76). In the early twenties, gendered
imagery of the eclipse of the sun is prominent in theories of degeneration, as in English
translations of Max Nordau’s Degeneration and Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West,
which Woolf refers to in a 1929 diary entry. Spengler links the decline of civilization to the rise
of women’s liberation and literary manifestations which have eclipsed “The primary woman…
mother” with “the Ibsen woman, the comrade, the heroine of a whole megalopolitan literature
from Northern drama to Parisian novel. Instead of children, she has soul-conflicts; marriage is a
craft-art for the achievement of ‘mutual understanding’” (qtd. in Goldman 90). Women such as
Ibsen’s heroines “all belong to themselves and they are all unfruitful,” and like flowers, “they
close in the setting sun” (qtd. in Goldman 90). Thus, the decline of civilization is a result of
women’s championing of the New Woman figures that “belong to themselves” and the death of
not only art but also of the race in the eclipse of the masculine, rational sun. Woolf’s texts thus
stage a war of signifiers, collapsing the appropriation of the sun as a signifier of absolute right for
either patriarchal dominance or suffrage radicalism in the image of eclipse.

Considering the numbers of deaths of “simple young [men] whom I hardly knew” that
Woolf herself must have been reading of in The Times, the paper which the narrator of
“Sympathy” is holding, the imagery of the sun which “shoots straight between the leaves to the
grass; the geraniums glow red in the earth” bringing the narrator back into the present moment—
“A cry starts to the left of me, and another, abrupt and dissevered, to the right. Wheels strike
divergently; omnibuses conglomerate in conflict; the clock asseverates with twelve distinct
strokes that it is midday”—suggests a parallel of the story’s seemingly trivial events with the
cataclysmic events of the war (CSF 104). The withdrawal of men, the strength and ability that
women proved themselves capable of in their absence, and the gulf which the war cleaves,
corresponds to the revelation that the narrator projects upon Celia in Humphrey’s passing. The
return to business as usual also corresponds; the omnibuses of the street and the striking of
midday that intrude on the narrator’s reverie mark the displacement of women after the war. The
narrator finds “We must go back then,” but not without remorse: “Must I then go back?” (CSF
104). Returning means a “horizon shut in,” and she protests that “No, no, Humphry Hammond is
dead,” as if his death will stave off the shutting in of the horizon (CSF 104). Whereas Conrad’s
Kurtz tells of “The horror! The horror!” that the vision of such a prospect creates, the narrator’s ambivalence in her desire for Humphry’s death that will keep open the horizon is expressed as “Terrible! Terrible! to be so callous!” (CSF 105). 23

However, the post arrives with a letter from Celia that clarifies that her father-in-law and not her husband Humphry has died, and which asks the narrator to dine. The canceled ending of the story reads: “Do you mean to tell me that Humphry is alive after all and you never opened the bedroom door or picked anemones and I’ve wasted all this; death never was behind the tree; and I’m to dine with you, with years and years in which to ask questions about the furniture.

Humphry you ought to have died!” (CSF 292-93). Woolf replaced it with a passage that discloses less disappointment at the wasted reverie and lingers less on her romantic imagery of Celia circumscribed by the banality of Humphrey and his talk of “furniture”: “O don’t tell me he lives still! O why did you deceive me?!” (CSF 105). The revelation made in the gap rendered by the war, in the absence of the husband Humphrey, seems to surely promise a new gyre, if not a Second Coming. 24

The tragedy of the World War I eclipse, the eclipse of socialism, the eclipse of feminism, is that the loss and the revelation experienced at the point of rupture are powerless to alter the return of the sun or son, the patriarchal, capitalist, nationalist, order. Despite having “force[d] the moment to its crisis,” and “After the sunsets[...] After the novels, after the teacups” (Eliot “Prufrock” 80, 101-102), Woolf and Joyce are most uneasy with the impotence, not of the breaking day, but of their project of breaking the word. The eclipse placing conventions of realism and romanticism in relief in the context of the lived realities of the war period ultimately turns the light of criticism upon the project of modernism itself. In shattering the old mirrors, these authors face their own reflections and ask whether the tragi-comic modernist epiphany isn’t merely “an attendant lord,” that is, “Politic, cautious, and meticulous:/ Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse:/ At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—” (Eliot “Prufrock” 112, 116-19).
The movement of “Sympathy” echoes with a difference the plots of prewar New Woman fiction—an eclipse of the sun that allows for a startling new vision that is, nonetheless, destroyed by the return of the sun. Even the masculinist The Woman Who Did includes the trope of the death of the male beloved, which affords a particularly feminist vision. In Grant Allen’s novel, the would-be New Man Alan Merrick agrees to New Woman Hermoine Barton’s desire to live as a common-law couple, but is increasingly shown to dominate her as a husband as he is increasingly likened to the blazing sun of Perugia. Ralph Denham, in Night and Day, offers Katharine a relationship “where each is free,” but Katharine, who is familiar with New Woman fiction despite her parents’ attempts to constrain her reading to classics, understands that in spite of the attractiveness of the offer, other influences and hidden “obligations always grow up” and make things into “a muddle” (286). The promise of the New Man to facilitate a deconstruction of patriarchal structures, like the promise of feminism preceding the First World War and strengthened by women’s efforts during the war, ultimately falls short in the glare of the sun.

Lisa Rado quotes modernist anthropologist Gasquoine Hartley’s 1914 study of primitive matriarchy: “the twentieth century is the age of Woman; some day it may be that it will be looked back upon as the golden age, the dawn, some say, of feminine civilization” (11).

Hartley’s conviction suggests that Katharine is frustrated by her position on “the threshold” rather than entrapped by it. The “liberation” Shelley supposedly represented in the nineteenth century (Allen’s narrator posits George Eliot and Percy Bysshe Shelley as Barton’s precursors), and that Ibsen and New Woman fiction writers heralded in the 1890s, is again augured as on the threshold of dawning in 1914—Woolf entreats us to realize this cycle of hope and failure.

Other New Woman Fiction authors who depict the frustration of female friendship as a result of the New Man include Isabella Ford, Mona Caird, and Gertrude Dix. Isabella Ford’s pamphlet “Women and Socialism” (1907) and novel On the Threshold (1895) represent one of the few optimistic attempts to forge a union between male labor and feminism as well as the
recurrent feeling that “men and women were on the threshold of a new way of living together which had not yet been fully realized” (Ledger 54). The narrator of the novel, Lucretia Bampfylde, dismisses “falling in love” for the more interesting “friendships between men and women,” a belief which Mary strongly articulates in Night and Day, that create “the leavening forces of the world” (qtd. in Ledger 54). The novel also includes the recurrent New Woman fiction motif of sex antagonism in a triangular relationship between two women and a man (Lucretia, Kitty Manners and Mr Estcourt, in this case) that often becomes a stumbling block between not only same-sex friendship, but also prevents a union of socialism and feminism. At the end of the novel, Lucretia suggests a utopian future—“We stepped over the threshold of life together and had our first glimpse of freedom”—but the terms of that freedom are undefined (qtd. in Ledger 55). Kitty has engaged herself to Mr. Estcourt according to her “comradely” ideals, but postpones their marriage to nurse her ailing father; Lucretia, should Kitty marry, would seem left alone in the city to become a spinster similar to her aunt before her (Ledger 55).

Woolf’s story “Sympathy” resonates particularly with Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” (1894). Chopin’s brief story unfolds in third person, describing a wife’s reaction of eroticized freedom at the news of her husband’s death in a train accident. Mrs. Mailard is given the news in “broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing” from her husband’s friend Richards and from her sister, the latter whom she clasps around the waist as she moves “unwittingly like a goddess of Victory” near the end of the story (23, 25). This depiction corresponds to Woolf’s narrator’s reverie of Celia’s movements; Chopin’s Mrs. Mallard further parallels Woolf’s narrator in that her epiphany takes place at the window, where she “could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life” (24). Chopin’s depiction of the woman’s awakening to freedom is one of sexual abandon—the woman abandons herself to the “something” that she feels “creeping out of the sky” that is “too subtle and elusive to name” in orgasmic happiness (24). Refusing to question whether or not her
joy is “monstrous,” as Woolf’s narrator self-ironically questions her terrible callousness, Mrs. Mallard has gained a “clear and exalted perception” in “that brief moment of illumination” (24, 25). It is indeed brief, for upon descending the stair from the summit prospect of her room alongside her sister, the door opens and her husband enters, having not been on the wrecked train. Despite Richards’ attempt to “screen him from the view of his wife,” Mrs. Mallard falls dead, as the doctors pronounce, “of heart disease—of joy that kills” (25).

New Woman fiction takes up the matter of heart dis-ease, critiquing the ability of the romance plot to eclipse the quest for “possession of self-assertion” in life as in literature (Chopin 25). In the brief interlude of Mr. Mallard’s supposed death, Mrs. Mallard is able to glimpse the possibilities of living “for herself” without a “powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature” (Chopin 25). The story itself is ironically eclipsed by a romance fiction, when the truth that Mrs. Mallard’s death is from sorrowful shock at the shutting in of the horizon is displaced by “the doctors” as a death of excessive joy at the husband’s return (Chopin 25).

The difference in Woolf’s story is the change in perspective, the introduction of a third perspective and the “retrospective arrangement,” to borrow Joyce’s phrase, that distinguishes it as situated on the threshold of modernism. Rather than emphasizing the perspective of the newly widowed woman, Woolf emphasizes the possibilities of sympathy and connection between the narrator and that woman. The narrator’s dismay at the end of Woolf’s “Sympathy” suggests that the return of the sun/son circumscribes the horizon in terms of interpersonal relations as well as aesthetics—she is no longer able to creatively imagine a connection with Celia on the hillside where they can together gaze on the prospect of a triangular field. The ambiguity of the pronoun “them” (does it refer to the field’s division or Celia and herself)—“We sit down and look at the triangular space of yellow-green field beneath us through the arch of bramble twigs which divides them so queerly” (CSF 103)—suggests that Woolf is interested, in this piece, in
emphasizing how the eclipse of the sun/son enables a glimpse of a turning point in not only the relationships between women but also the representation of women in fiction and how the relationship of what is possible in the artistic imagination is interwoven with lived reality.

In other words, "Sympathy" suggests multiple layers: the struggle for sympathy between the New Woman and the New Man which fails since the New Man's attachment to patriarchal structures stymies his ability to sympathize; the struggle toward a new sympathy between women which is glimpsed in the eclipse but is itself ultimately eclipsed; and the tightly woven sympathy between conventional narrative and conventional gender ideology which entraps. A new sympathy between women occasioned by the eclipse of the New Man is in a synchronic relationship to a new concept of literature—in order to enter the "new" in either human relations or in literature, a dual revolution (modernism and feminism) must unfold.
Night and Day: Three points of the eclipse

Returning not the same (U 13:1103-04)

Depictions of “these relationships between women,” Woolf writes in A Room of One’s Own, “are too simple” (82). Reading the fictitious Mary Carmichael’s book, Woolf concludes, “For if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been” (AROO 84). Both “Sympathy” and Night and Day, in emphasizing the tenuousness of the connections between women and the resonant silences of the moments of connection, depict the struggle of the artist to know “how to express it” (AROO 84). Written in 1919, “Sympathy” finds sympathy with the New Woman fiction of the prewar period, yet also expresses an angst that the death and return of the sun/son is yet a relevant plot. In the conclusion of Night and Day, written in the same period, Woolf shows the continued affiliation of the New Man with patriarchy, despite his seeming sympathy with the New Woman. Indeed, Jane Marcus argues that Ralph’s vision of “a little dot with flames around it,” a key moment at the conclusion of the novel, is “the emblem the Sun-King gave to Sarastro in The Magic Flute” (105).

The three protagonists of Woolf’s novel, Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet, and Ralph Denham, struggle to create identities that transcend conventional types, struggles portrayed through their frustration with the limitations of existent narratives and language itself. Katharine’s desire to escape her role as drawing-room hostess as the granddaughter of a great poet, Richard Aldryce, is conveyed in her secret mathematical calculations. Mary’s struggle to draft an essay that combines feminist and socialist goals is blotted as she is distracted by Ralph’s
lure of romance and the suffrage society’s absoluteness of vision. Conventions and conventional narratives shut in the horizon and circumscribe the pen, and it is the isolation of the women from each other that prevents them from creating an alternate space in which seeing together allows the exploration of identities outside of prewritten paths. If both Mary and Katharine are depicted struggling for alternative ways to express themselves and hiding their blotted papers from the eyes of others, Ralph also is frustrated in his attempts at poetic expression. Ralph, however, is frustrated by his desire to succeed in capturing Katharine’s essence in recognizable poetic forms of expression—it is his deviation from these forms (a doodle of a blot with flames) that Katharine praises, but which also ironically alludes to his likeness to the Sun-King. Ralph’s desire to forge an identity that resists patriarchal fictions ultimately succumbs to the privileges that his position in patriarchy affords; although he claims a desire to be a “voluntary exile” of patriarchy as Joyce was in his life (JL 2:84), Ralph ultimately desires to find an identity reflected within the mirrors of the civilized imperialist drawing-room of the Hilbery’s patriarchal house.

In chapter four, Mary Datchet and Katharine Hilbery meet, the two previously only acquainted via Ralph’s friendship with Mary and professional relationship with Mr Hilbery. The differences between the women are sharply brought into focus, as if the reader witnesses the process by which the pre-conceived perceptions each woman has of the other were being corrected. Mary is a strong and determined woman, “quite capable of lifting a kitchen table on her back” if such a need arises for the fortnightly meetings held in her rooms for a society for the free discussion of art, politics, and general interest (ND 36). Ralph Denham contrasts the women: Mary, seen as a type, spends her life getting women votes, whereas Katharine, as a type, has a reputation as a personality as a result of her family name. Mary’s room is likened to a stage setting by Ralph, who has arrived early for the meeting, and who further solidifies Mary’s caricature as a New Woman. Mary attempts to right this romantic projection by pointing out how common her situation is among women in London, and how the combination of reading books
and darning stockings isn’t very odd but quite satisfying (38). Throughout the text, Mary’s character plays upon the type: she is depicted negotiating the romance and reality of her position as a single working woman who wants to resist both the passive role offered by the romance plot and the role of tragic martyr of New Woman fiction and Ibsen’s drama. The celebrated and lovely Katharine Hilbery arrives with William Rodney for the meeting. The latter gives a paper on “the Elizabethan use of metaphor in poetry,” which sparks various other speeches from attendees that attempt, like “an ill-balanced axe [...] to hew out his conception of art,” and then smaller groups of discussion (40).

William Rodney, conventionally an appropriate match for Katharine and an aspiring poet who works as a government clerk, latches onto Ralph Denham for his sympathetic praise of his speech. Katharine moves to a windowsill, Mary joins her, and Ralph looks after them with jealousy, as if “tearing handfuls of grass up by the roots from the carpet” (a gesture William repeats with Katharine later when Katharine explains that she does not love him), but he determines (as William does later) to concentrate his mind upon literature (44). Katharine is “pleasantly excited” by the atmosphere of the meeting, and, “conscious of Mary’s body beside her,” is eased by “the consciousness of being both of them women” which “made it unnecessary to speak to her” (45). The two women’s coming together is characteristic of their various later meetings; their meetings are marked by their difference from relations with men (in which the women are to serve as reflecting mirrors) and by their silences during these moments which nonetheless seem to communicate more than the long lectures the men of the novel produce.

Mary draws nearer to Katharine, thus drawing her out, and learns that Katharine desires a profession in order to assert herself, and, when Katharine falls moodily silent again, Mary sees her “capacity for being easily silent” is a “habit that spoke of loneliness and a mind thinking for herself” (46). Mary’s accurate assessment of Katharine stands in contrast to William’s and Ralph’s repeated diagnoses of Katharine’s silence as evidence of her immaturity (a gap they can
fill) or as negligence of her feminine duty (which can be remedied in marriage). Although Katharine is as willful as Mary in pursuing her desires, Katharine’s “habitual silence” in contrast to Mary’s free-spoken manner allows Ralph to project onto Katharine his ideal feminine other. Jane Fisher has argued that Katharine is “uncomfortable with language and responds more strongly to visual signs, such as portraits, photographs, and abstract mathematical symbols,” thus making her silence an emblematic canvas for the other characters of the novel (95). Her approach to romance via a “visual medium that allows the merging of opposites such as past and present or man and woman” is at odds with her parents’ love of language and suitors’ desire for “romantic union through a verbal medium that relies on division and displacement” (Fisher 95). Analyzing the women of Joyce’s Dubliners, an analysis applicable to Gerty MacDowell in Ulysses, Suzette Henke argues that “silent audition and laconic responses are open, it seems to interpretive ambivalence and male misprision,” the silent woman “functions as a Lacanian mirror—an echo, a heimlich womb of mental warmth whose hothouse heart” encourages the male would-be artist’s growth (Politics 35).

Ironically, this projection on the sphinx continues on a contemporary level, in that contemporary (feminist) critics have had a tendency to project a focus of the difficulties of the woman writer upon Katharine. Although Night and Day is unquestionably concerned with language and communication, Katharine Hilbery is longing for freedom to explore mathematics not prose; she hides slips of paper covered with numbers and symbols rather than poems, essays, or paragraphs. As a “way of figuring the lack of fit between women’s desire, the socially prescribed norms of the woman’s lot, and the actuality of women’s lives” (Pykett 177), Katharine’s penchant for science (a masculine study) is as fitting, if not more so, as a female protagonist’s frustrated attempts at literature or art considering Katharine’s context of the Alardyce drawing-room. Feminist critics who project their own critical desire to read Katharine
as a poet risk reifying a nostalgic feminine Other figure, suggesting that poetry and perhaps
maternity are “natural” to Katharine.

Similarly, Mary’s discovery of another love, the love of work, should not be diagnosed as
compensatory for the loss of her love for Ralph (or what she acknowledges as her sensual
attraction to him), rather it should be read firstly as a love in and of itself, similar to Katharine’s
love of mathematics. The men of the novel and likely men reading the novel in 1919, judging
from the popularity of sexologists such as Otto Weiniger, would be apt to diagnose the women as
compensating “natural” female desires with unnatural ones. The work that Katharine craves and
Mary pursues requires education and improved chances of applying that education for women.
Middle and upper class women are confined to the common sitting-room and parlor and a diet of
classical and romance fiction, thus training them for psychological service for others and
affection dictated by heterosexual marriage. Similar to the feminist authors of New Woman
fiction, Woolf in Night and Day exposes the need for (and in A Room of One’s Own calls for) the
destruction of gendered spheres and a demand for ungendered education.

Mary’s attraction to Ralph is punctuated early in the text by her daydreams during a
lunch hour that includes wanderings in two rooms of the British Museum. In the first, she looks
upon a statue of Ulysses for a minute or two, and the narrator slyly comments, “her emotions
were not purely aesthetic, because […] she began to think about Ralph Denham” (ND 65-66).
Woolf, who had read the Odyssey in 1907-09 and the manuscript of James Joyce’s Ulysses in
1918 (Silver 133, 166), thus explicitly evokes the traditional literary and cultural paradigm of
quest and conquest, but with a pointed gender difference. The “silent shapes” allow Mary to feel
an “alarming” desire to say “I am in love with you” (ND 66). However, Mary is also “proud of a
feeling which did not display anything like the same proportions when she was going about her
daily work” (ND 66). The silent stone allows her to vent romantic desires which her working,
practical mind recognizes are detrimental to her other desires: “as she walked along the street to
her office, the force of all her customary objections to being in love with any one overcame her. She did not want to marry at all” (ND 66). Like Joyce’s Bloom who gazes at marble beauties to escape the realities of the streets (and the label of cuckold) and to also question the borders of the real and ideal, Mary is able to recognize the difference and distance between dreams and realities. The reality Mary must face is that romanticism can severely handicap her ability to pursue her love of work, unlike Bloom whose male gender allows him more freedom to dally with romantic idylls. Nonetheless, the similarity in Mary’s and Bloom’s preferences and aloofness in dining, their street wandering, and their projections on mythic artwork are striking. Just as Bloom projects his feminine ideals onto marble forms only to participate in the deconstruction and perversion of these heavenly bodies portrayed fantasmatically in “Circe,” Mary projects her ideal of Ralph riding with her past “winged Assyrian bulls” and “monsters […] couchant in the sand” only to deconstruct the very patriarchal and empiricist institutions that allow such reveries in her choices throughout the novel (ND 66).

In their first meeting by the window, Katharine’s discourse is teasingly alluring to Mary, as Katharine initiates intimacy, the two test “the ground,” and Katharine withdraws into silence again; Mary feels unusually quick “alternate emotions” as Katharine exerts a “curious power of drawing near and receding” (46-47). The tension is ruptured when Mary laughs at Katharine’s calling her “Miss Datchet,” and Katharine pronounces, “Mary, then. Mary, Mary, Mary” while she draws “back the curtain in order, perhaps, to conceal the momentary flush of pleasure which is caused by coming perceptibly nearer to another person” (47). The two look up at “the hard silver moon,” “down upon the roofs of London, with all their upright chimneys,” and at a middle space, “the moonlit pavement” (47).

However, this shared vision is shattered when someone behind makes “a joke about star-gazing, which destroyed their pleasure in it,” and Ralph seizes the moment to interject the sentence he’s been holding in wait for Katharine—he asks if she’s remembered to get her
grandfather’s portrait glazed, referring to his appearance in her home on a Sunday afternoon when he witnessed Mrs Hilbery ask her daughter to have the artist’s portrait finished. Mary is furious at Ralph’s “stupid” intrusion: “Oh, you idiot!’ Mary exclaimed, very nearly aloud” (48). The three stand in awkward silence until Mary is forced to leave to oversee the pouring of coffee, and Katharine stands in silence judging Ralph, who has set his willpower “rigidly […] upon a single object—that Miss Hilbery should obey him” and return to him a reflection that he had “conquered her interest” (48). Katharine thus suppresses the “desire to laugh,” and manages to keep “her voice steady” in answer to his grudgingly-toned question, “You know the names of the stars, I suppose?” (48).

In Woolf and Joyce, the fundamentals of this scene (a connection symbolized through parallactic vision between persons of the same sex with differing personalities and that is ruptured by a New Man figure) are uncannily similar, and prove an axis on which much of their work turns. In Night and Day, Mary and Katharine’s near connection in the light of the moon is interrupted by Ralph, and not only is this scene repeated with variations throughout the novel, but also it reappears six years later in Mrs Dalloway in which Clarissa Dalloway recalls a similar scene. Clarissa’s retrospective arrangement of the epiphanic moment when Sally had “kissed her on the lips” on the terrace where they walked as “Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf went on about Wagner,” describes an experience “infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!—when old Joseph and Peter faced them: ‘Star gazing?’ said Peter” (MD 53). Reacting with mute anger like Mary, Clarissa feels the intrusion is “like running one’s face against a granite wall in the darkness!”: she describes how it mauls Sally, “his hostility; his jealousy; his determination to break into their companionship. All this she saw as one sees a landscape in a flash of lightning—and Sally (never had she admired her so much!) gallantly taking her way unvanquished” (emphasis added, MD 53).
The triangular moment of vision and eclipse of "Sympathy" and Night and Day are coalesced here, and Woolf's Clarissa shares with Conrad the sense of "Oh this horror!" as she watches Sally take up the role dictated by Peter and Joseph's interruption (MD 53). Sally's sphinx-like role is an echo of Katharine's earlier role: "She laughed. She made old Joseph tell her the names of the stars, which he liked doing very seriously. She stood there: she listened. She heard the names of the stars" (MD 53). Peter as a New Man figure echoes Ralph Denham and William Rodney, marked by their egotism and romance for empire and patriarchal form in art and life which overwhelms a desire for the new and freedom from patriarchal tyranny. As Peter visits with Clarissa many years later, he is "overcome with his own grief, which rose like a moon looked at from a terrace, ghastly beautiful with light from the sunken day" in remembering the lost past (MD 62). Whereas Clarissa's anger is "[n]ot for herself" but for Sally, or rather the interruption of their connection under the moon, Peter is "overcome with his own grief" and ultimately chafes in being made to "go back like this to the past. [...] Why make him suffer, when she had tortured him so infernally," so that Woolf depicts him as "just as happens on a terrace in the moonlight, when one person begins to feel ashamed that he is already bored, and yet as the other sits silent, very quiet, sadly looking at the moon, does not speak, [he] moves his foot, clears his throat" (53, 62-63). Clarissa carries with her the Shakespearean talisman from Cymbeline, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun/ Nor the furious winter's rages" (MD 13). Clarissa may no longer fear the intrusion and stifling of the Sun-King since patriarchy's authority is unveiled as an idiotic and egoistic demand for sympathy (Ralph's question about the portrait, Peter's clearing his throat). However, this demand for self-reflective sympathy has asserted itself and blotted out the possible dual sympathy of a new connection, and thus it seems Clarissa, if not afraid of the heat of the sun, is yet ambivalent about the furious winter rage to come: she fears the ghosts (her missed connection with Sally) created by her submission to the glare of the sun, the conventions of the day, that will haunt her in an winter of discontent as she grows old. 28
Night and Day’s strikingly similar scene is part of the same cycle of seasons, albeit an earlier one, that also ends in the masking brilliance of summer. In the street, after the gathering in Mary’s flat, Katharine watches the moon and sniffs the far off sea as William Rodney discourses on his opinions of poetry and marriage. In effect, he tells Katharine that since he is half poet she should marry him (it is implied the marriage would be unnecessary if he “could write”), and she should also marry him since all women are only “half alive; using only half your faculties” unmarried (52). Katharine watches the moon as William misquotes Sir Philip Sidney, William sounding very much like the Stephen Dedalus of Portrait: “With how sad steps she climbs the sky / How silently and with how wan a face” (ND 52). Ultimately, Katharine laughs at both his and Ralph’s lecturing, posturing, and their tendency to figure her as a reflecting, cold moon. However, neither William nor Ralph realizes the meaning of her laughter, as Woolf shows in the following scene in which William and Ralph sympathize over their attraction to Katharine. Both project Katharine as the individual with illusions in need of “an attitude of adoration,” and then, on a stage setting “out of an opera by Mozart,” the men revel in complaining about their positions as New Men—their aspirations as great literary men are hampered by the need to work as solicitors, they would emigrate but are enamoured by the small concessions of London and couldn’t live with “savages” (ND 56-57).

As the novel progresses, Katharine becomes engaged to William Rodney, but not out of love. She agrees to marry in order to escape her parents’ home, to have “a house of my own,” since she desires “to study mathematics—to know about the stars” (162). Ralph obsesses over Katharine, and Mary pursues both Ralph and Mary, believing that she is in love with Ralph. Mary realizes finally that her feelings for Ralph are a waning physical attraction and perhaps a displaced desire for Katharine: Mary finds that her line of thought and feeling and Ralph’s
“bored their way in long, parallel tunnels which came very close indeed, but never ran into each other” (109). Mary and Katharine, like Bloom and Stephen in Joyce’s Ulysses, are connected in a parallactic relationship, gazing at a distant light.

Katharine finally renounces her engagement with William after meeting Ralph and Mary in the country and then being confronted alone by William’s demands for signs of her affection. During a walk on the heather, the horizon “blotted out by white mist,” Katharine is unable to speak the words he desires and instead steels herself to “tell him the truth” of her desire to be alone and study mathematics and astronomy, and that she does not love him, by fixing her “eyes upon a lightning-splintered ash tree” (202-03). Having divulged this truth, Katharine flounders under William’s insistence that “this kind of analysis,” that is, Katharine’s analysis that marriage without mutual understanding and feeling would be farcical, “is disastrous” (205). As William begins to cry, Katharine is made to feel that in refusing to follow conventions or play the role of reflecting mirror she has committed a grotesque sin, has commenced a “horror” that must be stopped (204). Katharine finds herself unable to extricate herself from the cycle of marriage, which heightens her attraction to Mary who seems to offer a balanced alternative to the two extremes of Katharine’s daydreams—the cold rational truth of mathematics and the romance of a magnanimous hero on a galloping horse. Unwilling to allow her mind to run along these dichotomous dreams (literally signified by a path along the Strand and a path along the river), she ascends to Mary’s flat where she sees a woman who enviably “could have a life of one’s own” (229). Nonetheless, the reader is made aware, through Mary’s point of view, that Mary’s alternative vision is not easily achieved and that she does battle with the allure of the conventional paths: the flow of her pen in striking out on a new feminist-socialist path that balances lived reality with the romance of revolution is continually “blotted” as she struggles for a vision not constrained by Ralph’s egoistic romanticism or Mrs Seal’s zealousness (225).
Woolf shows Mary and Katharine contemplating the barren truth behind the fictions of male-female romance with fairly steady gazes, and Ralph too is depicted as having a similar vision. For him, however, the eclipse of the sun is only a brief disclosure, and the return of Mrs Hilbery at the end of the novel (after a departure to Shakespeare’s grave) enables him to return to a sunlit and satisfactory prospect. Upon learning that Katharine is engaged to William Rodney, Ralph’s world is bereft of a “pattern” with any significance, his “life was visible” as “a straight, meagre path” and “all bright points in his life were blotted out; all prominences leveled” (129-30). Unable to produce a fiction that Katharine has wronged him, Ralph realizes his “old romance” seems “foolish and enfeebled” (130). Ralph’s thoughts echo Eliot’s Prufrock as he looks into the dun-coloured river and, unable to trust in “men and women. Not in one’s dreams about them,” Ralph finds that “There’s nothing—nothing, nothing left at all” (ND 130). Ralph’s observations also parallel Bloom’s thoughts at the end of “Ithaca” as he claims a heroism in renouncing the role of conquering hero by stripping his identity of the illusions he has been vested in. Katharine embodied a truth Ralph cherished and is the “solitary spark” that burns for him no more, but, “He did not blame her; he blamed nothing, nobody; he saw the truth” and bravely heeds life’s urge to movement, as he must now make his way with passion burning on a far horizon, “as the winter sun makes a greenish pane in the west through thinning clouds. […] But that was all there was left to him of a populous and teeming world” (129-30).

Ralph’s realization, signified by an ecliptic vision, is brief, and he ultimately returns to the conventional quest romances of men and women under Mrs Hilbery’s guiding hand and his own desire to dominate Katharine. An Austenian tale of mismatched lovers affords his relief and seems to displace the abject modernist vision. The suture—the joining of mismatched couples as well as a sewing up of conventional narrative—is satisfying to the older generation and the males of the novel. However, Woolf pointedly depicts the romance tale’s silencing of the novel’s women in order to emphasize the tragedy, or dis-ease, of returning to the “old story”: Katharine’s
cousin Cassandra becomes a bargaining chip exchanged with a ruby ring to William; Katharine’s and Mary’s horizons are shut in by the visions of the New Men, Ralph and Mr Basnett. Ralph encapsulates the frustrations of Woolf’s three primary protagonists in his explanation of his unhappiness to Mary, “I’ve lived almost entirely among delusions, and now I’m at that awkward stage of finding it out. I want another delusion to go on with” (186). When Ralph tells the “truth” about love, that it is “a story one makes up in one’s mind about another person [...] a pleasant illusion” that requires careful maintenance, Mary underscores his realization by noting that, despite Ralph’s awareness, he does not cease to participate in the pleasant illusion (212).

Mary’s moment of eclipse throws into relief the “truth” behind male and female romance as well as the romance of the pursuit of an Absolute truth in politics. Ralph’s melancholy unbalances her vision of life, and under his influence “the committee rather dwindled in importance; the Suffrage shrank” (135); she must “do battle with the sceptical presence of Ralph Denham” whom she sees looking over her life choices, and thus she plunges into her work which offers an indisputable knowledge of “what is right and what is wrong. As if emerging from a mist, the old foes of the public good loomed ahead of her—capitalists, newspaper proprietors, anti-suffragists” and the indifferent masses such as Ralph (138, 139). However, in the street and distracted by the misty sights of Bloomsbury, an organ-grinder, and Lincoln’s Inn Fields, she is overcome by a cold, depressing, horribly clear sight that makes her aware of the falseness of an absolute right or wrong—thus putting the S.G.S. in perspective (142). Mary is later able to see the “truth” of Ralph’s romantic obsession for Katharine, which is that his desire is based on seeing her from a distance that allows him to use Katharine as canvas and mirror, a romance which has the effect of making connection between Mary and Ralph impossible. Further, Mary understands that Ralph’s sentimentality will not only hinder him from truly connecting with Katharine, but also will prevent Mary herself from connecting with Katharine.
Mary’s unique perception of their three perspectives is particularly evident in a scene in which Ralph and Mary are having dinner in a country inn; Ralph witnesses Katharine walking in the street below (she does not see him, but scans the street) and he looks away dreamily, while Mary watches him. Mary critically considers three points of perception—Ralph’s, Katharine’s, and her own, and symbolically disencumbers her walking stick of a spray of ivy, retaining only two leaves as “one sacrifice […] to sentimentality and personality” in preparation for a “long and stormy walk” (194-95). Mary, having taken the measure of the parallax and realizing her participation in elevating others to a heavenly body, disencumbers her walking stick (which is a symbol of Ibsen’s New Women) of entwining ivy, a gesture allusive to Milton’s Paradise Lost, which likens Eve’s place to ivy twining about man’s directing elm.

Mary ultimately apprehends the similarity of the romance in Mrs Seal’s and Mr Clacton’s suffrage work and the romance of sentimental love. Having renounced the illusion of conventional romance, she refuses to blindly romanticize the S.G.S.: “having lost what is best, I do not mean that any other view does instead” (223). Consequently, she must renounce the imagery of the dawning day that is associated on the one hand with Dante’s and Milton’s romantic love as well as the image of an illuminating dawn appropriated by the suffrage movement: “One view of the world plunged in darkness, so a more volatile temperament might have argued after a season of despair, let the world turn again and show another, more splendid perhaps. No, Mary thought […]” (222-23). 9

The engaged William and Katharine stop by Mary’s flat, and Mary watches as Katharine prepares tea for William and wonders, “she found herself putting her hand on Katharine’s knee affectionately for an instant,” if Katharine’s assumption of control over the situation is a maternal feeling towards herself (145). However, Mary sees what William does not—that Katharine is not in love with him, and in observing Katharine. Mary is “struck” by the realization that Katharine’s smile is “not altogether in the maternal spirit” (145). Having faced the realization that she did not
love Ralph as she supposed and having faced the realization that the battle of right and wrong is hardly absolute, Mary now feels “herself baffled by something inscrutable in the character of a person to whom she felt herself very much attracted,” and she wonders how she would feel if “she were engaged to Katharine” (145). William tyrannizes the conversation and belittles women in doing so, and the two women are only able to watch each other. Katharine returns to the flat a moment after they’ve departed, retrieving her forgotten purse, commenting “I think being engaged is very bad for the character” in a tone that is different “as they were alone” and which “seemed to refer to something else” (146-47). Mary is left unable to comprehend Katharine completely or settle rightly her feelings for her. It is only much later in the novel that Mary comes to realize that “She did not love Ralph any more” but that “another love burnt in the place of the old one,” and this love is indeed for Katharine (381). Having resisted the conclusion that Katharine has unconsciously been driving her to, Mary finally murmurs, “There are different ways of loving” (380-81). However, by this point, Katharine has been immured in the “tyranny of love” by her relationship with Ralph Denham and a heterosexual romance plot of mismatched pairs (382).

Katharine and Mary meet once more alone in Mary’s flat, and achieve a moment of intimacy that distinguishes their relationship; the scene is particularly marked by its emphasis on silence in a novel that satirically presents a great deal of talk regarding love. Katharine has come to Mary’s flat since Mary seems to offer an alternative to two paths leading to “other worlds” neither of which satisfy Katharine—epic romance and mathematical realism (254). Katharine sets before Mary an idea that she has been entertaining, and which she arrived at “in the Tube,” regarding what motivates people: “It’s not love; it’s not reason; I think it must be some idea. Perhaps, Mary, our affections are the shadow of an idea. Perhaps there isn’t any such thing as affection in itself…” (230). Mary ponders her reaction to Katharine’s words, realizes her affection for Katharine and a “further confidence” that she could reveal, and resolves to tell
Katharine that Ralph loves Katharine and not herself (231). With “half a dozen words,” which will be painful to Mary since she desires to “keep something of her own,” she can “put flight and further silence” beyond Katharine’s power (231). Sitting beside Katharine, “Her hand went down to the hem of Katharine’s skirt, and, fingering a line of fur, she bent her head as if to examine it” and, commenting that she likes the fur and her clothes, Mary tells her of Ralph’s love (232).

Mary has renounced the possessiveness of love, a characteristic of conventional romance, and in refusing to possess the intimacy of a private unshared love for Ralph and for Katharine, she makes herself vulnerable but also achieves a greater happiness. Her “clear vision of the way to face life was made tremulous and uncertain, because another was witness of it,” a fact which pains Mary (234). In making her vision of the world vulnerable by opening it to Katharine, Mary opens the possibility of a connection across differences which nonetheless does not threaten to destroy difference. Mary discovers in the silence between herself and Katharine that “she seemed to have lost her isolation” (234). In renouncing possession of her romance for Katharine and Ralph as well as her romance as a heroic martyr, Mary connects. The experience is epiphanic in its sublime and abject duality: “she was at once the sufferer and the pitiful spectator of suffering; she was happier than she had ever been; she was more bereft; she was rejected, and she was immensely beloved” (234). Knowing it impossible to find words to express “these sensations,” Mary nonetheless feels that Katharine shares them: “Thus for some time longer they sat silent, side by side, while Mary fingered the fur on the skirt of the old dress” (234-35).

Mary’s simple speech is a spark to Katharine, who recalls the scene in the street: “‘She sat up straight and looked at me, and then she said, ‘I’m in love,’” Katharine mused. […] it was a flame blazing suddenly in the dark” (236). That Katharine chooses these words of Mary’s as her focus, and not Mary’s insistence that Ralph is in love with Katharine, further stresses the connection between the two women. In a later scene when Katharine is bringing together William and her cousin Cassandra, Katharine takes up Mary’s resolve to relinquish “private
misfortunes,” and thus finds herself alone, staring out a window into the night and gaining a perspective on the “light of illusion” that “makes it desirable to possess, to love, to struggle” (300). Although the conventions of a romance comedy dictate that Katharine is divesting herself of William in order to secure her romance with Ralph, the latter conclusion is left in doubt. Katharine desires, most of all, to be alone with Mary—and so she escapes her father who wants her to bring a book on Shelley to him, as well as William and Cassandra who dally with Mozart at the piano, by driving swiftly through the streets to Mary’s. However, Katharine is unable to forge the connection she desires with Mary, since she finds Mary working with a Mr. Basnett, who is evolving a “Society for the Education of Democracy upon Capital” and seeking Mary’s services as a paid secretary (302). Katharine is attracted to the man’s intelligence, his likeness to an “original man” or the ideal New Man figure that she imagines is a “citizen of a nobler state than ours” (304). However, she is isolated from both of them, since, as Mary notes, “Marriage is her job at present” (304). Mary reflects, nonetheless, that Mr. Basnett’s society has a less serious purpose compared “with some tremendous fact which manifested itself as she stood alone with Katharine. It may have been their common womanhood” (305).

Her tie thus pulls Mary from Katharine to the socialist New Man Mr. Basnett, and Katharine is pulled from Mary by her relationship with poetic New Man Ralph Denham. Mary must go back in and climb the height to her flat and a narrative of New Woman sacrifice in work, and Katharine must be carried away into the flow of the Austenian romance narrative by a cab. The black hole at the center of the text is the moment in which Katharine and Mary stand outside of her flat, where “upon both of them a cloud of difficulty and darkness rested, obscuring the future in which they had both to find a way” (306). Mary must exalt work as her grounding fiction while Katharine is drawn into the tyranny of the love plot.
Mrs Hilbery realizes that her daughter is not in love, but pushes her daughter toward marriage, toward “faith” in “love,” in order to save her from “the abyss” that is the alternative, the “shattered fragments of the world” that must be faced without such illusions (413, 412). After “civilization had triumphed,” and Katharine is to be married to Ralph, Katharine feels that she cannot see Mary, since Mary’s presence will unbalance the illusion of symmetry, found in the romance narrative, she has succumbed to: “To see Mary was to risk the destruction of this globe” (428). Indeed it is the awareness of her desire for connection with Mary that threatens the satisfactory return of the romance plot and overdetermines her parting words at the end of the novel. Standing under Mary’s window with Ralph, Katharine is unable to articulate her true desire: “‘I wish—I wish—’ she sighed, for melancholy came over her and obscured at least a section of her clear vision. The globe swam before her as if obscured by tears” (429).
CHAPTER 3

THE AWKWARD STAGE: OUT, OUT, DAMNED BLOT

At the conclusion of Woolf’s *The Waves*, Bernard endeavors to “sum up” by pretending that life is a solid substance, shaped like a globe” that will allow one to “go on, in an orderly manner” (251). However, this construction is inevitably dissolved by disillusionment, a “thunder-clap” and “light blown out,” a “hole […] knocked in [his] mind,” “a cold shock” (250, 241, 268). Both as human actor and writer attempting to continue “selfless and visionless” and “without illusion,” Bernard questions, “How then, does the light return to the world after the eclipse of the sun?” (285, 286). Having created an eclipse for their readers, Woolf and Joyce tackle this very question. Interest in the eclipse as a metaphor for the author’s relationship to realism and romanticism is particularly heightened by an actual eclipse of the sun that took place in 1919. Articles and editorials in *The Times* of 1919 emphasize the popular as well as scientific enthusiasm anticipating the eclipse. For the first time, photographers were able to record the eclipse and enable astronomers to prove correct, by the displacement of the stars around the sun, Einstein’s theory of relativity.  

In an article from *The Times*, 7 November 1919, Einstein’s theory is summarized under “Space Warped”: “the Newtonian principles assume that space is invariable, that, for instance, *the three angles of a triangle always equal, and must equal, two right angles*, and that a circle is really circular” (emphasis added, 12). However, expeditions to Northern Brazil and West Africa to view the 29 May 1919 eclipse support Einstein’s doctrine “that the qualities of space, hitherto
believed to be absolute, are relative to their circumstances,” that indeed “space may acquire a
twist or warp in certain circumstances,” and “in certain cases” light could be measured to “show
the effects of the warping in a degree that could be predicted and calculated” (12). Jane Goldman
argues that “Woolf’s aesthetic of light” is particularly relevant to Einstein’s theory of relativity,
since “in her work, the notion of the sun as a fixed absolute and self-contained value” is
undermined in order “to reveal (in its absence) other, multiple points of illumination: the stars”
which “seem to represent a distant yet desirable set of alternative possibilities” (27). Woolf’s
Mary and Joyce’s Bloom characters written during the total eclipse of total war, gaze at the
cosmos, and tentatively suggest that “the three angles of a triangle” perhaps must not always
“equal, two right angles.” In other words, Ibsen’s, Shelley’s, and New Woman fiction’s failed
triangles “are relative to their circumstances,” and the characters Mary Datchet and Leopold
Bloom attempt to predict and calculate the possibility of twisting given absolutes to open a third
prospect, a gap that is also a connection that reveals, through words, other worlds.

In a November 16, 1919 letter to Margaret Llewelyn Davies, writing of the diverse
reactions to Night and Day, Woolf writes: “You see, it’s a question of the human heart, and
cutting out the rotten parts according to ones convictions. Thats what I want to do, and thats
where we differ, and thats why you’ll dislike N. and D.” (2:400). Woolf saw that her novel, the
literary experiment, in turning a satiric eye upon conventional romance as well as New Woman
fiction, sought to expose the complex realities of human experience, the individual’s negotiation
of dreams and realities and the interplay of discourses (gendered, social, political, physical,
historical, etc.) that produce those dreams and realities. Nonetheless, by 1919, Woolf had
recognized that the form of her novel had constrained her; Night and Day allowed her to realize
the ties that bound her to conventions and that required a more complete severing than her highly
crafted satire had achieved. Ultimately, Woolf and Joyce find that the human heart requires
certain fictions to negotiate the isolation one’s experience of reality creates, and it is the expansiveness or narrowness of the fictions at one’s disposal that determines the expansiveness or narrowness of one’s experience of reality.

Woolf’s choice of the phrase “awkward stage” to describe the ecliptic moment in Ralph Denham’s experience, the realization of living a life of illusions and the desire for another illusion to “go on with” (ND 186), may be influenced by her critical commentary, written during the same period, on Henry James’s conception of how to shape his novel The Awkward Age. It is in Night and Day that Woolf is beginning to question the symmetry of James’s novel, its ring or globe of gig-lamps. For example, Katharine is able to achieve a perspective on the events of the novel, recalling three scenes—Mary’s declaration that she is in love, Rodney’s slippage of self-consciousness in confessing his love, and Denham’s poetic speaking to the sky—and thus sees “some symmetrical pattern, some arrangement of life, which invested if not herself, at least the others, not only with interest, but with a kind of tragic beauty. [...] They were the lantern-bearers” (ND 266). However, Katharine resolves to refuse to follow the tradition of categorization and system of moral resolution that she has been brought up in, and here instead decides to “let difficulties accumulate unsolved [...] while she maintained a position of absolute and fearless independence” that would allow her to serve those she loves, following Mary’s example, and pursue the alternatives she has glimpsed in Russian and modern novels (267). However, Mrs Hilbery’s influence and Ralph’s willingness to follow the traditions of marriage and a conventional resolution, destroys Katharine’s ability to maintain such a position. Woolf thus examines the Jamesian symmetry, exposes the desirability of shattering the tight cycle, but also comments on the difficulties (compulsory heterosexuality and the desire in literature to achieve a wholeness of beauty idealized as following conventional grooves that support that status quo) that yet make such a rupture difficult if not impossible.33
Near the end of *Portrait*, Stephen comes to the crucial discovery that language determines advantage, and the discovery of an alternative language to approach external reality is essential. In response to Cranly's prompting to refute the dogmatic certitude of Catholicism and literary convention, "thrilled by his touch," Stephen asserts: "I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning" (247). In *Three Guineas*, as in much of her writing, Woolf employs the silence and space of ellipsis to push toward the unsayable. "But... those three dots mark a precipice, a gulf so deeply cut between us that for three years and more I have been sitting on my side of it wondering whether it is any use to try to speak across it" (TG 4). "What then can be the nature of the fear that still makes concealment necessary between educated people and reduces our boasted freedom to a farce?... Again there are three dots; again they represent a gulf—of silence this time, of silence inspired by fear" (TG 120). Randy Malamud has noted, in contrast to Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound for whom ellipses often stand for the anguished inadequacy of language in the former and a pharisaic editorial flourish in the latter, Woolf's ellipsis "represents not an omission but a very definite presence: as the text trails off, a tepid old language is vanquished and a new one springs to life instantly" (61).

Although I agree that the ellipsis "represents not an omission" in Woolf's work, just as Joyce's play with omissions definitively pushes language toward the new by revealing its duplicity, the vanquishing of the old is hardly an instant or clean process. Rather, the anguish and exhilaration of breaking the tight ring of the sentence and the sentence of the Father (the patriarchal structures of art and life), proves a longer and more fraught process; indeed, Woolf's and Joyce's lengthy works on the threshold of high modernism depict the paradox of the author's wounded attachments to the past. In returning to Stephen's vow in *Portrait*, in both Woolf's and Joyce's oeuvres, there is a movement in the connotation of ellipses from representing an anguish that the reader/Other cannot help but fail to meet the author/self through language toward a more
confident use of ellipses. Woolf and Joyce embrace the manipulation of perception and multiplication of meaning enabled by the spaces of the ellipsis; they continually draw attention to the need for dual vision—particularly the vision of author and reader in gauging the parallax of the text—in their projects to break into the new.

Woolf and Joyce thus have created works which seem to, in Henry James’s phrase, “glory in a gap” (322). As Morris Beja argues, the uncertainty, the fact of doubt itself, “can be the author’s purpose”; the “gap, or absence, or ‘blank’ (in Iser’s term)” ultimately communicates something, and readers’ frustrations lie in their attempts to reduce the somethings (or nothing) to only one thing (Joyce 27). Their modernism thus borrows from, or continues, romanticism’s indeterminacy in the epiphany, a “transitory and inconclusive experience,” even if, as Beja suggests, the borrowing is “limited, even idiosyncratic or parodic” (28). The aesthetic theory behind Wordsworth’s “spots of time”—that the perceived world is half perceived and half created—parallels the simultaneously light and dark spots of Joyce’s and Woolf’s works; it is represented in the indeterminacy of the blot drawn by Ralph and elliptically commented upon by Katharine and the indeterminacy of Stephen and Bloom’s parallax told via catechism in “Ithaca.”

Woolf and Joyce can be seen as members of what Woolf described as a “third group” of readers of Henry James who admire both the early and late James but cannot accommodate themselves to either, experiencing “inexplicable lapses […] when from the extreme of admiration they turn to something like contempt” A sudden chill in an atmosphere of cordiality,” a distrust of James’s love of “old furniture” (E 2:347). James’s work on the threshold of the twentieth century, The Awkward Age, suggests the “important side” of the author which modern writers must pay homage to, according to Woolf, who quotes Henry James regarding a design he drew in order to explain his conception of the novel:
the neat figure of a circle consisting of a number of small rounds disposed at equal distances about a central object. The central object was my situation, my subject in itself, to which the thing would owe its title, and the small rounds represented so many distinct lamps, as I liked to call them, the function of each of which would be to light with all due intensity one of its aspects. (E 2:348)

Both Woolf and Joyce utilize a similar symmetry and craft in creating Night and Day and Ulysses. However, in the late stages of both works, both writers begin to question this method—Joyce refashions his own work until the text itself becomes a palimpsest reflecting the new form of his writing, and Woolf begins experimentation with her short stories and critical essays, ultimately arguing that “Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end” (CE 2:106). Randall Craig has noted that, whereas The Awkward Age contains “self-conscious recitations” of “a small and intimate salon” within “a highly structured and formal society,” Joyce’s “seriocomic recitations” are “a series of spontaneous, haphazard, and often discrete improvisations,” and his text extends the drawing-room into the city of Dublin entire (123). It is in their works after this threshold period that Woolf and Joyce vanquish the desire to capture the seamless whole, shattering the glass of Victorianism—its symmetrical series of lamps, hothouses and drawing-room lookingglasses.

Despite the seeming dismissiveness of Woolf’s diary comments on her reading of Joyce’s manuscript (the first seven episodes of Ulysses (D 1:140)), her reading notes in preparation for “Modern Novels” in April 1918 suggest a more profound engagement with Joyce’s work. In her Ulysses reading notes for her article “Modern Novels.” Woolf writes, “Also seems to be written for a set in a back street. What does this come from? [...] Indifference to public opinion—the desire to shock—need of dwelling so much on indecency. Whole question of indecency a difficult one. It should be colourless: but this we can’t quite manage yet” (643).
Although ambivalent regarding Joyce’s “indecency,” she is impressed by the book’s “attempt to get thinking into literature” (642). Woolf notes the limitations of “every method,” the “things that can’t be said,” which results in the “jumble” and “indecency” of Joyce’s work since he is “attempting to do away with the machinery—to extract the marrow” (642-43). Joyce is of particular interest to her because his work “is psychology,” and the struggle to write in this vein, to “[q]uestion how far we now accept the old tradition without thinking,” corresponds to her own struggles with form, to “burke the question of what reality is” (642-43). Woolf, reflecting on Joyce’s method, confronts her own paradoxical position as an artist—while “half of a writer’s strength often goes in keeping up [the] illusion of reality,” she also questions the construction or valuation of what constitutes reality (643). Woolf thus reads Joyce’s work as deconstructive: “Possibly like a cinema that shows you very slowly, how a hare does jump; all pictures were a little made up before. Here is thought made phonetic—taken to bits” (643). The “old traditions” and the “machinery” are laid bare, and Woolf writes, “For all I know, every great book has been an act of revolution” and it is the suddenness, the conscious attempt in Joyce contrasted against the “gradual development which we see in H[enry] J[ames] or Conrad,” that seems to prompt unease in Woolf (644). In comparison to Joyce’s method, Night and Day would seem to be yet on the threshold of “an act of revolution,” and signals Woolf unable to “move on from our immediate past” which she insists that “we must do,” and is yet lodged with the other writers who have exhausted “the business of representation: colloquial modernity,” Bennett, Galsworthy, and Wells (644).

Having just finished Night and Day, Woolf surveys “Modern Novels” and captures her own threshold position—“looking back with a sort of envy at those happy warriors” (the earlier “pioneers” as Shaw would say) but also looking forward for a sign of the new, having realized that the “ill-fitting vestments” of realism and romanticism are no longer serviceable illusions (E 3:31, 33). She acknowledges that she has been complicit, since “we go on” despite the realization
of inadequacy, “constructing our thirty-two chapters after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds,” with the result that the demands of custom, the “proper stuff of fiction,” have “obscur[ed] and blott[ed] the light of the conception” (E 3:33). In searching for a form and content that balances dreams and realities, dissolves genre boundaries, and which retains “the light of conception” (a portrait of the author as palimpsest), Woolf turns to her contemporary, Joyce.

Woolf’s reaction to Joyce’s work is a reflection of her own ambivalence, her wounded attachments, as she betrays an envy in her critique of his bold shocks that suggests her own unease with the thirty-four chapters of Night and Day. At the same time she sees in his work a flash on the horizon, a “spiritual” author “concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of the innermost flame which flashes its myriad messages through the brain,” and “giving closer shape to what we were prepared to call life itself” by courageously disregarding “the handrails which we cling for support when we set our imaginations free” (E 3:34). If Joyce’s calculated intent “to break the windows” in desperate pursuit of “fresh air” is alarming, it is nonetheless desirable (E 3:434). The hothouse of Victorian fiction that Katharine is portrayed as entrapped in requires a shattering of glass and an opening of doors that has been clamored for in Ibsen’s New Woman drama. 38 As Shaw noted of Ibsen’s work, the literary “pioneer” must trample on ideals, “plough through gardens of pretty weeds,” and let in “light and air to hasten the putrefaction of decaying matter,” thus “proclaiming that ‘the old beauty is no longer beautiful, the new truth no longer true’” (48). 39

Woolf looks upon the modernism of Joyce and the psychological fiction of the Russians and concludes that in her conception of the modern novel, “there is no bound to the horizon, and nothing forbidden but falsity and pretence,” the proper stuff of fiction is boundless, and all is open to be “drawn upon and used and turned by the magic of art to something little or large, but endlessly different, everlastingly new” (E 3:36). She further stresses her argument, which is akin
to Shaw’s in his statement that “[t]he plain working truth is that it is not only good for people to be shocked occasionally, but absolutely necessary to the progress of society that they be shocked pretty often” (191), by closing “Modern Novels” with a particularly Joycean “indecent” likening of fiction to a female beast that must be ridden and broken.

Woolf hazards a theory of Joyce’s intention in the statement, “Let us not take it for granted that life exists more in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small” (E 3:33). Woolf did not view the modernist project, her intentions similar to Joyce’s, as the definitive answer to the discontents of literature. Woolf and Joyce followed Shaw in the latter’s understanding that “[t]here is nothing new, then, in the defiance of duty by the reformer,” and that the defiance of reformers is duly denounced by the status quo: “Mary Wollstonecraft as an unwomanly virago, Shelley as a libertine, and Ibsen [as obscene]” (Shaw 9). Woolf similarly noted what Shaw describes as a “crablike progress” in literature as in life (9); she understood their shocks and attempts as a moment in a stream of moments: if the “whole course of the track” of literature could be viewed “from a sufficiently lofty pinnacle,” then its “circular tendency” would be plain—the important thing is to avoid paralysis, to “keep moving, now a little in this direction, now in that” (E 3:31).

The conception of the relationship of art and life that Woolf has arrived at in order to depart from the perpetual gyre of conventions that oppress women and men in patriarchy is a feminist “both/and.” In order to relinquish the satisfactory fictions that have structured and delimited both fictional narratives and lived realities, Woolf emphasizes a dual vision. This conception of literature has been theorized by Sebastian Knowles in Joyce’s work as a double helix. Rather than spinning hysterically in the old orbits—James’s model of a ring of lamps—modernist fiction seeks a critical perspective that exposes the attachments between life and literature (the connections of dreams and realities which form the ties between two strands in a helix) that stretches backwards and forwards in time rather than in an enclosed ring. By
examining the sympathy of dreams and realities, the relationship between life and literature, Woolf and Joyce seek to sever the wounded attachments of the past, thus allowing them to unfold James’s enclosed ring, to warp its shape into a double helix, and a new form of the novel that spirals toward the new while conscious of the chain spiraling backward into the past.

Both writers ultimately push toward an ideal of aesthetic androgyny as detailed by Woolf in *A Room Of One’s Own*. Androgyny in this sense suggests not merely the coexistence of male and female, but a dual vision of the poetic and prosaic. A move toward this ideal is portrayed by Woolf in the symbol of a fiery blot (an eighteenth century definition of an androgynous planet is one that is hot and cold) drawn by Ralph and the orchids (androgynous flower) which Katharine strokes during her visit with Ralph to the hothouse of Kew Gardens—both are epiphanic moments in which the New Man figure and New Woman figure are attempting to achieve a kind of connection. Nonetheless, Ralph’s investment in patriarchal and romantic perspectives prevents a realization of this dual vision (Ralph is more interested in the poem he has written than the doodle of the blot, and he is more interested in discussing romance than the botany of orchids at Kew) and even prevents Katharine’s attempt at such a vision with Mary. Similarly, Stephen’s investment in his romantic aesthetic notions of the artist which create a false dichotomy between art and life prevent a dual vision that new womanly man Bloom offers in their elliptical conversation in “Ithaca.” Thus, both Woolf and Joyce reveal the poetic desirability of such a vision while acknowledging the prosaic realities that prevent the achievement of “two thinks at a time” (FW 583.7).
In Other Wo[1]lds...

I have shown how Woolf links elegy with a solar eclipse in “Sympathy” as the narrator describes the change of her perspective seen from a window in London after having read in The Times of the death of a friend’s husband. Woolf’s Night and Day unfolds as an eclipse, depicting the opening and closing of the horizon of possibility from three points of view—Mary’s, Katharine’s, and Ralph’s. Mrs Dalloway also utilizes the elegy of eclipse, emphasizing a retrospective arrangement as Clarissa is haunted by a possible connection lost on the threshold. Analyzing Woolf’s “The Sun and the Fish,” Goldman concludes: “The landscape, the order of things, the naturalized status quo, have all been shown to be (not ‘natural’, but) constructed. This order has been eclipsed, and a new world created. But, as Woolf’s warning testifies, this is no time to take the world for granted” (88). The threshold moment, in which two women (Celia and the narrator, Katharine and Mary, Clarissa and Sally) reach toward connection, is made possible by the absence of a masculine sun that has obscured the alternative light of the stars which offer glimpses of “other worlds” (ND 254). However, Woolf’s elegy is for the return and intrusion of the sun/son and a wounded attachment to conventional narratives that results in a failure to cross the threshold, to push the moment past its crisis. I will show how Joyce also engages in an elegy of eclipse in order to depict the nightmare of history and the paralytic effect of a need for grounding fictions compounded by the inability to envision alternatives in the brightness of the old illusions.

The deconstructive play of Woolf and Joyce reveals that the allegories of “night and day,” the story of the Sphinx, and the paradigms of classic myths prove on the one hand sources with great explanatory potential, but also prove delimiting and insufficient to capture a feminist
vision of the future. The women of Woolf’s texts are battling with what Teresa de Lauretis has termed the narrative of the girl’s “consenting to femininity,” a passive subordination to male superiority in the female Oedipal narrative of maturation (134). Joyce’s Ulysses plays upon the Homeric myth of the Odyssey, the hero’s journey into darkness and back to the light of the waiting woman and son who reflect his paternal authority, signaling the confirmation of his masculinity. Night and Day may be read to resonate with the Homeric “Hymn to Demeter,” a mother-daughter narrative of attachment and separation, a presupposition of a blissful timeless past rooted in the feminine that is ruptured by male intervention (which enables narrative progress), a descent into the underworld, a parallel of death and marriage, and the idealization of femininity with fertility, and a resolution of plot in cycle. The consent to femininity is celebrated in the submission to masculinity for reproduction. Although Marianne Hirsch sees in the myth the positive alternative plot of Demeter standing in a dual position of “bi-sexual oscillation” between mother and husband (36), such a reading ignores Demeter’s subjugation to the plot—the cycle she travels is not of her choosing. Whereas Night and Day emphasizes the lack of alternative narratives to the relentless return of a consent to femininity through a parallactic juxtaposition of three characters (Ralph, Mary, and Katharine); Ulysses stresses the lack of alternative narratives to the relentless return of the boy’s consent to masculinity through a parallactic juxtaposition of two men (Stephen, Bloom, and Molly).42

Marianne Hirsch describes the “feminist family romances” that attempt revisions of the Freudian family romance that is reflected in the narratives of nineteenth and twentieth century plots which perpetuate mythological and psychoanalytic narratives (10). These revisions, Hirsch explains, “do not entirely reframe the basic conception of family as static structure, of the relationship of familial patterns and narrative patterns, of triangles as fundamental figures of familial interaction” (10). I agree with Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s insightful assertion that Night and Day is not merely an aesthetic exercise but a satiric attack on the “thralldom” of the
heterosexual romance narrative for the woman writer inheriting an Austenian tradition; as DuPlessis argues, Woolf’s novel attempts to “break the sentence” of this thralldom via a satiric critique of such narratives so that the dominance of the romance plot may be displaced in later novels (125). Although Woolf’s is a “feminist family romance” as Hirsch suggests, it does not ultimately fail to “reframe” that romance since the inability to yet smash the frame is the pointed subtext of the novel—the novel itself may be read as a portrait of the artist drawing out her wounded attachments to the past in order to break from the thralldom it demands. The novel itself depicts the anxiety of breaking the sentence and entering the empty space after the ellipsis.

Woolf and Joyce, although they satirized romance fictions (for example, Jane Austen’s Emma and Maria Susanna Cummins’s The Lamplighter), understood that the role of romance was as crucial in conceiving the possibilities of human experience and relations as the role of language itself. As Donald Bloom proposes in his discussion of romance and satire, the term “romance” might mean “a story that depicts the search for and discovery of the inner or true or total Self, what Jung calls the process of Individuation” or might simply mean “a story that deals with falling in love” (54). The two phenomena can overlap since “what we call ‘falling in love’ occurs when we find someone who exactly matches the matrix we have built up in our unconscious” (Bloom 54). Thus, romance is not merely a literary device but an aspect of “self-exploration and self-realization that all undergo,” and “finding the archetypal matrix of the Other in our deep unconscious” entails that “we project the archetype onto some real human being who closely matches it” (Bloom 54). It is this deeper psychological structure, the factors shaping the matrix, that Woolf and Joyce seek to expose by first deconstructing conventional romance fictions through irony.

In the typical woman’s Bildungsroman, characterization, plot, narrator intervention, and setting drive the reader toward direct and immediate sympathy with the heroine, who is on her way to becoming a perfect specimen of womanhood and femininity. As Nina Baym notes, “these
novels do not merely reflect a current ideology of womanhood; they participate rigorously in constructing and analyzing such an ideology” (x). Like current feminist scholars such as Baym, Woolf and Joyce (in their satires) participate rigorously in deconstructing the relationship between ideology, womanhood, and text. If Cummins’s The Lamplighter “uses Gertrude to critique the emergent American moneyed aristocracy from the standpoint of liberal Protestant domesticity” (Baym xxiv), then Joyce ventriloquizes the text to critique the deprivations that an intersection of domesticity and religiosity create for women such as Gerty MacDowell, thus showing in tragic comedy how Gerty manipulates internalized discourses to make do within the phallic economy and the discourses perpetuating that economy. Garry Leonard argues that Joyce “modernizes the romance heroine by showing her as a self-conscious image manipulator who views herself as a commodity that must be carefully packaged and advertised, in accordance with a media representation of what is feminine,” particularly to attract attention away from the mobile New Woman types on the beach, “in order to attract a male consumer” (99). The success with which she is able to see herself as both a Madonna figure (womanly woman) and a daring New Woman attracting the (manly) mystery man’s gaze creates the painfully humorous satire of the episode.

Although both Woolf and Joyce recognized the necessity of breaking the sentence, they both evidence a hesitancy in the possibly overwhelming power of their own deconstruction and the dearth of material to engender a new vision between the dots (between words erased in the ellipsis, between worlds made visible in the eclipse of the sun). Thus, the tool of satire becomes ambiguous—is romance broken apart and its fragments employed to construct new possibilities, or is it reified precisely in the act of being satirized? Without the portrayal of viable alternatives to the conventional heterosexual romance plots satirized, the latter seems inevitable, and this is the warning underlying both texts. Woolf’s critique of Joyce’s work as a frustrated shattering of windows thus seems to indicate a view that deconstruction must work in tandem with
construction. DuPlessis writes that after “Modern Fiction,” Woolf approaches the conventions of the well-made novel “as if the expected narrative demands were like a romantic involvement or a spell from which one had to be released, a compelling picture of the woman writer half in love with conventions that she resisted” (125). Indeed, Woolf’s fiction, particularly Night and Day, and Joyce’s as well in his use of retrospective arrangement, express this ambivalent thralldom via their shadowed satire—shadowed in the sense of bearing a dark and deconstructing humor, but also shadowed in the sense that it veils a desire for the thing satirized. By criticizing the tyranny of the love-interest plot as well as their own attachments to the old stories, Woolf and Joyce critiqued the discourses (social and literary) that produced and reproduced patriarchal, racist, classist, and heterosexual hierarchies in order to create a space for construction.43

Woolf’s political-via-aesthetics attack parallels Laura Mulvey’s attack on the tyranny of “visual pleasure” in her work Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, which calls for a new kind of cinematic pleasure and narrative center, attempts to break the thrall of women’s objectification by renouncing the old forms and fictions. The paradox of this attempt is captured in Mrs Hilbery’s comment to her daughter upon viewing Katharine’s alternative writing (her desire for mathematics versus writing the biography of the great poet, her grandfather): “‘A plus B minus C equals x y z. It’s so dreadfully ugly, Katharine. That’s what I feel—so dreadfully ugly’,”44 and she offers her what her own experience of romance was like, “‘We were in a little boat going out to a ship at night,’ she began. ‘The sun had set and the moon was rising over our heads. […] Your father’s head looked so grand against the mast. It was life, it was death. The great sea was around us. It was the voyage for ever and ever’” (ND 411). Katharine listens to this harmonious Siren’s song, the “ancient fairy-tale,” and would be content for her mother to continue professing “that love is our faith,” soothing words, “a riveting together of the shattered fragments of the world” (411-12). However, Katharine cannot reconcile her desire for a different narrative, her pursuit of mathematics. While Katharine is unwilling to put aside “those ugly thoughts,” she
realizes that if she is going to resist the soothing narrative her mother offers she needs, if “not exactly […] sympathy” then “the opportunity of setting forth her problems before a third person” (412). It is after the writing of *Night and Day*, which puts the problem before a wide audience, that Woolf is able to strike out upon new equations in *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*, texts renewed by the shattering glass of *Ulysses*. Joyce, in his later *Finnegans Wake*, pushes to the extreme of Laura Mulvey’s call to renounce conventional narrative, and serves an example of the paradox of such a project.
“put a matchhead on an aspen stalk and set the living a fire” (FW 131.11)

Adrienne Rich opens her essay on writing as a feminist deconstructive project with a description of Henrik Ibsen’s play _When We Dead Awaken_, a drama which describes a woman’s “slow struggling awakening” to her passive role as muse and matter for the male artist and thinker (34). Rich quotes George Bernard Shaw’s gloss of the play that claims that men and women’s growing consciousness of the “degradation” of human relations has placed society on the threshold of the “most interesting of all imminent social developments,” the question of “what will happen ‘when we dead awaken’” (34). Joyce, his early writing career influenced by Ibsen’s naturalism and treatment of social conflicts and, like Shaw, particularly interested in the conflicts created by the figure of the New Woman, alludes to this play in “Eumaeus” of _Ulysses_, an episode in which the new womanly man guides a sleepwalker (16:52-54). Woolf’s New Woman protagonists’ frustrations likewise center on the New Man’s delayed awakening and the mother’s lullaby that he should sleep; Ibsen’s presence is evoked by the text, but is ultimately tucked away by the older generation (ND 78, 89). In looking back to Ibsen’s 1899 drama from perspectives made stark by the feminist and socialist disappointments of the war, Woolf and Joyce ultimately expose the folly of allowing such sleepwalking to continue. They search for a new, more effective prod with their texts to wake the dead.

Jane Marcus has noted that Woolf’s novel is stylistically indebted to Jane Austen’s _Pride and Prejudice_ and thematically indebted to Ibsen’s _The Master Builder_ (99). “The younger generation knocking at the door” is the theme of the latter, a phrase reiterated in Woolf’s novel. Marcus sees Ralph Denham as the “liberating spirit” who enters the “Hilberys’ drawing room like a breath of fresh air” and impresses with the “alps of his mind” (115). Nonetheless, I would
suggest that if Woolf fashions Ralph an Ibsenian New Man, it is with frank irony, since Ralph ultimately concedes to Mrs Hilbery’s dictum that love without marriage is unaesthetic. It is Mary Datchet, her walking stick as alpenstock, that is the more subversive harbinger of fresh air and the New, similar to Maja in When We Dead Awaken. Marcus also notes the connection between the slippers of the great Victorian poet in the novel with the slippers that Hedda rejects, in rejecting a role of domestic slavery to her husband, in Ibsen’s Hedda Gabler. However, I disagree with Marcus’s emphasis that it is “Ralph’s help” that allows Katharine to refuse the slippers (115). Marcus reads the novel as evidence of Woolf’s early optimism: “Unlike Ibsen or Mozart, Woolf does not demand that the old cities and temples be razed so the ‘younger generation’ can inhabit them. Let the temples to dead men be opened to living women she cries. And not only to heroic women alone, but to women with men” (118). According to Marcus, “Night and Day is as bent on blessing as The Master Builder on hurling a curse at the old order” (118). However, the bleakness of the prospect that Woolf lingers on, the missed connections at the end of the text, suggest an indictment of the failure of the younger generation to push the moment past its crisis as they step back into the temples to dead men. Rather than a young optimism, the close of Night and Day is a tragi-comic warning, which indicates Woolf’s apprehension that she too is pressured to succumb to the lure of old forms.

In a 1916 review, Woolf writes that the modern problem authors face is a “question of realism or romance”: “we want to preserve the beauty and romance of the heroic together with what is called character-drawing and likeness to life,” the “softer light” of “the peerage” in conflict with the realism which Ibsen inaugurated (E 2:53). According to Woolf, Ibsen’s “success is based upon the fact that he has not flinched from the prosaic look of things as they are and yet has made them yield as true a poetry as any to be found in the plays of Swinburne” (E 2:69). In writing Night and Day, Woolf seems most concerned with unfolding her own irresolute perspective of the younger generation “knocking at the door” (Ibsen Master 244), which she also
expresses in her review of Stephen Paget’s essays of the same period, “Old and Young.” To
Woolf, the “old” are deeply attractive: “For the old, after all, are the deep mirrors of life, in
whose depths we may see all the processions of the past, closely surrounded by the unknown, as
the day by the darkness of night” (62). Alpenstock in hand like Hilda Wangel in The Master
Builder, with her novel Woolf attempts a perspective which balances romance and realism, old
and new, day and night, in order ultimately to entreat both generations to consider how
“wonderfully thrilling” it would be to imagine if the master builder “should fall” so that youth can
claim their “kingdom” and the master atone for the guilt that gnaws him “day and night” for
having built his kingdom upon the backs of youth and women (Ibsen Master 248, 267). In her
review of Paget, she faults the “content of the old,” which is due in part “because they do not look
ahead, but into the past and into the present” (E 2:63). The vision that the text of Night and Day
is on the threshold of creating is a vision that balances the compelling backward gaze with a
vision of the horizon, which affords a measure of how both shape the present moment. Such a
vision might enable the younger generation to break the thralldom, the “mystery” that “compels
our reverence” to the older generation (E 2:64). Woolf’s novel is in fact a satire of the kind of
novel Mansfield supposes it to be and which is suggested by Marcus’s reevaluation of the novel’s
optimism; it satirizes itself in effect in order to prize itself from the hold of tradition.

By his twenty-first year Joyce had read nearly all of Ibsen’s plays as well as Shaw’s The
Quintessence of Ibsenism, having taught himself Norwegian and corresponded with the
playwright himself. B. J. Tysdahl has argued that Ibsen’s early influence was as “a confirmer; in
him Joyce found a justification of his attempts to write in his own way without concern for
conventions, literary or otherwise” (36). Ibsen revealed to Joyce a mode of expression for a
social dynamic the young artist also faced; Ibsen’s plays regularly extol the figure that lets fresh
air into an atmosphere stifled by patriarchal structures and “tea drinking match-makers” (Tysdahl
40). Joyce responded to Arthur Power’s critique of Ibsen’s “deadly seriousness” and “dreary
ideas” by asserting that Power has misunderstood Ibsen: “The purpose of The Doll’s House [...] was the emancipation of women, which has caused the greatest revolution of our time in the most important relationship there is—that between men and women; the revolt of women against the idea that they are mere instruments for men” (35). Power responds that “intellectualism has been allowed to supersede a biological fact” with the result that neither of the sexes is happy (35). Joyce concedes that the relationship between the sexes is different, but not necessarily “happier or unhappier”; he only knows that “Ibsen has been the greatest influence on the present generation; in fact you can say that he formed it to a great extent. His ideas have become part of our lives even though we may not be aware of it” (35). Describing his movement from the romanticism of Portrait to Ulysses, Joyce explains to Power that, besides the “emotional aspect,” he is interested in the “intellectual outlook which dissects life, [...] to get down to the residuum of truth about life, instead of puffing it up with romanticism, which is a fundamentally false attitude. In Ulysses I have tried to forge literature out of my own experience, and not out of a conceived idea, or a temporary emotion” (36). It is in the “book of [his] maturity” that Joyce has “tried to see life clearly [...] and as a whole” (Power 36-37), achieving the balance of romanticism and realism that Woolf also saw in Ibsen and sought in her own work.

In her reading of Joyce’s early work, Christine Froula contrasts Joyce’s sexual politics with Ibsen’s in order to argue that Joyce “adapted Ibsen’s modernist realism to his different yet still critical project of analyzing the masculinity that his culture’s essentializing law of gender imposes” (38). Joyce, as a male artist, may have inherited the phallic economy, but subversively demystifies its structure and thus, like Ibsen, further enables the revolt of women. Ulysses revises the conventional love story by exposing the masculine social structures invested in perpetuating it and its patriarchal marriage system, as had Ibsen’s drama. A formative critique of the male artist’s use of the New Woman is also present in Ibsen’s work, a critique which Joyce extends in Stephen’s projections of Emma’s life as “simple and wilful as a bird’s,” a “batlike soul waking to
consciousness of itself in darkness” (P 216, 221), and which also appears in Woolf’s portrayal of Ralph’s projections of Katharine as lighthouse and battered bird. Ibsen’s The Master Builder also attaches bird imagery to the New Woman and New Man; Hilda vexes Solness with the taunt that “a forest bird will never choose a cage” (284); Mrs. Solness wansi admits that she does not “fly” anywhere anymore” (279); Solness has projected Hilda as “some wild bird of the forest” but Hilda argues that she would be rather “a bird of prey,” which Solness objects to uneasily and describes her instead as “the dawning day” (273). Woolf and Joyce thus return to Ibsen’s critique of the romanticism in the New Man artist’s projection of the New Woman—in his projection, the New Woman becomes less the emancipator of the sexes than the tool or actress that will emancipate the male artist from Day conventions.

Joyce’s early attitudes and reflections on the New Woman are self-ironized in his portrayal of Stephen Ulysses. The critique of the masculine presumption that Joyce creates in Ulysses indicted his own early attitudes. In “Ibsen’s New Drama,” Joyce dwells on Irene rather than the artist Rubek from Ibsen’s When We Dead Awaken. Joyce notes Irene’s speech about her living death as a result of Rubek’s objectification of her as evidence of Ibsen’s “extraordinary knowledge of women. No other man could have so subtly expressed the nature of the relations between the sculptor and his model, had he even dreamt of them” (CW 54). Colleen R. Lamos has argued that Joyce’s admiration of Ibsen’s ability to know women better than they know themselves is paradigmatic of Ulysses, in which “becoming female,” as in Bloom’s transformations and projections or the male pen writing “Penelope,” “is thus not a matter of denying or dismantling or even inverting sexual difference, but of the male introjection of a projected femininity, which seems to stand ambiguously on the edge of paternal authority” (95). Unlike Ibsen, however, Joyce’s “becoming female” is “a strategic move by the son attacking the father,” the resulting “androgyny” “a kind of male drag show” (Lamos 95). In this early essay, Joyce reads Rubek’s deficiency not in his sacrifice of Irene so much as in his failure to justify
such an objectification with artistic genius; to Joyce, Rubek's awakening is waiting on the threshold, requiring a quickening of artistic genius to understand the value of his life and art (CW 57). It is the figure of the awakened New Woman that promises to provide this quickening, to spur the birth of the New Man as artist. The New Woman's emancipatory potential, for feminism and socialism, is thus contained in a masculine, individualistic modernist conception of art.

Joyce's 1901 praiseful letter to Ibsen concludes with a prophecy of his own succession: "Your work on earth draws to a close and you are near the silence. It is growing dark for you. [...] You have only opened the way—though you have gone as far as you could upon it. [...] But I am sure that higher and holier enlightenment lies—onward" (Ellmann 86-87).

Margot Norris argues that the women in "The Dead" show that Joyce "learned from Ibsen not only feminism but also its self-reflexive application, that the male artist's representation of the female is an act of appropriation and reification" ("Stifled" 483). Budgen reports Joyce as describing the superiority of the tragic conflict in Ibsen as compared to the pathos of Shakespeare: "When Rubek and Irene meet in When We Dead Awaken, the one spiritually dead, the other, into whom his genius had passed, fiercely alive yet without power to give form to the life within her, their most trivial word is more dramatic than all the magical verses of Othello" (emphasis added, 179). Joyce thus seems to have been most struck by Ibsen's ability to represent the paradox of the emptiness of the New Man artist and the consequent barriers of the New Woman.

As Morris Beja has shown in his reading of Stephen as an unfulfilled artist, Joyce reveals the influence nineteenth-century romantic perspectives had on his early artistic views in his 1901 essay "The Day of Rabblemment," in which Joyce focuses on the frustration of Ibsen's sculptor, Arnold Rubek. Joyce ultimately suggests in this early essay that "Rubek's perception of a dichotomy between art and life is false, and that actually it is Rubek's devotion to his art, and his mastery of it, that may reveal 'a capacity for greater life, which may be exercised when he, a dead
man, shall have risen from among the dead’” (Beja Joyce 17). In Ulysses, Bloom appears to represent the most likely bridge of this false dichotomy: Bloom is Stephen’s New Woman figure, unconsciously pushing Stephen to realize that a disjunction of art and life is false. Characteristic of the disappointing New Man, Stephen is as yet “an unfulfilled artist, frustrated by his failure to create any art of genuine significance” (Beja Joyce 12) because of his attachments to a romantic portrait of the artist, the artist genius which Ibsen also indicted. Joyce’s perspective on When We Dead Awaken changes from his early writing to Ulysses. In crafting Bloom as his epic hero, Joyce has matured from his early focus on Stephen; Tysdahl describes the early “Stephen-versus-the-world-conflict” as Joyce’s version of “the Rubek-dead-and-Rubek-come-to-life dichotomy” (58). The shifting point of view which prevents any one character from seeming Joyce’s moral mouthpiece and the sympathetic irony behind the portrayal of Bloom and Stephen suggests a reading of the text that emphasizes a more holistic picture of human life.

“Catalina” is a review of Ibsen’s play “written in 1848, when Ibsen was twenty, a poor student working all day in a druggist’s shop,” written by Joyce in 1903 (17). Joyce’s interest is to show that Ibsen’s “earlier manner” of “the romantic” “suggests the later manner,” particularly in “the system of three” (17). Joyce notes that Ibsen is known for writing plays “about three people—usually one man and two women” and even critics “find that all his women are the same woman renamed successively Nora, Rebecca, Hilda, Irene” (17). Despite this critical tenor, Joyce likens the system of three to “a clear work of art that reflects every obscurity like a mirror,” a metaphor echoed in Woolf’s Between the Acts (17). The shortcomings of Ibsen’s early work, romantic, in contrast to his later work, classical, is the fact that the style of romanticism forces the poet to employ “the monstrous or heroic,” which reduces the women to “absolute types” and which savors “of dogma” (18). The poet must “express his fable in terms of his characters” since the modern era has as its task “the breaking-up of tradition,” and the modern spirit “discountenances the absolute” (18). The choice of “discountenances” alongside a description of
violently shattering tradition remarkably parallels Woolf’s meditations on Joyce’s method, her desire for pyrotechnics blasting tradition alongside the discountenance she experiences at Joyce’s “calculated indecency” (E 3:434). Also significant is Joyce’s young commentary on Ibsen’s development toward the “classical” temper since his work would follow a similar trajectory; the Shelleyan romantic enthusiasm for Stephen as the struggling artist is portrayed with less irony before Ulysses, a text which proves ultimately a more balanced exploration of the “real” of life and a move away from “the damned egotistical self” (Woolf “Modern Novels (Joyce)” 642).

Night and Day and Ulysses repeat with a difference the narrative convention of a possible and tragically failed triangle of lovers, following Shelley and Ibsen. These texts also put into relief an angle of the Oedipal triangle that particularly makes plain the reproduction of the ideological structure of patriarchy, that is, the relationship of the mother to the son. “Circe,” a microcosm of Ulysses as a whole, deconstructs the psychological, social, and sexual scripts of 1904 Dublin, satirizing through carnival the phallic economy and its dictated power relations and plots in the fantasy nightmarescape of Bloom’s unconscious. However, despite Stephen’s declaration of independence in the center of the chapter, and despite the fact that Bloom transgresses his place in the traditional Oedipal triangle and places the construction of masculinity into question, the close of the chapter, Stephen’s departure, and Bloom’s final reflections in “Ithaca” before the novel’s “clou” document the reassertion of the Oedipal quest plot and its reproductive triangulation. Traditionally, critics have read the close of “Circe” as Bloom symbolically assuming the Homeric role of adoptive paternity; critics such as Suzette Henke and Patrick McGee suggest that Stephen and Bloom “come together not in Homeric filiation, but through a shared masculine bond that hinges on their mutual dread of maternal abjection” (Henke 120). I will emphasize the ambiguity of the relationship between Bloom and
Stephen in order to explore how the inability of Bloom and Stephen to connect outside of conventional scripts (paternity, rival lovers) is related to the reassertion or domination of the Oedipal triangle.
“Darkness drops again”: Joyce’s Eclipse

In “Proteus,” the one glimpse readers have of would-be New Artist Stephen Dedalus engaged in his craft suggests that he is aware of his position as a New Man in the social hierarchy—the ambivalence of speaking for the Other (woman) and its desirability but also his own otherness in relation to the manly men that trumpet nationalism and patriarchy in the text.\textsuperscript{45} The following excerpt illustrates the ecliptic movement that I have been illustrating in Woolf. Here, after nearly recalling a dream in which a figure like Bloom has appeared to him, Stephen sees a borderline figure from his perch on the Strand; she is a New Woman type “trekking to evening lands,” and the flow of his thoughts aesthetically benefits from her coming:

Across the sands of all the world, followed by the sun’s flaming sword, to the west, trekking to evening lands. She trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines her load. A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mine, \textit{oinopa ponton}, a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls her hour, bids her rise. Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. (3:390-96)

In her rising, however, whether she is rising up against the cyclical narrative of the rocking cradle that entraps women or rising up to meet that narrative, the male artist benefits from and eclipses her rising: “He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth’s kiss” (3:397-98).

Stephen is inspired to write his creation, and amends his poem to include “two of em. Glue em well” (3:400).\textsuperscript{46} Seeking to bring words to the “unspeeched: ooeehah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring,” Stephen turns “his back to the sun” and writes (3:403, 406). Thus ‘ending,” he reflects,
Why not endless till the farthest star? Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta of Cassiopeia, worlds. Me sits there with his augur’s rod of ash, in borrowed sandals, by day beside a livid sea, unbeheld, in violet night walking beneath a reign of uncouth stars. I throw this ended shadow from me, manshape ineluctable, call it back. Endless, would it be mine, form of my form? (3:408-14)

Stephen first seeks to invigorate his artistry by speaking for the speechless, Woman—perhaps the New Woman, taking the dark form of the Other, which he is enabled to do by the authority of his “augur’s rod.” He then becomes enamored by his reflection of himself as a solitary mystery man on the Strand, the pale ineffectual artist scaling the cosmos—the New Man artists of Shelley and Ibsen, Ralph Denham overlooking the river, Peter Walsh the moon. Similar to Ralph, nonetheless, Stephen reveals a crack in his artifice; that is, he recognizes the romantic illusions undergirding his literary aspirations and the vampirism it prompts. With self-irony, and recognizing the need for a reflecting mirror in the scene he is composing (whether in the poem, or in his portrait of himself in the act of creation), Stephen wonders over his muse, “Now where the blue hell am I bringing her beyond the veil? Into the ineluctable modality of the ineluctable visuality. She, she, she. What she?” (3:424-26). In answer to this question, the artist’s quest to craft an appropriate other for his augur’s rod, rather than conjuring the popular press image of a New Woman, Gerty MacDowell, he thinks of the feminist authored New Woman fiction type with distaste, “a lady of letters […] Bet she wears those curse of God stays suspenders and yellow stockings, darned with lumpy wool” (3:430-32).

The flow of Bloom’s thought in “Lestrygonians” follows a markedly similar trajectory, from his ruminations on the romantic correspondence a single working woman might inspire to an observation of the loose stockings of Lizzie Twig, to sunspots, the eclipse due later in the year, and the meaning of parallax. Bloom watches as George Russell passes with a young woman “taking it all in. Not saying a word. To aid gentleman in literary work” (8:531-32), thus noting
her sphinx like silence and also recalling his earlier advertisement intended to spark a postal affair, one which he does take up with Martha Clifford. Bloom marks with distaste her loose stockings, a mark of the "literary etherial people [...] Dreamy, cloudy, symbolistic," a description which also aptly fits Stephen's attempt at his poem on the Strand (8:543). His stream of consciousness moves on to a watered-down version of Stephen's "Proteus" reflections on the "[i]ncrementable modality of the visible" (3:1), as Bloom experiments with perspective—"If you imagine it's there you can almost see it"—then blots out the sun with the tip of his little finger and recalls that "There will be a total eclipse this year: autumn some time" (8:562-63, 569-70). According to the OED, the meaning of parallax at the turn of the century in astronomy was an "Apparent displacement, or difference in the apparent position, of an object, caused by actual change (or difference) of position of the point of observation," and specifically, "the angular amount of such displacement or difference of position, being the angle contained between the two straight lines drawn to the object from the two different points of view, and constituting a measure of the distance of the object."

Bloom desires to know the meaning of parallax, but resigns this desire as hopeless. Nonetheless, Bloom is himself an agent of parallax as we see a parallactic line evolve between Bloom and Stephen. The strands of their two lives wind through Dublin, spiraling around one another, and Joyce leads the reader to note the connections between these parallel strands.

Bloom's wanderings and Stephen's imperfectly mirror each other and seem to hold a promise that they will meet where "the rays cross" (8:567), that is, in the eclipse. Their meeting obviously differs from the narrative of star-crossed lovers or conventional romance quests, but Joyce is certainly subversively playing upon that theme by using its imagery and evoking its structure between two men as Woolf does between two women. The come-hither of the narrative is classically romantic as the reader watches two characters struggle through obstacles in orbits moving slowly toward each other, but radically different in shifting the reader's desire for
connection from a desire for the resolution in marriage or reunion of the heterosexual couple to the desire for connection between individuals of the same sex with different visions usually kept apart by convention. In his depiction of Bloom’s and Stephen’s journeys toward “Ithaca,” Joyce exposes how writing a connection between men outside of patriarchal roles (son, father, sexual competitor) is nearly impossible and how the inability to forge such connections enables the perpetuation of the follies of patriarchy—nationalism, the objectification of women, and the paralysis of the artist. Bloom’s accumulated wisdom tempers Stephen’s narcissistic “literary ethereal” musings regarding the possibility of ever creating the new in art without creating the new in life: “what’s parallax? […] Never know anything about it. Waste of time. Gasballs spinning about, crossing each other, passing. Same old dingdong always. Gas: then solid: then world: then cold: then dead shell drifting around” (8:578-83).

Returning to Stephen’s ruminations made on the liminal space of the beach, it is unclear whether the lines that follow his observations of the woman are a continuation of Stephen’s speaking for the speechless, his attempt to portray words/worlds beyond the farthest star, or his own desires: “Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now. What is that word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me” (3:434-36). Is this Stephen’s desire, to be touched by a feminine muse, since the quote’s question is the one Stephen has asked his mother? Or is it his projection of a fictional female’s desire, since it describes a desiring muse that inspires the pen of the author, and more specifically, echoes the desires of Gerty’s consciousness (the blue veil of the madonna) and Bloom’s Martha who has written “I do not like that other world. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word?” (5:245-46). Stephen then leans back over the rocks, as Gerty will in “Nausicaa,” and finds himself “caught in this burning scene. Pan’s hour, the faunal noon. Among gumheavy serpentplants, milkoozing fruits, where on the tawny waters leaves lie wide. Pain is far. And no more turn aside and brood” (3:442-45). Bloom, in “Lestrygonians,” also seeks refuge in a
feminine Edenic projection as he thinks of “silkwebs, silver, rich fruits spicy from Jaffa [...] warm human plumpness [...] Perfume of embraces all him assailed. With hungered flesh obscurely, he mutely craved to adore” (8:635-39). As in the ecliptic movement of Woolf’s Night and Day, Stephen has glimpsed the possibilities of that “other world” that the New Woman seems to trail against the sword of the sun. However, a wounded attachment to his augur’s rod and privileged place as a New Man leads him back to the conventional romance—he is lulled by the romance of an Elizabethan restoration of order after a riot of misrule. Bloom similarly returns to an Edenic moment on Ben Howth with Molly during “Lestrygonians.”

In the opening of the text, Buck Mulligan accuses Stephen of Wildean romanticism, “The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror,” to which Stephen replies with his allegory of the “cracked lookingglass of a servant” as a symbol of Irish art (1.141-46). The resentment Stephen feels toward Mulligan is compounded by his frustration as a would-be artist in the service of reflecting Mulligan as well as Mulligan’s accusation that Stephen has killed his mother in refusing her dying wish to pray. However, from Stephen’s perspective, submission to his mother’s wish would mean submission to the patriarchal order that has wronged her in life; nonetheless, refusal of his mother’s wish means that he yet “betrays her by depriving her life of its meaning and its justification” (McGee 15). Critics such as Ewa Ziarek, Daniel Ferrer, and Colia MacCabe have pointed out that the symbol of a distorted or cracked mirror in Joyce’s text represents the failure of the “feminine” to reflect, and thus self-define, the man. The feminine creates a subversive critique in the act of mimicry—as the cracked lookingglass stolen from a servant girl, as Gerty unconsciously in “Nausicaa,” as Bella'o consciously in “Circe,” and as Molly’s star turn in “Penelope.” Despite Stephen’s awareness of the double-bind entrapping him in his decision regarding his mother’s dying wish, he is not aware of the male privilege that allows him to appropriate the symbol of a female servant’s cracked lookingglass for a metaphor of his double-bind: the servant’s flawed mirror parallels all the women in his milieu (his mother,
the birdgirl) which serve as instruments for his creativity in that they cannot or willfully refuse to faithfully reproduce the artist’s identity as he wills it. Stephen’s rage against patriarchal structures (the church, the conventions of English literature, nationalism) seeks reflection, justification, but since the only existent mirrors available to reify his identity are shaped by patriarchy, Stephen faces the incertitude of the void.49

The fictions of the church, paternity, and traditional literature fail to frame the portrait of the artist he endeavors to become. Stephen falls back on romanticism, identifying with Shelley, in his problematic investment in patriarchal structures. Although he recognizes the double-bind his mother faced (to live within patriarchal structures or to struggle as an outsider), in “Proteus,” Stephen romanticizes the woman that chooses the latter, trekking towards night and “followed by the sun’s flaming sword” (3:391). As if practicing romantic writerly scales, Stephen capitalizes on the other woman, the New Woman against patriarchy, with the same masterful distance he practices on the birdgirl in Portrait. Stephen thus epitomizes the wounded attachments of the New Man, disdaining to look for himself in the Victorian green lookingglass hung in so many drawing-rooms and Edwardian novels, but attached to the reflection of the artist it provides, cracked or not. Indeed, the contradictory cracks of the glass are a point of interest, suggesting the rage of genius constrained by convention.

Although Woolf’s portrayal of Joyce smashing out the windows of convention in her essay “Modern Novels” is touched with ambivalence, she nonetheless recognized that Joyce’s deconstruction was preferable to a work such as Hugh Walpole’s The Green Mirror, in which “[t]he hammer is thrown and the mirror comes down with a smash,” but ultimately, “the war has done nothing to change it”; that is, the war has not radically changed the English family novels of Galsworthy, Bennett, and Forster in which “invariably at the end the mirrors break, and the new generation bursts in” (E 2:215-16). Woolf in her review and her own satire in Night and Day critiques these novels since they are not finally subversive; in Walpole’s novel, even with the
father of the story dead, the son, mother, and daughter carry-on and have the mirror “mended at an expensive shop in Bond Street,” symbolic of the novels’ own inability to escape the drawing-room (E 2:216). Joyce’s text smashes the glass of Victorian propriety, as Woolf wrote in “Modern Novels,” by moving out of the drawing-room and depicting Stephen’s attempts to find a suitable reflection in the glasses hung in bars, brothels, and bedrooms; Joyce reveals the night side of the Victorian lookingglasses—the oppressive permutations of patriarchy that ultimately are the dark sisters of the drawing-room mirrors, the leaden paint making possible drawing-room illusions and reflections.56

“Nausicaa” provides a pointed commentary on the matrix of illusions at the turn of the century, the relation of romance and reality, and the complexity of the artist’s and reader’s attachment to familiar fictions. One possible reading of the episode interprets its style as relatively uncomplicated irony: Gerty is the “deluded, self-regarding sentimentalist” whose “saccharine justifications and motives contrast with those of the unchivalric Bloom,” an “unromantic, practical, plain profession” who “is ‘saved’ by a young woman enamored of romance” and who “reationalizes that passive, romantic females need illusion” (Black 75). However, the layers of satire as well as the depth of the characters beneath the comedic veneer (the “namby-pamby jammy marmalady drawesy (alto la!) style with effects of incense mariolatry, masturbation, stewed cockles, painters’ palette, chitchat, circumlocutions, etc., etc.”) suggest a more complex understanding (Joyce qtd. in Budgen 205).

The juxtapositions (for example, Gerty’s appropriation of sentimental scripts to embroider a coarse and brutal reality) of the episode ultimately indict the social structure as a whole in its need for illusions. When Bloom is “rationalizing” the need for illusion, “the stage setting, the rouge, costume, position, music. […] Curtain up. Moonlight silver effulgence. Maiden discovered with pensive bosom” (13:855-58), the reader recalls Bloom’s own desire for these illusions, which he has consumed throughout his day’s wanderings. The fact that he is
aware of this desire as illusory is the black hole of the episode, the eclipse that alters the prospect. Bloom’s rational awareness of his investment in conventional romanticism is what makes the comedy of the episode ultimately tragic. Although Bloom is aware of his collusion in patriarchal structures in a way in which most New Men figures are not, his awareness is impotent. He is unable to offer some “other world” to Martha, Gerty, or Molly. That is, Bloom may realize the need for an alternative that undoes patriarchal forms but is unable to author a narrative of connection different from conventional quest romances to the women with whom he interacts. Outside of conventional romance, “The Mystery Man on the Beach,” Bloom’s sentence and identity—“I […] AM. A […]”—is doomed to be incomplete if not impossibilised (13:1258, 1264).51

Goldman argues that the Victorians’ “fears about solar death dovetail with anxieties about a world bereft of the certitudes of Christianity, where the old order is crumbling, and patriarchy is under threat” (92). Both Joyce’s Ulysses and Woolf’s Night and Day are situated in the context of this anxiety. In the latter text, “to glimpse the stars is usually a positive (perhaps feminist) experience,” as in Katharine Hilbery’s “nocturnal life as a mathematician” and her “invocation of the planets—not as literary, amatory, mystic forces, but as mathematically chartable points of reference in the night sky” (Goldman 92-93). Katharine subversively pursues unwomanly desires for rational science and is continually shown as conscious of the night sky, whereas the romantic New Man Ralph is conscious of “paving stones” (ND 316). Goldman argues that daylight, associated with “the solar light of masculinity, prevents these other worlds” in which women pursue the work of their choice “from being visible at all” (93). The glare of conventional patriarchal narratives, the illusions society is invested in, obscures the ability of men and women to envision alternative worlds, or narratives. Likewise, the women of Joyce’s Ulysses may serve as the Other, the cracked lookingglasses, the moons imperfectly reflecting and thus defining the authorial men. However, despite their categorical otherness, indeed because of
their categorical otherness, these women are in search of other worlds. Martha Clifford’s erratum in her message to Bloom—“that other world. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word?” (5:245-46)—can be read as Joyce depicting women’s entrapment in patriarchal narratives. Martha’s position as a woman in patriarchy circumscribes her ability to realize other worlds, and it is significant that she turns to Bloom, the new womanly man, whose male androgyne is privileged in the text over female androgyne (Bloom has a “touch of the artist” whereas Lizzie Twig is “tasteless” (10:582, 8:542)). Nonetheless, Bloom’s ability as a solitary figure to proclaim “a new era is about to dawn […] the new Bloomusalem” bringing “New worlds for old” falls short, a stick stuck in the mud, and is ultimately satirized in “Circe” (15:1541, 1543, 1685).

As I have argued, the creation of the new in art and literature must be a dual revolution—modernism alongside a feminist socialism, and it is the dual vision that is able to balance romance and reality, aesthetics and politics, that will make Stephen an artist. Stephen may desire an alternative world, which Bloom finally represents with his soft hand, “a strange kind of flesh of a different man” (16:1723-24), in opposition to “Cranly’s arm”; however, the “word known to all men” is eclipsed by the homophobia surrounding “Wilde’s love that dare not speak its name” and the possibility and meaning of an “other world” fades on the horizon (3:451). Thus, although Stephen identifies with the New Woman (he even parallels Gerty in his position on the Strand and in his relationship with Bloom), he is impotent to author an-other world since he ultimately feels compelled to refuse Bloom’s sympathy, a refusal of being in touch with the complex reality of experience of Dublin 1904. He is only able to mutely reflect on the cyclical entrapment of gender roles, seeing in the tide’s manipulation of the “writhing weeds” the “hising up” of “petticoats.

[...] Day by day: night by night: lifted, flooded and let fall. Lord, they are weary”; in Latin, he quotes St. Ambrose’s observation that day and night the creator groans over wrongs (3:461-66). Stephen’s thoughts turn to the death of the father which bodes forth a “seachange” (3:482), but as
the weariness of the previous lines suggest, the relentless gyre of the moon, and analogous to
Yeats’s narrator, the seachange does not come, the “Second Coming” is lulled by the return of the
sun to sleep.52
CHAPTER 4

A PARALLAX MEASURE: THE HOMOSOCIAL AND LESBIAN CONTINUUM

As Levi-Strauss observed, in the triangle man-woman-man, the heterosexual relationship often emerges as the man’s means to a relationship with another man or men. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has described this “homosocial” dynamic in which homosocial intercourse is made possible by the heterosexual “traffic” in women; poetry making is one important form of that intercourse in the classic romance plot. Sedgwick begins her analysis of friendship between men by seeking “to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual” (1). Similar to the male homosocial continuum Sedgwick describes, Rich defines the lesbian continuum as inclusive of a range “through each woman’s life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman” (“Compulsory” 80). In comparing Woolf’s exploration of the consent to femininity and Joyce’s exploration of the consent to masculinity, it is important to note that in an androcentric culture, the male homosocial continuum differs from the lesbian continuum theorized by Adrienne Rich.

Whereas lesbian existence necessarily is a “rejection of a compulsory way of life” and “a direct or indirect attack on male right to access to women” (Rich, “Compulsory” 80), the male homosocial continuum of “men loving men” to “men-promoting-the-interests-of-men” is not necessarily anti-patriarchal; indeed, the latter aggressively predominant end of the male homosocial spectrum is conspicuously patriarchal (Sedgwick 3). Feminist deconstruction seeks to reveal how the homophobia that disrupts the male homosocial continuum is derivative of the
same patriarchal structure that oppresses women in order to perpetuate a male-dominated kinship system. The intersections of patriarchal oppression for men and women are put into relief by the similarities of Joyce’s depiction of the missed connection between Bloom and Stephen and Woolf’s depiction of the missed connection between Mary and Katharine.

Historically, the homosexual has not been repressed definitively in literature for men or women; however, where literature has sanctioned homosexuality, its appearances have not threatened patriarchal structures. In evidence, Sedgwick cites K. J. Dover’s study Greek Homosexuality, which is of particular interest since Ulysses reverberates with echoes of Plato’s Symposium: “Highly structured along lines of class […] along lines of age,” a structure also evident in 1904 Dublin, “the pursuit of the adolescent boy by the older man was described by stereotypes that we associate with romantic heterosexual love (conquest, surrender, the ‘cruel fair,’ the absence of desire in the love object), with the passive part going to the boy,” it is a relationship with an “erotic component” as well as “a bond of mentorship” (Sedgwick 4).53 Joyce’s craft in creating the triangles of the text (primarily Bloom-Stephen-Molly, but also Bloom-Stephen-Mulligan, Bloom-Stephen-Gerty, Bloom-Boylan-Molly, etc.) unsettles the reader who seeks to set character and narrative in predetermined grooves. Unable to figure the Bloom and Stephen relationship absolutely under the trope of paternity or homosexual desire structured along education and class lines, the reader hesitates with Stephen in contemplating a both/and.

At the end of “Scylla and Charybdis,” Stephen stands on the threshold of the library, moving from “the vaulted cell” where he has elaborated his Shakespeare theory into “shattering daylight of no thought.” and becomes aware with heightened sensibility of Bloom crossing his path, passing between himself and Buck Mulligan (9:1111-12). Mulligan’s portrait of Bloom as unnatural particularly represents the use of homophobic discourse to control a homosocial hierarchy; Mulligan with clowning malice whispers to Stephen, “The wandering jew. […] Did you see his eye? He looked upon you to lust after you. I fear thee, ancient mariner. O, Kinch
thou art in peril. Get thee a breechpad” (9:1209-11). Mulligan’s words ultimately serve to other Bloom, a Jewish ad-man, by suggesting that to see Bloom in the pseudo-Platonic “Manner of Oxenford” is ridiculous (9:1212). Stephen wavers between Mulligan and Bloom, contrasting the “Day. Wheelbarrow sun” and the “dark back” that slips “under portcullis barbs”; he wishes Mulligan to continue offending him with his talk as he notes the two “plumes of smoke ascended” in parallel paths over Dublin (9:1213-14, 1219). Stephen thus seems to be gaining an understanding of the arms directing his art, the racist androcentrism of the classist “Oxenford” manner, and the possibilities that taking another arm might actualize.

Although Buck Mulligan is mocking the schoolboy games of “Plato’s world of ideas” (9:52-3), Stephen mentally notes “Was Du verlachst wirst Du noch dienen [What you laugh at, you will nevertheless serve]” (9:491). Stephen’s determination to refuse to serve Mulligan and his set, however, leads him ironically to serve as a “glorified man, an androgynous angel, being a wife unto himself” and thus isolated from the reality of experience—in miming Shakespeare he renounces Shakespeare’s entreaty to “Do. But do” (9:1052, 653). The paralysis of the New Man is his ability to see the wrongs of the present, the nightmare of history endlessly repeated in the present, while being impotent to cut a new path into the future since he is invested in his identity which is derivative of that past in the present. Although Stephen unveils the web of patriarchal oppression in his Shakespeare theory—the possessiveness of property and women as property, and the structures of religion, racist nationalism, and conventional marriage that spin this isolating possessiveness (9:781-91)—he is unable to make life choices to circumvent the nightmare of the past because of his interest in becoming an artist: “Will they wrest from us, from me, the palm of beauty?” (9:740). In other words, Stephen is unable to reconcile art with personal politics since the feminist assertion that the personal is political (is artistic) threatens the bounded aesthetics to which he has hitherto ascribed and which has created his identity.
Woolf’s Judith Shakespeare of *A Room of One’s Own* is prefigured in *Night and Day*’s theory of the artistic genius of Anne Hathaway posited by Mrs Hilbery, which strikingly parallels Stephen’s musings in “Scylla and Charybdis.” Woolf notes in a 1918 review that Coleridge is the individual that perceives “the truth that ‘a great mind must be androgynous . . .’” (E 2:222). According to Rosenfeld, the oft quoted metaphor of *A Room of One’s Own* of the man and woman getting into a taxi represent for Woolf a “moment of perfect mathematical balance” and the writer’s balance of a phallic or domineering “I” with the subjective actualities of a character’s state of mind (119). Katharine’s struggles as well as Stephen’s may be read as their attempts to achieve this mathematical balance and thus transcend, as androgynous angels, the banality of their immediate realities.

The social and aesthetic possibility that Woolf arrives at in *A Room of One’s Own* is a vision of “androgyny,” a natural cooperation of the mind, symbolized by the couple entering the cab and a state of mind not requiring repression. Having detailed the trials of her fictional Judith Shakespeare, Woolf’s narrator holds that the mind of Shakespeare exemplifies not only the desirability but also the dangers of such an androgynous mind. For although the writer’s mind must be “woman-manly or man-womanly” and thinking of one’s sex “fatal,” one cannot lose sight of the view from the window either, the view which represents the reality of women’s confinement to the domestic sphere (104). An androgynous mind thus prevents Shakespeare from recognizing women’s plight, as in the example of his sister; this is a conclusion that Stephen also reaches with his exposure of Shakespeare’s behavior towards Anne. According to Woolf, in the modern era, Shakespeare’s sister can only achieve her desires if women, her sisters and mothers, work for her (114). Nonetheless, Woolf also nods to the limitations of women’s efforts in isolation since women lack the material needs and educational wealth to open vistas for their daughters, and women’s internalization of patriarchal ideology actively restraints the next generation, as Woolf explains in her essay “Proessions for Women” in the figure of the angel in
the house. Ultimately, Woolf refuses either strategy—the androgynous mind risks perpetuating the lived realities of sexism and tyranny, whereas reliance on a female tradition or women-only activism risks debilitating material limitations. Marianne Hirsch concludes that Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* creates a strategy of “contradiction and oscillation,” which her novels reflect in their inclusion of “the language of darkness and concealment” and “dual, sometimes multiple plots in which contradictory elements rival one another” (95). This description applies equally to Joyce’s deconstruction; Stephen as a character is depicted as contradicting himself and oscillating between the very theories he has propounded precisely because he is aware of the paradox that Woolf also describes.

The Bloomsbury group sought to counter the masculinist modernism of Wyndham Lewis, D. H. Lawrence, and Ezra Pound with their ostensible privileging of androgyny, bisexuality, and hermaphroditism in their construction of “something new […] a new society which should be free, rational, civilized, and pursuing truth and beauty” as Leonard Woolf described their prewar aspirations which did not include the destruction of the past (106). Nonetheless, as Woolf’s threshold text makes clear, the prewar excitement of the Cambridge Apostles and Bloomsbury women proved romantically naïve. Julie Taddeo convincingly argues for a critical understanding of the idealism of Bloomsbury; she emphasizes how patriarchal Victorian ideological frameworks persisted despite the “bisexual love triangles and candid conversations about sex,” arguing that in figures such as Lytton Strachey and T. S. Eliot the creation of “something new” included an “urge to reassert masculine authority over such autonomous ‘New Women’ as Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and [Strachey’s] own sisters” (134). In *Night and Day*, William Rodney seems at least partly fashioned after Lytton Strachey; Strachey records his misguided proposal of marriage to Virginia Woolf in 1909 as an effort “to escape” his dismal career prospects and Duncan Grant’s rejection and recalls his relief at her refusal, reflecting “the story is really rather amusing and singular” (qtd. in Taddeo 139). Nonetheless, in confessing to
friend Leonard Woolf that he had “beat him to the punch” but escaped without the horror of a kiss in a February 19, 1909 letter, Strachey reveals a particularly masculinist orientation: “I could have done it [married her] and could […] have dominated and soared and at last made her completely mine” (qtd. in Taddeo 139).

Compared to the cross-generational homosexuality of male Platonism, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature where female homosexuality appeared it figured as a part of the maturation process of young women—harmless female bonding that is discarded upon entrance to the marriage market when “natural” heterosexual attraction matures. Previous to the 1890s, when the New Woman emerges as well as the male dandy, “same-sex love between women had been regarded as a ‘harmless’, and even as a healthy preparation for heterosexual love and marriage” (Ledger 125). However, as New Woman fiction novelists such as Edith Arnold and Mona Caird began to suggest a desire to go beyond the harmless “romantic friendship” model, male novelists, such as George Moore and Henry James, increasingly focused on the pathology of the New Women as sexual invert. In both male and female authored New Woman texts, nonetheless, a male suitor most often interrupts the female to female relationship and the “odd” woman is isolated (her isolation figured as either tragic martyrdom or just punishment). Although a similar interruption occurs in the relationship between Stephen and Bloom, with the intervention of Mulligan (symbolic of the others in the text that assert proper homosocial boundaries), the isolation of Stephen would be (in a straight reading) viewed as a desirable conclusion. Whereas the isolation of the New Woman is read as either ineffectual tragedy or condemnation, Stephen’s isolation is conventionally read as enabling the fiction of the solitary heroic artist, and Bloom’s isolation irrelevant since Molly offers him the fiction of perfect symmetry.
As they appear in dominant fictions, the affects of homophobia of male homosexuality should be understood as continuous with the affects of misogynist attitudes of patriarchal structures. Sedgwick describes the difference thus, “Male homosexual bonds may have a subsumed and marginalized relation to male heterosexuality similar to the relation of femaleness to maleness, but different because carried out within an already dominantly male-homosocial sphere” (47). Similarly, Rich emphasizes the importance of recognizing the common oppression experienced by those who pursue male to male and female to female bonds with the caution that this common oppression should be “seen against the differences: women’s lack of economic and cultural privilege relative to men; qualitative differences in female and male relationships” (“Compulsory” 80). Woolf and Joyce expose these effects through parallactic visions in order to break their sentence. In unsettling readers’ expectations, Woolf and Joyce push the reader to the “verge” and require them to understand how the sentence of the past perpetuates (the law of the Father that polices male homosexuality and relegates female homosexuality to a phase) and how readers collude in making alternate visions impossible.
“—so what is the connection between Bloom and Dedalus?”

Woolf’s reading notes in 1918 (“Modern Novels (Joyce)” 645)

A number of Joyce scholars have been at pains to emphasize the relationship between Stephen and Bloom as paternal, to the extent that one wonders if the absolutism of some of the readings protests too much. For example, Budgen’s discussion of “Circe” insists on Bloom as father and comrade; as “Ulysses stands to his men,” Bloom is “father and guardian as well as captain” for Stephen (231). Louis Gillet similarly insists on the pure spirituality of their connection, as if at pains to negate a misreading of his own reading as love at first sight: theirs is a “[r]elation so intellectual, affiliation so free from all physiological ties, union partaking so little of the flesh that Ulysses-Bloom recognizes at first sight Dedalus-Telemachus as the son of his soul—this is the entire meaning of their odyssey” (Potts 191).

Patrick McGee’s reading of “Ithaca” refutes the argument that the relationship of Bloom to Stephen is only paternal.57 Citing Joyce’s scientific narrator’s catechism of Bloom’s and Stephen’s “quasisimultaneous volitional quasisensations of concealed identities,” McGee argues that Bloom appears to Stephen “as the figure of Christ, the fusion of the divine and the human, while to Bloom’s ear Stephen’s word represents the ecstasy of the tragic, the madness of Prince Hamlet” (164). Bloom and Stephen cannot assume unproblematic roles of father and son since they play simultaneous roles: “Bloom as the type of Christ is the son of God and the father of Christianity; Stephen as the artist […] is the son of his literary father, Shakespeare, and hypothetically the father of his work.” moreover, Bloom’s fatherhood is problematic and Stephen
is not yet an artist (164-65). The contingency on patriarchal structures that their identities and thus the form their relationship can take is exposed as the point of the “nought” that “Ithaca” reveals and the point that neither ever reach.

Stephen quotes Latin in “Scylla and Charybdis”: “Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes. Word known to all men. Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus…” which Gifford translates as “Love wills something to someone, will some good, when we want a thing, desire it” (9:430-31). This linguistic playfulness mirrors Shakespeare’s “Will” sonnets, particularly sonnets 135 and 136:

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,  
And will to boot, and will in overplus;  
More than enough am I that loves thee still.  
To thy sweet will making addition thus,  
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,  
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?  
Shall will in others seem right gracious,  
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?  
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,  
And in abundance addeth to his store;  
So thou being rich in will add to thy will  
One will of mine, to make thy large will more.  
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;  
Think all but one, and me in that one will. (135)

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,  
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy will,  
And will thy soul knows is admitted there;  
Thus far for love my love-suit sweet fulfil.  
Will will fulfill the treasure of thy love,  
Ay fill it full with wills, and my will one.  
In things of great receipt with ease we prove,  
Among a number one is reckoned none.  
Then in the number let me pass untold,  
Though in thy store’s account I must be,  
For nothing hold me, a something sweet to thee.  
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,  
And then thou lov’st me, for my name is Will. (136) (qtd. Sedgwick 37)

Sedgwick has explored the homosocial triangle of these sonnets, which are suggestive in gaining a perspective on the peculiar dynamics of the homosocial Joyce constructs in his triangles, Bloom-Stephen-Molly in particular. As Sedgwick argues in her reading of the sonnets, the
triangle does not signify merely heterosexual men engaged in masculinist posturing or trade with
women as property, nor is it merely homosexuality contorted by society’s homophobia. Instead,
the sonnets (and Joyce’s text) are engaging with the frustration of forging relationships outside of
these grooves—can Bloom form a connection with Stephen that satisfies his paternalistic and
maternalistic desire as well as a kind of sexual attraction he feels toward the fair young man that
may be a reflection of a certain narcissism? The narcissism is the imperfect reflection, the
vicarious satisfaction, Stephen offers Bloom, since Stephen (an artist type) in Bloom’s mental
narrative can enact the romantic notion of jilted love that creates the wound necessary for his
transcendence as a Christ figure and for Stephen’s transcendence in the creation of art.

The Will of the sonnets first entreats his fair young man to reproduce for his own good—
the continuation of the race which Stephen describes in his Shakespeare theory: “Will he not see
reborn in her, with the memory of his own youth added, another image?” (9:427-28). The child
or feminized other creates a parallactic vision for the male author or father, a vision that leads to
greater understanding and thus satisfaction of the self as well as understanding of the self in
relation to the world. However, in entreating the young man to reproduce, the Will of the sonnets
makes himself and the young man vulnerable to wounds. When the dark lady actually
approaches in Shakespeare’s sonnets, Will is plunged into chaos, just as Bloom is in “Circe,”
where he seems to wander the fringe of the field uncertainly, expecting to witness the violence of
the tusk of the boar (a masculine symbol made female as Bella becomes Bello, and Stephen takes
“the cow by the horns” (9:635)). Stephen describes this relationship in terms of Hamlet’s father
to Hamlet, which is analogous to the Will of the sonnet to his fair young man, and unbeknownst
to him, Stephen thus also describes his perspective of the possible relationship of Bloom to
himself: “But, because loss is his gain, he passes on towards eternity in undiminished
personality, untaught by the wisdom he has written or by the laws he has revealed” (9:473-78).Bloom’s years in the university of life as a uniquely perceptive individual has the potential to
beget Stephen as an artist, to balance Stephen’s isolating aesthetic romanticism; however, Stephen is ultimately unable to put himself in a position of vulnerability. The desirable artistic wound enabled by the system of three of the sonnets, *Exiles*, and *Ulysses*, protects the artist from sexual love and preserves a space for artistic creation that walks a threshold of engagement with others and exile. Describing this dynamic, Froula argues that Stephen Dedalus casts off his own theory unlike the “self-mystified, melodramatic Richard Rowan” of *Exiles* (117). However, Stephen’s interaction with Bloom suggests the possibility of divesting himself of this theory—a possibility Stephen does not take up since he ultimately remains bound to his phallic/artistic economy.  

Bloom’s new womanly arm or hand is figured throughout the text as an alternative Stephen contemplates, also representing the complex (or perhaps very simple) relationship Bloom offers—paternal, maternal, and narcissistic. In “Scylla and Charybdis,” Stephen’s discourse on the fictions of paternity is capped by the entrance of Bloom, reminding him of an earlier meeting after his mother has died: “[…] I touched his hand. The voice, new warmth, speaking. […] The eyes that wish me well. But do not know me” (9:825-27). Stephen unravels the “legal fiction” of paternity, posits maternal love as “the only true thing in life” to circumvent the incertitude of the “void,” and then founders to account for the relationship of love between a father and “any son” (9:842-45). Stephen’s retrospective touch of Bloom’s hand begets a monologue that attempts to deconstruct patriarchal fictions, but ends entangled in the son’s wounded attachment to these fictions via the mother figure. Thus, Stephen recognizes his double-bind as “a new male,” doomed to bring pain to those he seeks to liberate (his mother, his sisters, Bloom, himself) by either condemning the fictions that nonetheless create their identities or by perpetuating those fictions (9:855). Joyce seems to have recognized the limitations of the New Man after the war: Frank Budgen reports Joyce saying after the publication of the “Lestrygoninans” episode, “Stephen no longer interests me to the same extent. He has a shape that can’t be changed” (105).
As critics have noted, Joyce teaches the reader how to read his text through Stephen’s Shakespeare theory, and this dictum applies to the relationship between Bloom and Stephen as well: “The son consubstantial with the father” (9:481). The theological use of “consubstantial” refers to the unity of the trinity, but in popular parlance usually connotes the relationship of the father with/in the son. Bloom and Stephen’s is not simply a father and son relationship, but connected to the triangle of the sonnet, of which Stephen notes, “Love that dare not speak its name” (9:659). That this unspeakable relationship, the relationship outside the sentence, applies not only to the sonnets but to Stephen and Bloom is made clear at the close of “Scylla and Charybdis,” when Stephen sees the dark star of Bloom pass before Mulligan as he contemplates the moment of crisis, of a possible seachange—of parting from Mulligan and the path he represents: “My will: his will that fronts me. Seas between” (9:1202). Sedgwick describes the pleasures the Will of the sonnet derives from the triangle of the fair young man and the dark lady: “the pleasure of giving his name (Will) to a woman (or part of a woman); the pleasure of being mistaken for a man or men who have some proprietary rights in the woman; perhaps the pleasure of being mistaken for a younger and more energetic male; and in general, the pleasure of amalgamation” (38). The possibilities and impossibilities of these pleasures for both Bloom and Stephen, “My will: his will,” are revealed in the night of “Circe,” “Eumaeus,” and “Ithaca.”

According to Helene Cixous, “Circe” “not only replays all parts of Ulysses in one scene, but, by decompartmentalization and by depersonalization, decomposes each and everyone into his several selves, breaks the real into fragments… without distinction of object, of subject, of interiority or exteriority, of property” (qtd. in Ziarek 164). It is not coincidental that the more sympathetic Bloom, the figure most like the Will of the sonnets, is largely the focus of the episode. Bloom, more “in touch” with the psychological, sociological, and sexual matrix of 1904 Dublin, and the character that most follows Shakespeare’s insistence to engage with experience in order to know thyself and gain the pleasure of vulnerability in an-other, is more likely to make
himself vulnerable on the Circean stage. “Circe,” according to Patrick McGee, “is the premature climax” of the novel (187). The episode deconstructs the space, dynamics, and conditions that have produced the episode, which constitute novel writing as it has been known. In the carnival of “Circe,” the seeming seamlessness of the symbolic is ruptured through deconstructive play; the apocalyptic vision and style of the episode is a meta-textual moment of eclipse, the plunge into darkness that throws environs into relief. It is impossible for the reader to “survey the whole and bring the play of the signifier under the rule of meaning,” so that “we glimpse the process (de)constituting the (w)hole” (McGee 186).

Nonetheless, Stephen and Bloom do emerge “intact” and the episode ends in a moment of “crisis and truth” taken from conventional narratives (McGee 186). The father and son relationship that critics reduce the relationship of Bloom and Stephen to is most supported in Stephen’s fall under an English soldier’s blow and Bloom’s vision of his dead son at the end of “Circe.” Bloom standing as Masonic sentry over the fallen Stephen (he murmurs the Masonic rites as Stephen lies murmuring fragments of Yeats) emphasizes the constructedness of patriarchal fictions—fatherhood and the questing masculine hero are as much illusions constructed against the incertitude of the void as is the Masonic order (a subtext also of Ibsen’s The Master Builder). Bloom watches over Stephen: “Face reminds me of his poor mother. In the shady wood. The deep white breast,” reflections which suggest a paternal and sexual attraction to Stephen as Bloom’s consciousness aligns him with a “poor mother” in need of protection and yet also associates him with a narcissistic comfort (15:4949-50). Bloom’s poignant sympathy for Stephen and his loveable misreading of Stephen’s quoting of Yeats’s poem, however, is notably juxtaposed with his Masonic code—“I will always hail, ever conceal, never reveal, any part or parts, art or arts” (15:4951-52). The sympathy Bloom feels for Stephen is overwritten by a Masonic patriarchal code of silence.
Stephen and Bloom’s near connection parallels a connection between William Rodney and Ralph Denham in Woolf’s novel, scenes which nod toward this code of silence which maintains male privilege but ultimately constrains possibilities of connection. Woolf and Joyce portray this in tableaus in which two men—Stephen and Bloom, William and Ralph—reflecting on their positions in relation to the glowing lamp of the feminine they have positioned above themselves, realize the paradox of the structure they nonetheless perpetuate. Ralph has seen himself as a lost bird drawn to the glow of a lighthouse and dashing himself senseless against the glass—Katharine in the drawing-room of her father’s house is the splendid blaze of light—and has a confused sense that he is “both lighthouse and bird” (ND 334). His confused sense of duality is accurate in that the light that he desires, figured as the feminine other, is his own projection meant to reflect his desired sense of self. William Rodney is a similar lost bird in Ralph’s eyes, but his presence is only important in so much that it allows him to see himself and Katharine “alone together, aloft, splendid, and luminous with a twofold radiance” in the same way that Bloom proffers Molly as a lovely light in order to see himself in an exalted position beside her (ND 338). Ibsen’s When We Dead Awaken similarly depicts a New Man artist desirous to scale the heights with his luminous other, while the true New Woman type in the text is portrayed escaping the destruction that Rubek’s romanticism engenders. 61

The two realize that both are caught up in their love, and William exclaims to Ralph, “what fools we both are!” and the two “looked at each other, queerly, in the light of the lamp. Fools!” perhaps exchanging a similar look as Celia and the narrator in the reverie of “Sympathy” (ND 227-38). “They seemed to confess to each other the extreme depths of their folly. For the moment, under the lamp-post, they seemed to be aware of some common knowledge which did away with the possibility of rivalry, and made them feel more sympathy for each other than any one else in the world,” nonetheless, the Masonic brothers exit the Mozartean stage directly, “Giving simultaneously a little nod, as if in confirmation of this understanding, they parted
without speaking again” (ND 337-38). Sympathy, connection, is possible between men when the “folly” of the patriarchal narrative of love, its possessiveness, its necessary illusions, are put into perspective by the men’s awareness of three perspectives, particularly the looking-on of a New Woman figure as in Ibsen. However, this moment of connection passes in silence, since analysis might suggest responsibility and a radical reconfiguration in which the privileges of the male in the narrative must be renounced—the folly of patriarchy undone.

In “Nausicaa,” Bloom reflects, “See ourselves as others see us. So long as women don’t mock what matter?” (13:1058-59). Karen Gindele’s concept of “feminist comedy” which unlike the civilizing comedy theorized by Freud, Bergson, and Meredith, aims to liberate, “stages the collapse of patriarchal desire to enable female individual and social desire,” is applicable to a reading of Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts as deconstructive (140). This collapse of desire is achieved “by total frustration as a result of adverse circumstances,” missed connections, as well as “by the exposure of desire which humiliates it into nothing,” the “nought” of the eclipse of illusions, “and, paradoxically, by the satisfaction of desire: desire fulfilled in the marriage in a romantic comedy becomes no desire, kept within bounds hospitable to the society in which it occurs,” the conclusions of both Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts (Gindele140). The comic note in the midst of tragedy (the missed connections of “Nausicaa” and “Ithaca” in Ulysses, Ralph’s blot and Cassandra’s role in Night and Day) as well as the physical embodiment of feminist comedy in striking representations of women laughing (Molly, Cissy, and the barmaids in Ulysses, Katharine and Mary in Night and Day) forward the deconstructionist feminist project.62

In both novels a woman’s distanced and critical laughter is a recurrent fear of the male protagonists. This fear supports the male paralysis that the war engendered—that the fear of woman as vampire or untouchable muse would be eclipsed by women’s lack of a need for men at all. Men’s actual fear proved “not that they will have women’s sexual appetites forced on them, or that women want to smoother and devour them,” but rather, as Adrienne Rich argues, “that
women could be indifferent to them altogether, that men could be allowed sexual and emotional—therefore economic—access to women only on women’s terms, otherwise being left on the periphery of the matrix” (“Compulsory” 74). As William repeats throughout *Night and Day* regarding such conventions, “It’s that it spoils things to discuss them; it unsettles peoples minds; and now we’re all so happy—” (ND 353). Although Katharine’s relationship to Ralph is unconventional in its crossing of class lines, a greater revolution is buried in silence. The relationship between women and the refusal of isolation and objectification by patriarchy that such a relationship signifies is silently passed over, is buried “in soft golden grains” of lamp light in the Hilbery drawing-room when Ralph returns Katharine there, having turned her away from the lamp light of Mary’s flat in the city (ND 432). Although Mr Hilbery may feel that “[c]ivilization had been very profoundly and unpleasantly overthrown that evening” and that his “house was in a state of revolution” which requires “soothing and renovating at the hands of the classics,” as Bloom requires rejuvenation through narratives of “tranquil recollection of the past,” mere anarchy is not finally loosed upon the world (ND 406, U 17:1756-57).

The self-irony of the silent exchanges between men in the texts supports McGee’s argument that the crises and resolutions of “Circe” “are illusory and premature” (186). In preceding episodes, Joyce has tutored his reader in a history of the dynamics between literature and human relations, particularly exposing how gender is implicated in the intertwining constructions of narrative plot and identity. In “Circe,” Joyce has deconstructed narrative and subjectivity in order to expose the unconscious of the text and the space of the text’s production. Consequently, a paternal connection neatly suturing the climax of the text is suspect; as in the conclusion of Woolf’s *Night and Day*, the reader is meant to realize his or her own implication in the production of closure and the familiar groove of resolution.
Comparing Notes: “the beauty seen here in flying glimpses only” (ND 116)

In “Ithaca,” Bloom’s and Stephen’s “mutual reflections merge” regarding the facility of language, traced “from the Egyptian epigraphic hieroglyphs” (perhaps the riddles of the Sphinx) to the form of “Ithaca” itself, and it is in the contemplation of forms of communication and the ability to communicate with and realize the other that the “rays cross” for Bloom and Stephen and the reader (17:770-71, 8:567). Comparing notes, the Semitic and Celtic alphabet, Stephen hears in Bloom the wisdom of the past, and Bloom sees in Stephen the predestined future. In the description of these crossed rays, the reader may recall Stephen’s earlier ruminations in “Scylla and Charybdis,” in which he moves from Hamlet (“through the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unliving son looks forth”), to Shelley (“fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be”), to the realization of identity and thus narrative possibility: “So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be” (9:380-85). The addition of a distant prospect or point of view (whether the self in the future realized or the presence of an other) enables the artist to gain a perspective of his place—as artist, citizen of discourses, and individual self in time and space. Bloom’s new womanly man presence offers such a prospect—he could play the sister of the past in Stephen’s answer to the Sphinx’s riddle.

Bloom, like Mary to Katharine, is cognizant of the connections possible between himself and Stephen; the narrator of “Ithaca” notes that it is Bloom that discovers “common factors of similarity between their respective like and unlike reactions to experience” during their discourse during a walk of “parallel courses” that the two “follow returning” (17:18-19, 1). Also like Mary and Katharine, Bloom and Stephen are united by a common rejection of orthodox doctrines and
both feel an “alternately stimulating and obtunding influence of heterosexual magnetism” (17:24-26). Notably, it is under the question “Were their views on some points divergent?” that Stephen seems to observe a connection of parallax, “the reapparition of a matutinal cloud (perceived by both from two different points of observation, Sandycove and Dublin) at first no bigger than a woman’s hand” (U 17:27, 40-42). The cloud’s obscuring of the horizon during the protagonists’ winding courses through Dublin is echoed in Mary’s and Katharine’s frustrated parallel courses, where “upon both of them a cloud of difficulty and darkness rested, obscuring the future in which they had both to find a way” (ND 306).

Bloom’s “jocoserious” sacrament of Epps’s cocoa prepared for Stephen parallels, in terms of character, tone, and result, Mary’s serving of food and wine to Katharine. In “Ithaca,” the moment of possible connection already seems to have been eclipsed, made impossible by Stephen’s declaration and fall, which signifies a falling back into his self and the paralysis of the New Man. Similarly, when Katharine last visits Mary’s flat, she is already falling into the conventional romance plot—her focus is on the romance of missing Ralph that night—and Mary, like Bloom, can only observe and attempt to forge a connection. Joyce depicts Bloom’s care and hospitable sacrifices in serving his guest the chalice of sham Crown Derby, particularly Bloom’s concerns for Stephen’s health and his prospects as an artist connected to Mulligan. Mary plays a similar role: “Mary told her to come, and [Katharine] came submissively, as if she let Mary direct her movements for her. They ate and drank together almost in silence, and when Mary told her to eat more, she ate more; when she was told to drink wine, she drank it” (ND 382). As Bloom notes of his “silent companion” (17:383), Katharine is “so intent upon some vision of her own that Mary gradually felt more than protective—she became actually alarmed at the prospect of some collision between Katharine and the forces of the outside world” (ND 382). Mary learns that Katharine has been lost to the “tyranny of love,” but she herself is free (382). In spite of the pain of the loss of Katharine, Mary can fall back upon her own feminist romance; Katharine in
her refusal to renounce the tyranny of the romance plot and accept Mary’s proposal of asylum, is, to Mary, “immensely to be pitied” (ND 384). Bloom, when his proposal of asylum to Stephen is refused, finds consolation in his conventional romance with Molly and the heroic story he tells himself of his transcendence as Noman.

Although Mary and Katharine tacitly connect, physically and finally psychically they are isolated from one another. The tragedy of this failed connection is underscored by Katharine’s attempt to connect with Ralph outside of patriarchal forms—to create a relationship that is not a reproduction of the patriarchal system that has stifled her desires for mathematics and a house of her own. Ralph as a typical New Man, however, is doomed to fail as a result of his attraction to the house and privileges that Katharine is attempting to escape. The scene in which Bloom and Stephen share writing—“a glyphic comparison of the phonic symbols of both languages [Hebrew and ancient Irish] made in substantiation of the oral comparison” (17:731-32)—parallels the final attempt at connection between Ralph and Katharine, when they exchange compositions and “Katharine read his sheets to an end; Ralph followed her figures as far as his mathematics would let him” (ND 419). (Bloom explains the “arithmetical values as ordinal and cardinal numbers” of the symbols he writes (17:741-42)). Katharine finally notes a doodle in the margins of Ralph’s poetic dissertation: “I like your little dot with the flames around it” (419). Although to Ralph, the doodle represents Katharine herself, his luminous muse and a role that she disdains, Katharine ironically sees the blot as representative of a sympathetic view of the world. Nonetheless, “its circumference of smudges surrounding a central blot all that encircling glow,” the alignment of the eclipse, leads to a parallactic vision: “Whether there was any correspondence between the two prospects now opening before them they shared the same sense of the impending future, vast, mysterious, infinitely stored with undeveloped shapes which each would unwrap for the other to behold;” (recalling Sally and Clarissa) “but for the present the prospect of the future was enough to fill them with silent adoration” (ND 420). However, this open prospect is interrupted by a
“knock on the door” from the older generation, Mrs Hilbery, who is ultimately able to reinstate the “duties” of marriage and conventional romance with a Shakespearean flourish and Ralph’s consent (ND 420).

Similarly, “the proposal of asylum” Bloom offers Stephen, which would benefit Bloom in a “rejuvenation of intelligence, vicarious satisfaction,” Molly in “disintegration of obsession, acquisition of correct Italian pronunciation,” and Stephen in “security of domicile and seclusion of study,” is “Promptly, inexplicably, with amicability, gratefully […] declined” (17: 937-39, 954-55). The refusal of the proposal, like Katharine’s inability to see Mary again after she has succumbed to her mother’s incantation, is pointedly not inexplicable—Joyce’s point is to expose the impossibilities of connection. The suture of conventional fictions and the dream of familiar symmetry isolates Mary as solitary political activist from Katharine and Ralph, just as it isolates Stephen as solitary artist from Bloom and Molly. The reader is “grateful” since the return of the light of the day is promised in Stephen’s denial, and the arduous task of describing “other worlds” made visible in the night is deferred.

The “counterproposals” of meeting for Italian and singing lessons that Bloom posits after Stephen declines his “proposal of asylum” correspond to Mary’s final attempts to connect with Katharine (17:954, 960). Bloom, like Mary, recognizes the tragic comedy of his attempts to connect, which Joyce portrays in Bloom’s memory of the failed return of a marked coin and the parody of paternity of a circus clown claiming Bloom as his son.64 Woolf portrays this tragic comic attempt in the futility of Katharine telling the “the cabman to drive faster’ and Mary’s futile gesture of holding her wrist during the ride “side by side” unable to say in pursuit of what (384)—their parallel lines cannot meet at the lowlying star that they glimpsed on their first meeting and which Mary recalls in their last parting (383-385). Bloom and Stephen also recognize the impossibilities of the two meeting at “the point of bisection of a right line” in the future (17:971).
Mary and Katharine speed through the streets of London, “side by side” toward Cheyne Walk, Mary having taken charge of Katharine’s aimless wandering in the street after their sacramental meal in Mary’s flat (385). Watching the progress of the cab that carries Katharine away from her, “Mary began to fix her mind, in sympathy [...] upon a point in front of them. She imagined a point distant as a low star upon the horizon of the dark. There for her, for them both, was the goal for which they were striving, and the end for the ardours of their spirits was the same” (emphasis added, 384). This is a point on the horizon that cannot be reached in the circles of this text. The door of the Hilbery house divides them, Mary walks “slowly and thoughtfully up the street alone” and Katharine only hesitates a moment on the threshold of the room where Ralph waits, and where finally succumbing to the “desire no longer to strive and to discriminate” and releasing the desire to laugh “in his face,” she confesses her love (385).

At the close of “Eumaeus,” Bloom and Stephen leave the cabman’s shelter and their parallel paths into the night are watched over by a man in a sweater cab, who sings of a couple riding to marriage in a lowbacked car. Bloom directs Stephen homeward as Mary directs Katharine and holds Katharine’s wrist, and both Bloom and Mary feel a false hope, which both Stephen and Katharine tacitly recognize but are impotent to fulfill. Bloom’s gesture of taking Stephen’s arm and their walk “Side by side” observed by a street man (16:1880)—“Stephen [...] thought he felt a strange kind of flesh of a different man approach him”—prove a false hope, as Bloom will fail in making Stephen into “a different man,” since Stephen consents to lean on Bloom only briefly (16:1719-24). Shakespeare’s star, “recumbent constellation” “lowlying on the horizon,” which Stephen wonders of in relation to his own possible trajectory in “Scylla and Charybdis” (9:931-32), reappears in “Ithaca,” as Bloom and Stephen, having realized the impossibility of connection, consider the “appearance of a star [...] of exceeding brilliency dominating by night and day (a new luminous sun generated by the collision and amalgamation in incandescence of two nonluminous exsuns) about the period of the birth of William Shakespeare
over delta in the recumbent neversetting constellation of Cassiopeia” (17:1119-23). Bloom and Stephen, exsuns, consider “the attendant phenomena of eclipses, solar and lunar, from immersion to emersion” on the threshold of a return of the sun (17:1131-32).

Woolf and Joyce, neither having read these compositions of the other, produce strikingly parallel visions—both gazing at a new luminous sun lowlying on the horizon made visible in the eclipse. Bloom and Stephen, Katharine and Mary, are unable to make their connections, are unable to speak the sympathy of their visions and bode forth a new star. It is up to the reader, looking on like the cabman, brought to a sympathy with the modernist author’s vision and able to drive such visions forward, to make that connection and begin to realize the wounded attachments of the past and enter into the process of re-vision.

Bloom, concluding their consideration of constellations, posits “a Utopia, there being no known method from the known to the unknown: an infinity renderable equally finite by the suppositious apposition of one or more bodies equally of the same and of different magnitudes;” which may be a parallactic measure of being, “a mobility of illusory forms immobilised in space, remobilised in air;” which may be the parataxis of the individual’s experience of the real and the imaginary and which may be the style of the text’s episodes, “a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present before its probable spectators had entered actual present existence” which may be the parallax of Bloom and Stephen, of 1904 and the postwar period, and the failure of the new to be born in the future after the war (17:1140-45). It is by meeting through parallactic visions that Bloom can connect with Stephen, can reach toward the utopia of having “stepped over the threshold into the faintly lit vastness of another mind,” which is the desire of the blocked protagonists of Night and Day (ND 430).

Bloom instigates the creation of a representation of his constellation of Utopia by first listing the parallels “between the moon and woman” and then attracting Stephen’s gaze to the “luminous sign” of Molly’s “lamp with oblique shade projected on a screen of a roller blind” in
the second story window (17:1171-74). Bloom attempts to “elucidate the mystery of an invisible attractive person, his wife [...] denoted by a visible splendid sign, a lamp” (17:1177-78), just as Ralph and Katharine “With indirect and direct verbal allusions or affirmations: with subdued affection and admiration: with description: with impediment: with suggestion” (U 17:1179-81) consider the light burning in Mary Datchet’s flat high above the street. Both are moments of triangular parallax in which the two characters attempt connection through an act of parallel observation of signs, celestial and incandescent.

Bloom and Stephen look at Molly’s “visible splendid sign, a lamp” and both are “Silent, each contemplating the other in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of their his nothis fellow faces” (17:1178, 1183-84). Likewise, Ralph and Katharine have “lapsed gently into silence, travelling the dark paths of thought side by side towards something discerned in the distance which gradually possessed them both,” and the two gauge the meaning of the flame on the blind of Mary’s room by looking in each other’s faces (ND 430). The silent contemplation, visions that are unable to be communicated, give way to failed trajectories. Bloom and Stephen, in the “penumbra” of Molly’s lamp, urinate and observe a falling star. Katharine and Ralph cry in the shadow of Mary’s symbolic flame; Katharine’s sentence “I wish—I wish—” is incomplete as she claims she cannot see Mary as the globe of symmetry threatens to dissolve in her tears, and Ralph climbs the stair but fails to knock on Mary’s room and instead returns crying (ND 429).

Katharine sees in Ralph’s face, as Bloom sees in Stephen’s, her own struggle to “piece together in a laborious and elementary fashion fragments of belief [...] lacking the unity of phrases fashioned by the old believers” (ND 432). And it is in this “difficult region, where the unfinished, the unfulfilled, the unwritten, the unreturned” join, putting on “the semblance of the complete and the satisfactory” (ND 431-32). Bloom and Stephen are also in this difficult penumbra region, where both reflect on the present moment in the context of the past and future, hoping to achieve a semblance of symmetry, a fiction of completeness and return in which, “[t]he future emerged
more splendid than ever from the construction of the present” (ND 432). However, this “Utopia” has a failed trajectory; the bond to “a past which possibly had ceased to exist as a present before its probable spectators,” to a fiction of symmetry and the completion of the old cycles, circumscribes the pen attempting to write the new (U 17:1140-45).

The notion of a penumbra region is key here in its emphasis on the visual denotation of a threshold (between light and dark) and its meaning as a description of the quality of light in an eclipse, which marks the moment of parallax in these texts. The Oxford English Dictionary defines penumbra: “the partial shadow, as distinguished from the total shadow or umbra; esp. that surrounding the total shadow of the moon, or of the earth, in an eclipse, producing respectively a partial (or annular) eclipse of the sun, or a fainter obscuration bordering the full shadow on the disk of the moon.” Penumbra’s second meaning also recalls the blot Ralph doodles of Katharine’s head (pen also may mean head): “The lighter outer part or border of a sun-spot, surrounding the darker central nucleus or umbra.” In deconstructing the word, if these are the “penumbra” moments of the text, these moments represent the pen poised upon the threshold of darkness, umbra being the night of high modernism, a coming that is nonetheless deferred by the return of the sun after the war. The pen, set against the night, is also a quill or feather, the feathers of the “lost birds, who were dashed senseless […] against the glass” of the lighthouse lamp in Night and Day (334) and the feathers of the failed artist, “Lapwing,” Dedalus of Ulysses (9:980).

Katharine is led back to her father’s house by Ralph, pushes open the door, and stands “upon the threshold” of the “deep obscurity of the hushed and sleeping household”: “For a moment they waited, and then loosed their hands” (ND 432-33). Bloom and Stephen “take leave, one of the other, in separation,” when Bloom unlocks and pushes open the garden gate: “Standing perpendicular at the same door and on different sides of its base, the lines of their valedictory arms, meeting at any point and forming any angle less than the sum of two right
angles” (17:1220-23). The triangles of these texts, the failed connections between men and between women, must wait a decade or so yet for the eclipse that will make plain alternate ways of seeing, writing, and thus connecting. It isn’t until 1919 that the eclipse of the sun proves Einstein’s principle that the qualities of time and space are not absolute, that Newton’s doctrine that three angles of a triangle must equal two right angles and that a circle is circular in the real is not an absolute truth. The 1919 eclipse enables Einstein to assert his theory of relativity first posited in 1905. Woolf and Joyce must describe failed trajectories, the wounded attachments that circumscribe life and literature and prevent the realization of the “new” in 1904/1909 (a failed trajectory repeated during the war), in order to enable their entry in high modernism, to successfully crossover the 1919 pen-umbra threshold. Woolf and Joyce call us to linger on the chill of the prospect, the “absolute zero […] the incipient intimations of proximate dawn” in order to understand the necessity of the new: Bloom pauses to consider, “The disparition of three final stars, the diffusion of daybreak, the apparition of a new solar disk” (17:1247-48, 1257-58). The appearance of the sun is not to be celebrated; at the end of the war and facing the reinstatement of all that the home-rule sun represents for these characters, these texts underscore the change in the prospect after the eclipse, seeing everywhere “spectres of a shadowland which now will never pass” as H. M. Tomlinson wrote in 1922 (108). The false absolutism and symmetry of the novels’ conclusions—the two right angles of Bloom and Molly’s and Katharine and Ralph’s affirmative call and response—are self-ironic and a warning.66
“if life were no longer circled by an illusion (but was it an illusion after all?)” (ND 4:4)

“June that was too I wooed. The year returns. History repeats itself” (U 13:1092-93)

At the end of “Ithaca,” Bloom attains what Sedgwick calls “the pleasure of amalgamation” (38). Bloom’s identity is reduced by the catechistic narrator who subtracts his social location and the fictions that construct identity (nationality, race, creed, family, education, male authority), which results in the denominator that Bloom equals an auk’s egg, that is “little or nothing, nothing or less than nothing” (17:1953). His knowledge of himself as a drop in the ocean, recalling the Will of the sonnets, enables Bloom to refuse to serve as cuckold or outraged patriarch. To a certain extent then, Bloom triumphs the void, the foundation of the legal fictions of patriarchy as well as the construction of the void according to the fictions of patriarchy, by become nothing, “Noman” (17:2008). The void figures as an allusion to the fearsome feminine, the “great sweet mother […] The scrotumtightening sea” (1.77-78), which is a construct of patriarchy that requires an assertion of masculinity, mastery, and ownership. The void is also the void; Bloom realizes that he (nothing) is only one thing—one seaman contributing semen among innumerable others like the Will of the sonnets: “each one who enters imagines himself to be the first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity”—in his voyage under the “apathy of the stars” (17.2226).

By refusing to serve his role in patriarchal fictions, Bloom opens himself to the possibility of connection by making himself vulnerable. Similarly, having gained a perspective on her position in relation to Katharine and Ralph during a walk through crowded streets after having been denied connection with Ralph, Mary renounces conventional notions of happiness, and turning her thoughts to the pain Ralph has caused, resolves not “to hate any one” (ND 219).
Her refusal to hate, the renunciation of her demands, her recognition of herself as a human being among many others in the stream of life, enables Mary “to see the larger view, to share the vast desires and sufferings of mankind,” and having reduced the individual’s illusions to nothing, there remains “a hard reality, unimpaired by one’s personal adventures, remote as the stars, unqueasable as they are” (ND 220). Mary seems to parallel Bloom’s path toward a socialistic transcendence. However, Bloom’s triumph is won by assuming the paradoxically masculine-heroic role of “Noman” (recalling Ulysses’s adventure with the Cyclops); his ability to refuse patriarchal fictions hinges on his maleness in patriarchy—Molly and the women of the text are always already not men. In Woolf’s text, Mary leaves behind her feminist romance—her heroics in the S.G.S.—from an unease regarding its repetition of patriarchal structures, the hierarchy Clacton represents and the absolutism of Mrs Seal’s zeal. The suffrage society paradoxically threatens to make her “nowoman” and instead a masculine crusader in attempting to win rights for women. Nonetheless, Mary’s femaleness prevents her from ultimately assuming a privileged position (that is, valued by dominant discourses) of renunciation.67

As Sedgwick notes, typical in the erotic triangle of the sonnets is the confusion of identities that the male speaker experiences with the woman, since in his pursuit of “heterosexual adventure with an eye to confirming his identification with other men,” he is himself feminized in the triangle (39). The woman and the young man’s relationship to her has the power to feminize the male speaker, but it is risking this descent into the “female Hell” that ultimately allows the speaker to “be fully a man” (Sedgwick 40). Bloom, the epic hero, risks feminization in turning his head away from his wife’s adultery, in courting Stephen, and in braving the “female Hell” Stephen leads him into in “Circe.” Nevertheless, his Christ-like forgiveness of Molly, his profferment of Molly’s charms to Stephen, and his ultimate emergence from the abyss also assert his status as masculine. McGee notes the parallel of Bloom with Odysseus, who legitimates his paternity and manhood upon return to the marital bed by telling a “simple fiction”: “Bloom
fathers Stephen to this—and only this—extent. He resolves Stephen’s contradictions, he gives him a social position and a title, he recognizes him. Where? In a fiction, a legal fiction” by identifying him as an artist (169). Mary, without rights to an augur’s rod of ash, cannot be author and hero of an Odyssean epic; nonetheless, when she disencumbers her walking stick of ivy, she also chooses to refuse to participate in the legal fictions (marriage, strident suffragette) her femaleness does allow her. Unfortunately, the socialist project she embarks on with Mr Basnett, from a postwar perspective, proves as distant as a star on the horizon and as susceptible to masculine dominance as the S.G.S.68

After Stephen’s departure, Bloom spends his time in meditation of narratives regarding himself and “tranquil recollection of the past” before repose (17:1756). His meditations lead to the reduction of his identity to “Everyman or Noman,” and this renunciation of social locators first provokes visions of pain and distress but also leads to a narrative of odyssey (17:2008). Having escaped social bonds, as Noman, Bloom envisions a journey “beyond the fixed stars and variable suns” traveling amongst various peoples, lands, times, and finally “reluctantly, suncompelled” returns to “obey the summons of recall” (17:1014-18). Having traveled into a new gyre, Bloom as Noman returns in a rebirth, “reborn above delta in the constellation of Cassiopeia,” where he shines like the heroic New Man almosted at the end of Ibsen’s dramas, “a wreaker of justice on malefactors, […] a sleeper awakened” (17:2019-22). However, this nought is never reached, due to the “play of forces, inducing inertia” that hold Bloom: “the obscurity of the night” or the obscurity of high modernism, “the proximity of an occupied bed” or the warm familiarity of the fiction of matrimonial oneness, “the statue of Narcissus, sound without echo, desired desire” or Stephen—Bloom’s mirror of reciprocal flesh enabling the perpetuation of desire in his departure (17:2029-34). Bloom thus parallels Stephen’s earlier attempt on the strand to write a narrative that stretches beyond to other worlds. Stephen thinks: “Why not endless till the farthest star? Darkly they are there behind this light, darkness shining in the brightness, delta
of Cassiopeia, worlds. Me sits there with his augur’s rod of ash [...] I throw this ended shadow from me, manshape ineluctable, call it back” (3:408-13). Their visions together perhaps would make possible such a new text charting the farthest star, just as Mary’s and Katharine’s sympathetic visions would, but each alone they perish in the old romances.

As in Woolf’s texts, the reassertion of the heterosexual romance plot returns with a difference after the eclipse. If “Ithaca” depicts the inability of men to connect under patriarchy, it does not offer the connection of men and women as a happily ever after, the coming together of the masculine and feminine in a wholeness. Rather, the close of “Ithaca” centers on the incompleteness of the relationship between Bloom and Molly. Joyce exposes the two flies stuck, buzzing against transparent ideology, unable to completely use the other as mirrors to perceive his/herself to situate his/her identity. The myth of marital bliss is made plain by shifting the narrative perspective from known Truth, the fiction that marriage and heterosexual relations are the translation of two into one, to a sales pitch for potted meat. In “Lestrygonians,” Bloom thinks of the ad: “What is home without Plumtree’s potted meat? Incomplete. What a stupid ad! Under the obituary notices they stuck it” (8:742-44), and the force of “stuck it” recalls the phrase capping his reverie in which he returns to the Edenic moment on Ben Howth. Threatened by the fact of his insignificance in the cycle of the universe and patriarchal history (“Same old dingdong always” (8:582)) and the construction of male and female relations which push him toward a type (the cuckolded husband), Bloom dwells on a retrospective arrangement of a moment of perfect union when Molly and he consummated their relationship: “She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me” (8:915-16). However, the reverie is capped by the phrases “Stuck on the pane two flies buzzed, stuck” and “Me. And me now. Stuck, the flies buzzed” (8:896, 917-18). Bloom is stuck with Molly in a gyre of nostalgia for the fiction of unity and the promise of their love-making on Howth, a garden before a falling off for both—Bloom’s internalized guilt of failed masculinity and Molly’s entrapment within the female sphere.
On the one hand, Molly is a subversive figure that suggests the New as she moves between borders, sexual, maternal, racial, and class. It is her readiness to challenge conventional ideologies that attracts Bloom. The non-punctuation of Molly’s prose further emphasizes slippages, as in her description of sleeping in Hester’s bed: “I slept in her bed she had her arms around me then we were fighting in the morning with the pillow what fun he was watching me whenever he got an opportunity” (18.638-44). Nonetheless, Molly’s textuality and sexuality do not so much represent her ability to override conventional sexual oppositions as some French feminist critics have argued, as they represent the power and perpetuation of such oppositions. Molly must represent the power of nostalgia; her “Yes” is a siren-call to a fine old romance that isolates women from one another. It is her spatially fixed position and “feminine intuition” that enables Joyce to offer another perspective of Bloom and Stephen. Molly’s service as countersign must act in opposition to the text as a whole, and presses the reader to realize the need for alternatives to both the aesthetic projection of women and the entrapment of women within gendered spheres. Katharine, once again entrapped in her parents’ house, similarly gets the “last word” of Woolf’s text—one that Ralph may see as his passport to eternity, but which a distant reader may read ironically.69

At the close of Night and Day, Ralph is enabled by Katharine to produce a satisfactory fiction of wholeness, to return from chaos and darkness to “the earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun” (432). The narrator shifts from Ralph’s perspective, drawing a veil over the scene: “On a June night the nightingales sing, they answer each other across the plain; they are heard under the window among the trees in the garden” (ND 432). Standing on the threshold of the Hilbery house on the threshold of dawn, “Good night” Ralph breathes to Katharine, and she answers him “Good night” (433). On a June night in 1904, Molly in the Bloom’s bedroom above their garden
returns to an earlier plane, a similar call and response that is superb and brilliant in the sun: “then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower” (18:1605-06). 70

As in colonial encounters, in romantic encounters (as between Bloom and Gerty, Bloom and Stephen, and Katharine and Ralph, and Katharine and Mary) the well-meaning attempt at communication is thwarted by the paradox of separateness, mistranslation, projection on either side, and interpenetration of outside social and cultural discourses’ gendered scripts and scopes. Rosenfeld cites Terence Hewet’s and Rachel Vinrace’s odd disjointed conversation in the jungle in The Voyage Out as a “Saint Vitus’ dance […] instantly seized in the strictures of society,” representative of the fact that any form of communication is always already mediated: “No ‘communication,’ however real and alive, is truly undictated” in the face of social and cultural conventions (36). The lovers must conform to “the Miltonic decree that love must be hierarchical and formalized once formulated,” and it is this submission to a conception of romantic love as thesis and antithesis, of “[m]ind and body, body and mind, she for God in him” that prevents a marriage of the kind Woolf desired (Rosenfeld 37). Woolf undercuts an optimistic reading of Katharine’s engagement since Katharine and Ralph echo Terence and Rachel’s impossibilised connection, the New Woman looking for an alternative narrative in the New Man; indeed, speaking the scripts they are driven to, Katharine and Ralph ultimately do “merely parrot one another” as Rosenfeld notes of Rachel and Terence (37). The revolving triangles of attempted connection are in constant negotiation with “social and cultural conventions,” the plots of patriarchy and psychology; the echoes, parroted affirmations, at the close of both Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts is an exposure of this gyre.

Woolf portrays the tragedy of missed connections between women and the obscured possibilities of other worlds and words signified by the gaps between the stars. Joyce portrays a parallel tragedy between men and the inability to reach other words and worlds since patriarchy
forces men’s consent to masculinity and women’s consent to femininity. Woolf and Joyce, both exiles of patriarchy, were perhaps looking at the same lowlying star and gauging their leaps across the threshold into modernism. From our position of the future realized, we can compare the compositions of Woolf and Joyce and consider the uncanny similarities, but not simply to connect the dots. Until the sentence of the past is realized and broken, perhaps smashed and splintered, as Woolf described the style of Joyce’s work, human relations cannot wake from the nightmare of history. To this end, Woolf and Joyce posited a dual vision emphasizing a bond between observers, allowing the preservation of difference, and opening a new space of creation that resists binary structures. Their ideal vision measures the parallax of the past and the future, romance and reality, the poetic and the prosaic. Such a dual vision might allow me to conclude by imagining Woolf and Joyce stepping into a taxi-cab, riding side by side into the night, and riding atop the cab perhaps, are their readers, guiding the lark, the plunge by the light of a lowlying star.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Woolf and Joyce lay bare the discourses limiting the scope of human interaction, and concomitantly, literature; their deconstructions and their portrayals of tragi-comic missed connections reveal that new means of communicating, connecting, are necessary to awaken from the nightmare of patriarchal history. In these texts, the false dichotomy of masculine artist and thinker versus the feminine muse and monster is exposed in order to understand the wounded attachments that perpetuate such fictions and in order to clear a space for proposing a new understanding of how the “energy of creation and the energy of relation can be united” (Rich 43). Rich describes the needs of the artist: although most “human lives are full of fantasy—passive day dreaming,” to write requires “an imaginative transformation of reality which is in no way passive” (43). Woolf and Joyce react against the ideologies that restrict the “freedom [or flight] of the mind” necessary for the artist “to transcend and transform experience […] to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives,” a freedom “to play around with the notion that day might be night, love might be hate; nothing can be too sacred for the imagination to turn into its opposite or to call experimentally by another name. For writing is re-naming” (Rich 43).

Woolf’s and Joyce’s texts indict literature, and thus human relations, to step from the passive Day dreaming of Shelley’s romanticism and the reductive cycles of Ibsen’s realism into the unwritten possibilities of modernist Night. The voyage, both authors acknowledge, is paradoxical in that only by looking backward can one describe the movement forward, and the voyage is also a difficult one; “It’s exhilarating to be alive in a time of awakening consciousness;
it can also be confusing, disorienting, and painful” (Rich 34). The course of this study of Joyce and Woolf can be found in Woolf’s letter to Gerald Brenan on Christmas Day, 1922, which reflects on her attitudes regarding modern fiction:

This generation must break its neck in order that the next may have smooth going. For I agree with you that nothing is going to be achieved by us. Fragments—paragraphs—a page perhaps: but no more. Joyce to me seems strewn with disaster. I can’t even see, as you see, his triumphs. A gallant approach, that is all that is obvious to me: then the usual smash and splinters (I have only read him, partly, once). (L 2:598)

It is this essential fragmentation that Woolf is coming to terms with and making procreative in *Night and Day* and Joyce already embarked upon in *Ulysses* that marks Woolf and Joyce as binary stars. Woolf further denigrates her letter as “scribbling,” since she is “doubtful whether people, the best disposed towards each other, are capable of more than an intermittent signal as they forge past—a sentimental metaphor, leading obviously to ships, and night and storm and reefs and rocks, and the obscured, uncompassionate moon” (L 2:593). Thus Woolf evokes the tragically limned motif of connection between author and reader, self and other that these works also take as primary, as well as a satiric tone that seeks to strip the morass of sentimentality from this essential attempt at connection which is at the heart of modernism. In terms evocative of *Night and Day*, Woolf writes her letter,

partly as a token (one of those flying signals out of the night and so on) that so we live, all of us who feel and reflect, with recurring cataclysms of horror: starting up in the night in agony: Every ten years brings, I suppose, one of those private orientations which match the vast one which is, to my mind, general now in the race. I mean, life has to be sloughed: has to be faced: to be rejected; then accepted on new terms with rapture. And so on, and so on: till you are 40, when the only problem is how to grasp it tighter and tighter to you, so quick it seems to slip, and so infinitely desirable is it. (L 2:598-99)
It is this simultaneous project of deconstruction (sloughing) and feminist shaping (grasping it tightly) that is described temporally (a project of maturation for the artist) that depicts these authors negotiations with language. In a post script, Woolf adds, “I think I mean that beauty, which you say I sometimes achieve, is only got by the failure to get it; by *grinding all the flints together*; by facing what must be humiliation—the things one can’t do,” and thus the “disaster” of Joyce’s work proves necessary: “But I agree that one must (we, in our generation must) renounce finally the achievement of the greater beauty: the beauty which comes from completeness, in books such as *War and Peace*, and *Stendhal* I suppose, and some of Jane Austen; and Sterne; and I rather suspect in Proust” (emphasis added, L 2:599). By the conclusion of her letter, Woolf has not only accepted Joyce’s fragments but is also arguing against her nostalgia for the old forms of beauty.

Jan Parandowski records a conversation with Joyce in 1937, which has an uncanny correlation with Woolf’s reflections. According to Parandowski, Joyce described his efforts in “Work in Progress,” as aiming to

*grind up words* in order to extract their substance, or to graft one onto another to create crossbreeds and unknown variants, to open up unsuspected possibilities for these words, to marry sounds which were not usually joined before, although they were meant for one another, […] to liberate all sounds […] from their servile, contemptible role and to attach them to the feelers of expressions which grope for definitions of the undefined […] With this hash of sounds I am building the great myth of everyday life. (emphasis added, Potts 160)

He soon added, “Perhaps it will end in failure, be a wreck or ‘catastrophe’ such as Virginia Woolf believed *Ulysses* was; and perhaps in the years to come this work of mine will remain solitary and abandoned, like a temple without believers” (Potts 160-61).
These texts, finished at the end of the First World War and looking back to the supposed threshold of the new in the prewar period, force readers to understand that “The awakening of consciousness is not like the crossing of a frontier—one step and you are in another country” (Rich 48). Rather, it is necessary to track how writers and readers and the modern citizen tread the same patriarchal gyres in each “new” revolution. The ambiguity of the conclusions of both texts are litmus tests for the optimism or pessimism of modernism’s project to forge a new language, and a new relationship that might deconstruct the vexed relationships between socialism and feminism and aesthetics at the turn of the century.

Consequently, my own reading of the optimism or pessimism of Woolf’s and Joyce’s revisions of the New Woman follows their pattern of parallax—refusing closure. My argument that these works figure as feminist deconstructions of patriarchal discourses and narratives is modeled after Joan W. Scott’s argument that two moves are essential to the feminist critical position (369). First, feminist critics must deconstruct the structures of categorical difference, but not by inverting hierarchy in favor of an ultimate truth or an equalizing sameness of identity. Second, and most critically, this critique and deconstruction of categorical difference and its operations in various cultural texts must continually defer fixed meanings, a strategy which ultimately creates “an equality that rests on differences” by disrupting and rendering ambiguous any fixed binary opposition through continual, reflexive deconstructive criticism (Joan Scott 369).

Thus, the second move, which I argue includes the chain of re-visions that Adrienne Rich’s work describes, is necessarily always already incomplete. As the emphasis on seeing together in both texts underscores, in order to avoid obscuring the lived dualities of Western culture, feminist critics must refuse the modernist philosopher’s vision of truthful representation as well as the postmodern “dream of everywhere” that defuses the possibility of political action (Bordo 39). Ultimately, to achieve this dual approach to feminist deconstruction, Woolf and Joyce entreat the reader to make Scott’s second move, to learn from the destructive repression
represented (often by ellipses, in the gaps) in their texts by critically reading our own readings of that text. In order to eschew both reductive binarisms and the postmodern myth of a “dream of everywhere” that speaks for the other, a categorical identity, feminist deconstructionist critics must insist on intersectional frames of analysis and the deferral of definitive readings. The parallaxic vision depicted in Woolf and Joyce, and which we as critical readers bring to both texts risking failure and missed connections, thus continues this work in progress.

Adrienne Rich, writing of the necessity of re-vision on the threshold of the second women’s movement, includes her poem “Planetarium,” which hauntingly returns to Woolf’s and Joyce’s moments of parallax, reminding readers on the threshold of the twenty-first century of the need to star-gaze, to endlessly revise, to speculate the trajectory of the latest gyre:

_Thinking of Caroline Herschel, 1750-1848, astronomer, sister of William; and others_

A woman in the shape of a monster
a monster in the shape of a woman
the skies are full of them

a woman “in the snow
among the Clocks and instruments
or measuring the ground with poles”

in her 98 years to discover
8 comets

she whom the moon ruled
like us
levitating into the night sky
riding the polished lenses

Galaxies of women, there
doing penance for impetuousness
ribs chilled
in those spaces of the mind

An eye,
“virile, precise and absolutely certain”
from the mad webs of Uranisborg
encountering the NOVA

every impulse of light exploding
from the core
as life flies out of us
Tycho whispering at last
“Let me not seem to have lived in vain”

What we see, we see
and seeing is changing

the light that shrivels a mountain
and leaves a man alive

Heartbeat of the pulsar
heart sweating through my body

The radio impulse
pouring in from Taurus

I am bombarded yet          I stand

I have been standing all my life in the
direct path of a battery of signals
the most accurately transmitted most
untranslatable language in the universe
I am a galactic cloud so deep          so invo-
lated that a light wave could take 15
years to travel through me          And has
taken I am an instrument in the shape
of a woman trying to translate pulsations
into images          for the relief of the body
and the reconstruction of the mind. (47-48)
Notes to Chapter 1:

1. "Day" here refers to Victorian, patriarchal, and classical forms, in comparison with modernist "Night."

2. Victor Luftig persuasively argues in his Seeing Together: Friendship Between the Sexes in English Writing, from Mill to Woolf that the description of two individuals "seeing together" in Woolf's modernist literature provides an alternative to the limited terms of friendship and breaks the "thralldom" of the heterosexual romance plot (in Rachel Blau DuPlessis's terms) by renaming or refusing to name in instead portraying "the active realization of a bond between the fellow observers" (217).

3. The OED defines parallax: "Apparent displacement, or difference in the apparent position, of an object, caused by actual change (or difference) of position of the point of observation; spec. the angular amount of such displacement or difference of position, being the angle contained between the two straight lines drawn to the object from the two different points of view, and constituting a measure of the distance of the object." Marianne DeKoven explores the gendered implications of how modernist writing acted as a "sea-change" in her book Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism. Tracking the relationship "between literary modernism and political radicalism," DeKoven argues that "modernist form" developed to represent the "terrifying appeal" of "late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism and socialism" (4). Her use of "sous-rature," an unresolved contradiction or unsynthesized dialectic [. . .] that enacts in the realm of form an alternative to culture's hegemonic hierarchical dualisms," as a paradigm for modernism, influences this study (4).

4. Woolf's and Joyce's form (both within their texts and their texts in relation to other literary conventions) might be described as "formal decomposition," a term Marcel Duchamp's used to describe his Nude Descending a Staircase (1912) which represents the modernist portrayal of paradoxically simultaneous fragmentation and unity, the satiric relationship of modernism with science and mathematics, and the modernist project of decentering; Duchamp called it "a static image of movement" (Cabanne 30). According to Duchamp, Nude is an example of "formal decomposition; that is, linear elements following each other like parallels and distorting the object. The object is completely stretched out, as if elastic. The lines follow each other in parallels, while changing subtly to form the movement, or the form" (Cabanne 29). Thus, viewers, like the readers of Woolf and Joyce, are made to view the resulting text in a series of parallactic measurements or judgements. These judgements push the viewer/reader to realize his or her wounded attachments to past form and narrative. This study uses Wendy Brown's notion of "wounded attachments" which describes the modern individual's negotiation of a past that structures one's identity in the present in order to clear a space for the future. Nietzsche's Zarathustra, as a 'redeemer of history' seeks to triumph over his powerlessness in the face of time "by remaking the present against the terms of the past," making possible a future against the fragments of the past (Brown 72).
5 At the close of “Sirens,” Joyce turns from his initial style of interior monologue and third-person narrator to a panoply of voices—an unnamed debt collector; the writers of legal briefs, newspaper reports and features, and scientific accounts; the authoress of a romantic Victorian novel; the great prose writers in English literary history”; Joyce returned to monologue with “Penelope,” but without an intervening narrator (Groden 42-43). In 1920, Joyce sent to Carlo Linati a schema of Ulysses in order to emphasize the layers of the text, including in his letter the assertion that, “It is an epic of two races (Israelite-Irish) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)” (qtd. in Groden 38).

6 Ezra Pound’s dictum to “make it new” has been a hallmark of modernism for subsequent critics and scholars. Pound used this dictum as a title for a 1934 essay collection and it also appears in Canto LIII.

7 In 1908, Woolf reviewed The Letters from Percy Bysshe Shelley to Elizabeth Hitchener. Woolf describes how Hitchener was a schoolmarm that the young Shelley met and kept up an intense correspondence with. When he married Harriet Westbrook, Elizabein and Shelley’s relationship “was to be a spiritual companionship” (E 1:175). Harriet had an affair with one of Shelley’s close friends, which prompted Shelley to entreat Elizabeth to “join his wandering household directly;” and Harriet, in some of the most interesting letters in the volume, was made to add her entreaty to his” (E 1:176). Woolf’s sarcasm is hardly subtle as she analyzes the decline and fall of the illusions of their relationship (“the women were the first to discover that the others were imposters”) and Shelley’s egotism, noting Elizabeth’s transition from “spiritual sister and prophetess” in Shelley’s eyes to “The Brown Demon” whom Shelley felt “must be got rid of even at the cost of a yearly allowance of a hundred pounds” (E 1:177).

8 Rachel Blau DuPlessis coined the phrase “both/and vision” in her essay “For the Etruscans,” defining such a vision as the “end of the either/or dichotomized universe” (276).

9 In Night and Day, the attempt of Mrs. Hilbery, with Katharine’s help, to write their poetic forefather’s biography can serve as an allegory for Woolf’s vexed position on a literary-historical threshold. Mrs. Hilbery’s whimsicality and her propensity for proto-modern poetic forays prevents her from writing the sort of “Standard Biography” described in Lytton Strachey’s preface to Eminent Victorians or in the form that would admit acceptance into the Dictionary of National Biography which Leslie Stephen edited from 1882 to 1890 (resigning under the strain of his position). Straddling this threshold, the Hilbery women are suppressed, on the one hand, by conventions and internalized respect for the old order from creating a radical new form, and on the other, by a dim awareness that the old forms are inadequate and (on Katharine’s part) a lack of interest in the unending project of preservation. Indeed, this threshold seems to critique the text’s own position, suggesting that re-writing the past while still nodding to old forms (even ironically) forces the writer to risk getting mired in hopeless paradox.

10 According to Paul de Man’s Blindness and Insight, romanticism in literature seeks to resolve the contradictory relationship between natural being and the being of consciousness or attempts to persuade one to reside within it.

11 This reading stands in contrast to Marylu Hill’s analysis of the modernist portrayals of the New Woman (including Forster, Richardson, Sinclair, Hall, and Woolf), which argues that the young women of these texts “embody a hopeful vision of ‘personhood’ rising out of the decayed hulks of Victorian gender codes” in that “these women do not reject the legacy of their Victorian
mothers as did their New Woman counterparts of the 1890s" and instead “participate in a marked pattern of maturation which leads them from an early male identification, symbolized by an affinity with a father figure and his command of language and learning, to a later reconciliation with a mother figure who represents an alternative sense of knowledge, perception and language,” following Kristeva’s notion of the repressed feminine (4).

Notes to Chapter 2:

12 William Butler Yeats’s “The Second Coming,” published in January 1919 provides a point of reference in my exploration of Woolf’s and Joyce’s re-visions:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle.
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

13 See Joyce’s critical writings; see also recorded conversations regarding Dante’s influence on Joyce in Richard Ellmann, Arthur Powers, and Willard Potts. Jane Marcus notes in a footnote “the Dantean circle which arranges our perceptions in Night and Day” (103). Although Lawrence Warner has published a study of Dante in Mrs Dalloway and Three Guineas, Woolf’s use of Dante seems largely an unmined field. In 1917, Woolf read Dante’s Purgatorio, and Milton’s Paradise Lost the following year (McNees 11).

14 In the New Woman fiction Jude the Obscure, Jude and Sue struggle to produce an original governing fiction counter to the conventional romance plot, but their tortuous struggle, lacking functional idioms or alternatives, is finally futile and ultimately encapsulated by Philoxen: “O—the old story” (401).
At the close of *Night and Day*, a text riddled with Conrad allusions, Ralph feels supreme gratitude for Katharine who makes possible “the recollection from chaos, the return of security, the earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun. From the heart of his darkness he spoke his thanksgiving” (432).

Yeat’s image of a rocking cradle is commonly read as symbolic of Catholicism, Jesus the Son of Man, rather than as allusive to women’s oppression within patriarchy as maternal servants—a point made horrifyingly explicit in Yeat’s “The Mother of God.” My point here is that Joyce’s text exposes the continuum of oppression that patriarchal structures such as the church perpetuate—Stephen refuses to serve a church that has made his mother victim and siren, and in doing so must refuse the mother that loves him since the mother is implicated—the hand that rocks the cradle.

Regarding the other images of the poem, in addition to this focus on the wheels within wheels of the cosmos, the descent into darkness, and the epiphanic moment, it seems that the use of the sphinx as metaphor is a particularly modernist phenomenon. The sphinx speaks the riddle that the title of Woolf’s novel answers and is implicated in Mary’s daydreams at the British Museum. Yeat’s poem gives the sphinx a man’s face, but couples its slouching arrival with the revolt of women against the nightmare of history. The sphinx links Bloom and Stephen, particularly in Stephen’s thoughts elucidating the meaning of Bloom’s troubled sight which is finally intersected with his own impaired vision in “Circe”: “Hm. Sphinx. The beast that has two backs at midnight. Married” (15.3631-2). Greek myth characterizes the sphinx as a creature that has the head of a woman and the body of a lion and the wings of a bird. One thinks of “a worm winged like an eagle,” the “odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards,” the silent woman Woolf uncovers in *A Room of One’s Own* (44). The sphinx appears in Egypt in the form of a sun god, usually a head of a king wearing his headdress and the body of a lion, in a desert formed by the fall of Phaeton from his chariot. The Sphinx of the Giza plateau was cleared of accumulated layers of sand in 1905—figuring prominently in the popular press alongside stories about the New Woman, as a symbol of power, gazing beyond or through New Man imperialists.

In their history of the war, Wilson and Hammerton note that “Business as usual” was the motto of London” (84). The outcome of the first total war denoted a victory for “God, King, and Country,” and to many, particularly modernists, feminists, socialists, and the colonized, this “victory” left the sense “that the war had left unfinished business and that further wars were to follow” (Howard 14). Indeed, the Great War would become World War I or the First World War in retrospect.

“There was talk of wild young people in London [...] of night clubs; of negroid dances. People gazed in horror at the paintings of Gauguin, and listened with delighted alarm to the barbaric measures of Stravinsky” (Dangerfield 63-64). See Martin Green’s *Children of the Sun and New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Patterson Strike Pageant*, as well as Modris Eksteins’ *Rites of Spring*. In addition to the intersection of political and aesthetic seeming-revolution, the scientific realm experienced “the rapidly advancing scientific demolition of the Newtonian universe,” as “rational man undermined his own world” through the “discoveries of Planck, Einstein and Freud” (Eksteins *Rites* 31). Woolf in the Bloomsbury circle and Joyce in Trieste and Paris were certainly in touch with this spirit of tragic rebellion.

Goldman quotes William C. Wees, “between 1910 and 1914, labour strife, the Parliament Act, screaming suffragettes, and artists’ ‘maltreatment of the human form divine’ seemed, to many
people, to be parts of a conspiracy to undermine traditional order and decency” (118). In 1910, further providing a link of Night and Day to this year since the text references the strike, Winston Churchill ordered troops to break the strike of Welsh miners at Tonypandy (Goldman 117).

20 I do not mean to suggest that patriarchy and imperialism are exactly synonymous (since women are the colonized in a patriarchal hierarchy) as Gilbert and Gubar have, a view which Sally Ledger has refuted by emphasizing how some Western feminists have also supported imperialist ideology (72). Nonetheless, in the texts I am focusing on, Woolf is precisely interested in exposing the continuum of oppression of the racially and sexually colonized and how patriarchy and patriarchal imperialism succeed by isolating the colonized. See Susan Hudson Fox on a reading of Night and Day as refuting British imperialism. Also consider Woolf’s interest in Parnell, which is documented in her letters and diaries as well as the opening of The Years.

21 Amy Lowell’s poem “In the Stadium,” published posthumously in A Shard of Silence (1957) continues:

This is war:
Boys flung into a breach
Like shoveled earth;
And old men,
Broken,
Driving rapidly before crowds of people
In a glitter of silly decorations.
Behind the boys
And the old men,
Life weeps,
And shreds her garments
To the blowing winds.

Mrs Seal, the zealous and flighty suffragette that works for the S.G.S. in Night and Day, tells Mary that the fight will “last all our lifetimes. As one falls another steps into the breach” (221). However, Woolf is putting Mrs Seal’s absolute and myopic dedication to the suffrage to question, indeed giving it a military metaphor, since Mrs Seal laments how simple the fight should be, since “good is so unmistakably divided from the bad” in her perception (221). The horror of a gradualist concept of change for women is the possible negation of enlightenment won in previous gyres, that those filling the vast abyss have leaped into the darkness in vain—a cartoon in Punch at the turn of the century sympathetically depicts a suffragette as a brave Sisyphus.

22 On July 26, 1917, responding to David Garnett’s praise of The Mark on the Wall, Woolf writes, “I daresay one ought to invent a completely new form. Anyhow its very amusing to try with these short things, and the greatest mercy to be able to do what one likes—no editors, or publishers, and only people to read who more or less like that sort of thing” (L2:167). Night and Day as a much longer piece couldn’t be published by the Hogarth Press.

23 The emphasis, I would argue, should not only fall on “callous,” but also on “to be.” It is an emphasis on the odd threshold position of being in the moment of eclipse and yet also realizing that moment of being as if from a critical distance, a distance that thus enables one to realize the moment’s connotation in the context of civilization as recurring cycles of oppression.
Besides the echoes of this scene in *Night and Day*, the same chords are struck at the end of *Mrs Dalloway* when Clarissa stands at the window, watching the woman across the street watching her. Hearing of Septimus’s suicide, Clarissa’s world is plunged into “profound darkness” but then placed in wondrous relief, having “lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank” because of the change in perspective that news of Septimus’s death has caused (MD 282). Like the narrator of “Sympathy,” Clarissa hears the “leaden circles” of the clock striking and the noises of the street, and “she did not pity him; [...] she did not pity him. [...] Fear no more the heat of the sun. [...] But she must go back” (MD 283-2).

In a 1917 review of Lady Newton’s history of the house of Lyme, Woolf notes that “The name of Lyme, indeed, stands for *times*, a border, for the three counties of Cheshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire come together at this point” (E 2:97), the significance that she should focus on this point of triangular perspective and the root of the word liminal, in a review of a text which forces us to feel an “affectionate respect” for such houses that are “a sanctuary for the lovely wreckage of the past” is suggestive in reading “Sympathy” as well as *Night and Day* (E 2:97).

A kitchen table is Woolf’s favored symbol for the paradox of the subject’s relation to reality.

Peter Walsh, in a similar dynamic with Clarissa, makes the same gesture in *Mrs Dalloway*.

The images and tone of Guiderius’s song resonates throughout *Mrs Dalloway* as well as “Sympathy,” and *Night and Day*. In Joyce, Stephen’s and Bloom’s thoughts throughout their day and their missed connection under Molly’s lamp and the cosmos further explore these themes. Indeed, having elaborated his Shakespeare theory and crossing paths with Bloom at the library threshold, Stephen notes two plurnes of smoke ascending and quotes *Cymbeline* (9:1221-25).

GUIDERIUS. Fear no more the heat o’ the sun,
   Nor the furious winter’s rages;
   Thou thy worldly task hast done,
   Home art gone, and ta’en thy wages;
   Golden lads and girls all must,
   As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.
ARVIRAGUS. Fear no more the frown o’ the great,
   Thou art past the tyrant’s stroke:
   Care no more to clothe and eat;
   To thee the reed is as the oak.
   The sceptre, learning, physic, must
   All follow this and come to dust.
GUIDERIUS. Fear no more the lightning flash,
ARVIRAGUS. Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stroke;
GUIDERIUS. Fear not slander, censure rash;
ARVIRAGUS. Thou hast finish’d joy and moan:
BOTH. All lovers young, all lovers must
   Consign to thee and come to dust. (Cym. 4.2.329-40)

Jane Marcus details how *Night and Day* is a response to the “masculinist-pacifism” and misogyny of the Cambridge-Bloomsbury culture; it is after all “an anti-war novel [...] against the ‘sex war’” (101). Woolf thus exposes how such progressive minds as the Cambridge-Bloomsbury set yet managed to reproduce patriarchal beliefs in their gendered prejudices.
regarding art and propriety, tacitly linking such masculinism with the masculinism that produced actual war. Woolf joined the Women’s Suffrage Movement in January 1910, joining the nonviolent section of the movement rather than the ranks of the suffragettes. Woolf despairs in a letter to Janet Case over her desire for action, regretting that “conversation isn’t enough” (L1:421). By November of that year, Woolf’s enthusiasm waned; her letters describe the monotonous tollings of suffrage meetings that she attended and express impatience with the progress of the vote.

Shirley Nelson Garner has read the novel against the conventional reading of a traditional comic novel, arguing that the “significant story” of the text “is the one told indirectly,” that is, the denied relationship between women (319).

At the close of “Ithaca,” Bloom achieves a similar state of “equanimity” (17:2155).

Notes to Chapter 3:

According to Einstein’s theory, which he began to formulate in 1905, since light is subject to time and space, it too should abide by the curvatures of what Einstein called space-time. Thus, gravity should bend light, and an eclipse would prove this since, if relativity is correct, light from the stars behind the dimmed sun should be seen to bend into the gravitational dimple created by the sun, making the stars appear slightly out of alignment. The 1919 photographs captured the deflected light of the distant stars. Joyce’s, Woolf’s, and Einstein’s projects can thus be seen in metaphoric alignment, in “abandon[ing] the prey for the shadow” (Potts 88).

Essentially, Katharine sketches James’s model of a ring of lamps (in which each lamp serves to intensely light an aspect of the central aspect of his novel) by indicating the parallel epiphanies of Mary, William, and Ralph. She resolves to break from this model and take up the Russian inspiration she’s found in The Idiot. However, her moment of realization here also parallels the renunciations she’s just highlighted, thus making her another lantern-bearer.

Wendy Brown’s term, “wounded attachments,” is a refraction of Nietzsche’s resentment in the context of late modern identity politics. Brown paraphrases Nietzsche’s theorization of the three achievements of resentment: “it produces an affect (rage, righteousness) that overwhelms the hurt, it produces a culprit responsible for the hurt; and it produces a site of revenge to displace the hurt,” thus it externalizes what is otherwise “unendurable” (68). This theory is also an explanation for the “feature of the will that is stricken by history, that rails against time itself, that cannot ‘will backwards,’ that cannot exert its power over the past” (72).

Woolf’s reading notebooks of 1918 record the entry “Wordsworth’s Preface to Lyrical Ballads/1800” as well as “Shelley’s Defence of Poetry” (Silver 153, 155).

In April 1918, Harriet Weaver approached the Woolfs regarding publishing Ulysses at The Hogarth Press. The Woolfs declined for several reasons, a major factor being the inadequacy of the Press to handle such a large text. Virginia Woolf made reading notes on the episodes that had appeared in the Little Review, March through October 1918 (“Telemachus” to “Aeolus”) (see “Modern Novels (Joyce)” in Bonnie Kime Scott).
37 The OED defines burke as: “To murder, in the same manner or for the same purpose as Burke did; to kill secretly by suffocation or strangulation, or for the purpose of selling the victim's body for dissection,” an interesting word choice that supports my reading of Woolf's reading of Joyce as similarly embarking on a deconstructionist project.

38 The metaphor of dynamiting fiction appears frequently during the postwar period, influenced by European anarchists, radical feminist activists, as well as the mythic lure of the American Western man. Walter Benjamin argues that the historian must be "man enough to blast open the continuum of history" and thus break from the "narcotic" orientation to history of the nineteenth century (emphasis added, qtd. in Eksteins “Cultural” 334).

39 Joyce's aesthetic development follows parallel lines; the young Joyce is attracted to the Jamesian craft, as evidenced in his reading of Ibsen's treatment of life in his art which is similar to Stephen Dedalus's conception of the artist: "He sees it steadily and whole, as from a great height, with perfect vision and an angelic dispassionateness, with the sight of one who may look on the sun with open eyes" (CW 65). Ulysses tracks Joyce's move from this conception of the artist.

40 Compare with Woolf's side note in her reading notes for "Modern Novels": “Yet it seems just possible that the big things are the big things: love, death, jealousy and so on; but must be seen again, felt again; always, perpetually. Yet Joyce is quite right, morally, not artistically, to do this” (645).

41 Shaw also describes this "crablike progress" as the "retrogressive movement of progress" (16). Martin Green has tracked the cyclical reappearance of the dandy and his variations (rogue, naif, and I would add the New Man) through literature and history, focusing on the cult of the dandy after 1918, a group of young men he describes as "Children of the Sun." Interestingly, Woolf and Joyce portray this narcissistic and romantic young man's reemergence prewar precisely in order to comment upon his inability to alter his role in the gyres of history. Woolf and Joyce do not pessimistically reveal that rebellion is a hysteric cycle, but entreat a reevaluation of what perpetuates patriarchal structures, indicting the romanticism of the New Man and his narcissistic ties to the old patriarchal orders.

42 The triangles of the texts are multiple. Simply stated, the plot of Ulysses is driven in dramatic action by the Bloom, Molly, Boylan triangle, and it is driven in suppressed action by the Bloom, Molly, Stephen triangle. Similarly, the plot of Night and Day is driven in dramatic action by the mismatched couples of the Katharine, William, Ralph triangle, and it is driven in suppressed action by the Katharine, Ralph, Mary triangle.

43 Of course, the satire of Woolf's novel is less barbed and remorseless than Joyce's or even Lytton Strachey's critique in his contemporaneous Eminent Victorians. Critics such as Mark Hussey have noted that Leonard Woolf's The Wise Virgins (1914) is more direct (some have argued cruel) in its criticism of courtship (probably a thinly veiled rewriting of his and Virginia's), class and race based divides, and its tone of rebellion. Leonard's book, it is interesting to note, "became an instant failure" (Rosenfeld 56). Virginia Woolf seemed more reluctant in breaking out the windows, not only from a desire for re-construction, but also from an understanding of what her audience would accept. Joyce's satire of the mind of a young woman gilded by sentimental fiction, "Nausicaa," resulted in one of the most famed censorship trials in publication history. The uneasy ambiguity of critique in Woolf's text, which is willing to
violently sacrifice Cassandra on the barb of satire but not to go so far as to portray Ralph as a Jewish usurper, captures the socio-historic context in which Woolf wrote, her struggle as an artist for confidence and rebellion without the benefit of a strong vision of the future. Susan Squier has trenchantly noted that the accepted classic romance plot of Woolf’s novel is only subtly transformed, in order for the inclusion of a more radical breach of social codes in Mary’s choice of work rather than romance to be included without offending readers (140). Did the compromise, however, work too well, allowing readers to gratefully ignore the unease underlying Katharine’s submission and isolation from Mary?

44 A coincident comment on the ugliness of modernism: Edward Garnett reported of a manuscript of Joyce’s Portrait similarly: “It is too discursive, formless, unrestrained, and ugly things, ugly words, are too prominent” and the text needs to be “pulled into shape and made more definite” along the lines of the “old conventions […] in the background” to excuse its being “realistic” “unattractive” (JL 2:371). Further, the book’s ending “is a complete falling to bits […] they fall like damp ineffective rockets” (JL 2:371-2).

45 Stephen is what Victor Turner has described as a “threshold” person, “neither here nor there; […] betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (95).

46 Ironically, the depiction of the vampire drawing upon the feminine muse is doubly vampiric—since the verse is an alteration of a poem by Douglas Hyde.

47 “Nausicaa” parallels this scene: Bloom’s attempt to write a message with his “manshape,” a stick, in the sand for a seeming New Woman, Gerty MacDowell, is similarly disappointing to Stephen’s attempt, and Bloom flings his stick away as well. Additionally, it is perhaps Bloom who will read the signs that Stephen writes (3:415). Meta-textually Stephen’s question “would it be mine, form of my form?” can be read to comment on the debates surrounding the likening of modernism to an essential feminine (3:414). Shari Benstock argues that the “psychosexual-textual structures” that “occupy a textual space that overlaps a cultural space, a margin of difference or a vanishing point of meaning,” signifying a space unrecognized by the “law of representation,” is the textual feminine (xvi-xvii). According to Benstock, modernism and feminism have largely failed to actualize this textual feminine as a result of the hegemony of binaristic representation/rationalization structures. Even Cixous’s “écriture féminine” or Luce Irigaray’s “parler femme” risks segregation to an idealized and lost presymbolic space or risks alignment with “psychotic speechlessness or its opposite, logorrhea” (Benstock xvi).

48 Bloom mentions Sir Robert Ball’s book of astronomy, which offers a definition of parallax, “it is by parallax that the distance of the sun, or indeed, the distance of any other celestial body, must be determined. Let us take a simple illustration. Stand near a window whence you can look at buildings, or the trees, the clouds or any distant objects,” recalling the key scenes of parallax in Woolf’s texts and Molly’s vantage point; “Place on the glass a thin strip of paper vertically in the middle of one of the panes. Close the right eye, and note with the left eye the position of the strip of paper relatively to the objects in the background,” significant in indicating the role of parallax in proving the theory of relativity; “Then, while still remaining in the same position, close the left eye and again observe the position of the strip of paper with the right eye. You will find that the position of the paper on the background has changed […] This apparent displacement of the strip of paper, relatively to the distant background, is what is called parallax” (qtd. in Knowles 10).
In Stephen’s Shakespeare theory, he argues that the church is founded on the myth of paternity rather than the madonna: “Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son?” (9:837-45).

Joyce’s move from the drawing-room to the streets also raises the issue of how the woman of the streets reflects the modernist artist. By the turn of the century, women as *flaneuses* had become what Elizabeth Wilson describes as “an irruption in the city, a symptom of disorder, and a problem: the Sphinx in the city” (9). In Woolf’s novel, Mary is depicted as becoming revitalized by her movement through the city, and Katharine’s abrupt departures from her father’s drawing-room (in one instance, holding a slice of bread and butter) echo this sense of irruption and change. Woolf’s essay “Street Haunting” reveals the narrator “poised on an ideological fault line,” wavering between “the bourgeois security of the private room and the compelling, but threatening, energy of the streets” (Hankins 18), thus provoking another threshold image that Katharine’s street wanderings (contrasted with Mary’s purposeful walks) represents. Questioning Woolf’s preference for androgyne in her street narrators, Hankins asserts, “For Woolf, gender makes the difference in the urban scene” (19), an assertion that can equally be applied to Joyce’s portrayals. The vacillation between identity and anonymity, spectacle and gazer, draws attention to the importance of gender in street subjectivity; the *flaneur* as Walter Benjamin and contemporaries figured it was a male construct. When a female takes up this subject position, not only does the reader encounter a gender switch but also “a marked difference in role and historical time frame. Without feminism, a *flaneuse* remained a pawn within a male system […] freely occupying a street of one’s own was impossible until one had a room of one’s own” (Hankins 19). Joyce’s portrayal of women in the street (Stephen’s sisters, Gerty, prostitutes) exposes their entrapment in a phallic economy as much as Molly’s entrapment within the house docs.

“Nausicaa” thus reveals that the discourses overlaying the phallic economy, particularly the notion of “true love” and the heterosexual quest romance, are ideological discourses woven to appear as magically transcendental carpets, which will transport the subject out of immediate material realities, and these castles in the air (to paraphrase Ibsen’s *The Master Builder*) are grotesque constructions for those unable to reach them as well as those that do succeed in gaining them. “In ‘Nausicaa’ the idealist spirituality present in ‘Telemachus,’ and in *The Lamplighter*, has been assimilated into and transformed by a materialist spirituality” in Bloom’s and Gerty’s consciousness (Richards 218). Despite the humor of the scene, Joyce is not merely laughing at Gerty’s expense but revealing our participation in it. Leonard notes “there is something cruel in the fact that Gerty’s masquerade is so successful with Bloom that his typical sensitivity to suffering is lulled to sleep by her performance” (112). In a further lighthouse/bird connection with Ralph’s projections of Katharine, Leonard has shown how the imagery of a lighthouse beam in “Nausicaa” and Gerty’s ruminations on it suggest a parallel between the beam and the male gaze: “a woman will be lost at sea or wrecked on the rocks in the absence of a male gaze to guide her home” (109).

Compare Stephen’s stream of consciousness to Clarissa Dalloway’s as she sews in meditative repose in the drawing-room, having dismissed Lucy (who has shyly paid tribute to her loveliest of mistresses, “mistress of silver, of linen of china, for the sun”):

So on a summer’s day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying ‘that is all’ more and more ponderously, until even the
heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is all [...] Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the wave breaking; the dog barking, far away barking and barking. (MD 56, 58-59)

Notes to Chapter 4:

53 Brenda Lyons has described the importance of Plato in Woolf’s Jacob’s Room, and Stephen Whittaker, who describes the intersection of physics and Plato in Ulysses, has argued that Woolf saw herself as a modern Phaedrus in the writing of A Room of One’s Own. See also Joleyn Wood, “Scylla and Charybdis” (and Phaedrus): The Influence of Plato and the Artistry of Joyce.”

54 The Buck-Stephen-Bloom triangle can also be theorized according to Martin Green’s Sonnenkind cult, which focuses on the generation of young men after the Great War that “no longer wanted to grow up to become fathers themselves” (39) and which incorporated the clown of commedia dell’arte as symbol of Sonnenkind sensibility. Stephen is a Pierrot figure, “a haggard hamlet,” wearing black and often a tri-cornered opera hat, and in a vexed relationship with his feminine muse (21). Buck and Cranly play Harlequin roles, extravagant and violent, “insolent, mocking, clownish, and above all, obscene” (21). Bloom via Molly plays the Columbine figure, the “whore-with-the-heart-of-gold” (22). Stephen’s departure to France and his episode in the brothel in the fantasy-world of “Circe” are further correspondences (23).

55 The genius and gender of Shakespeare seem a foundational metaphor of the ongoing debate of nature and nurture and their affects in literature. New Woman fiction writer Mona Caird’s 1887 essays on marriage challenged the point of view that women essentially lacked artistic genius, requesting that those who wished “to know why many women have not written Shakespeare’s plays (as it is generally quaintly expressed)” consider the obstacles of “the weary detail of domestic duties, of the unending petty responsibilities, the constant call ‘to give small decisions and settle minute emergencies’” (qtd. in Pykett 181).

56 The Apostles was a fraternal society at Cambridge, including J. M. Keynes, G. E. Moore, Leonard Woolf, and Strachey among others, which adopted a Platonic orientation and excluded women. Womanizing was acceptable only as an outlet for baser values in order to keep their manly love pure. The esprit of the Apostles is captured in Stephen’s experiences in Portrait as well as his interactions in “Scylla and Charybdis” and with Buck Mulligan and Cranly.

57 The criticism describing the nuances of the Stephen and Bloom relationship parallels criticism of the relationship of Dante’s pilgrim and Brunetto Latini in Canto 15 of The Inferno. Reviewing this criticism, Ronald Martinez explores the complexity of representing a love that “dare not speak its name” in Dante’s period (557). Martinez also questions some critics interpretation of the metaphor of “the pilgrim’s relation to Brunetto (as to Virgil)” as “that of a son to a father”: “Not of cause a natural father: what in another context might be a ‘mere’ metaphor for the relationship of a mentor and a disciple is here charged with irony, for Brunetto’s repeated claims to a figurative fathering of the pilgrim take place against the background of the sterility of Sodom” (557-58).
58 Since Froula ultimately reads Stephen as Stephen/Joyce and thus authoring “Penelope,” she can argue that Stephen’s refusal to connect with Bloom is part of a greater deconstructionist plan: Stephen submits himself to the law of gender, “internalizes its logic, and then meticulously vivisects himself, exposing the violence by which it cuts the subject off from the full register of human possibility” (193).

59 Significantly, the moment in which Joyce’s protagonists come closest to communicating, connecting, is “a gesture, rather than words” and a gesture which “Stephen has learned to distrust and Bloom has recognized as a form of false speech,” that is, the offering of an arm at the end of “Eumaeus” (Craig 132). This hypothesis strikingly parallels Mary’s gesture of fingering the fur of Katharine’s skirt. Although this is the moment of closest possible connection, it is a gesture that would seem meaningless to Katharine in a different context and which, in its conventional complimentary terms, would be seen as false by the practical Mary.

60 Stephen notes in his Shakespeare theory that, along with a name, “A star, a daystar, a firedrake: rose at his birth,” shining by day and night (9:928-29). Stephen mentally wonders what his name will mean—what his “configuration” reads in the skies; perhaps “Bous Stephanoumenos” [ox/bull-soul of Stephen] (9:939-41).

61 In “Eumaeus,” Bloom discourses on the passion of Spanish and Italian temperaments, offering Stephen the example of his own wife. Stephen, “rambling on to himself or some unknown listener somewhere,” (perhaps Joyce’s readers familiar with his trouble in publishing and producing his play Exiles which is alluded to in the previous line “Roberto ruba bona sua [Robert stole his things!”), responds with the observation “we have the impetuosity of Dante and the isosceles triangle miss Portinari he fell in love with” (16:882-86). Here Joyce deconstructs his own earlier passionate attachment to the love triangle of the artist-genius.

62 Leonard V. Smith argues for a re-vision of the metanarrative of World War I as tragedy, suggesting the comic mode as a displacement of the tragic. Comic here is not meant in the sense of evoking laughter (although it may), but rather “simply own[ing] up to the basic contrivance of narrative itself” (Smith 145). Smith quotes Carolyn Bynum, “Comedy tells many stories, achieves conclusion only by coincidence and wild improbability, and undergirds our sense of human limitation, even our cynicism about our motives and self-awareness” (145). See also, Mel Brooks.

63 This is Bloom’s abject attraction to Bella/o.

64 That Mulligan, the clown (Harlequin to Stephen’s Pierrot), caps Stephen’s earlier speech on the fiction of paternity with a satire of Bloom is an interesting connection for the reader here.

65 The promise of these parallel scenes, both capped by the pairs touching (Stephen on Bloom’s arm and Mary holding Katharine’s wrist) are redolent with last-supper tragedy. The impossibility of the optimism in their connection is undercut by the words the couples speak to each other. At the close of “Eumaeus,” Stephen sings “Und alle Schiffe brucken” [and all ships are bridged] rather than Johannes Jeep’s line, which translates as “Which brings the ship into misfortune” (16:1884): the first verse of Jeep’s song warns against the sirens of the sea, “For their song resounds so sweetly; / That the sailors fall asleep, / The ship is brought into misfortune” (Gifford
562). Indeed, when Mary releases Katharine’s hand it is to Mrs Hilbery’s siren song of the wife’s voyage out, as Katharine yields to “a flood of confusion, of relief, of certainty, of humility” and allows herself to “sink within [Ralph’s] arms” (ND 385).

66 In her review of Night and Day, Katharine Mansfield concludes by setting up the novel as ultimately naïve:

It is so far away, so shut and sealed from us to-day. What could be more remote than the house at Cheyne Walk. [...] We had thought that this world was vanished for ever, that it was impossible to find on the great ocean of literature a ship that was unaware of what has been happening. Yet here is Night and Day fresh, new and exquisite, a novel in the tradition of the English novel. In the midst of our admiration it makes us feel old and chill: we had never thought to look upon its like again! (110)

However, Mansfield’s own words belie the strength of the novel’s satire and ambiguity: the reader is made to realize his or her “admiration” for the old conventions and narrative grooves which when set against the realities of the postwar world creates a “chill” sensation. Geoffrey Hartman argues that Woolf engages, like “every great artist,” with the paradox of the individual’s need for grounding fictions, “a world, a substantialized Yes,” and the artist’s rebellion against “the necessity of fiction, i.e., the inherently affirmative structure of imagination” (37). Modris Eksteins sums up perspective in the “wake” of the war, “which mobilized some sixty million men, killed off about one in six, and mutilated about one in three, nothing could look or sound the same as before. Prewar harmonies, though reproduced ad nauseam, rang hollow. The connections were gone. Meaning, like a huge artillery shell, had exploded into endless fragments” (340). Stephen’s strategy of silence against the nightmare of history is emblematic of Woolf’s and Joyce’s textual choices in these works, as well as the zeitgeist of the postwar chill. The return of the representative home-rule sun meant the triumph “to preserve tradition, law, and empire, to preserve a world with boundaries, regulation, and definitions against the technically brilliant but morally anarchic thrust of “the modern,” represented by Germany’’ (Eksteins 340). Eksteins cites a collection of epigrams regarding the debunking of “History” as it had been known; particularly relevant is Sellar and Yeatman’s ironizing of British history, 1066 and All That (1930), which includes the final section “Up to the End of History,” and concludes “that with the Great War history had come to a . . .” (335). As does the close of “Ithaca.”

67 Lucy Bland describes the formation of mixed group clubs beginning in the 1880s, composed of feminist women and socialist and radical men, that discussed controversial topics and sought socialist change. Such groups are nodded to with Mary’s bi-weekly meetings in her flat at the beginning of Night and Day and her joining of Mr Basnett’s society at the end of the text. Ultimately, these Men and Women Clubs that Woolf’s writing seems to suggest proved unsuccessful in forging a strong connection: although many of the women hoped that such alliances would create foundations for “a common ideal that would aid reform” and “a vision of an emancipated femininity and a moralized masculinity—a ‘new woman’ and a ‘new man’,” in the main, the women were disappointed due to male dominance of discussion (Bland 7). I do not mean to suggest, however, that Woolf’s depiction of Mary turning to socialism is meant to represent a wholly pessimistic vision. While Woolf sought to expose the sexism still inherent in many of the socialist groups, she also saw socialism’s greater possibilities. In a 1918 review of Ernest Belfort Bax’s reminiscences of his mid and late Victorian work for socialism, Woolf writes that in spite of Bax’s “work of destruction” as a Victorian, his hope for the future “bridges the gulf cut by the war. The Socialist ideal reaches beyond ‘any mere material transformation’” (E 2:263-4).
In 1921, Joyce described “Ithaca” to Budgen as “a mathematical catechism” in which, all events are resolved into their cosmic physical, psychical etc. equivalents, e.g. Bloom jumping down the area, drawing water from the tap, the micturition in the garden, the cone of incense, lighted candle and statue so that not only will the reader know everything and know it in the baldest coldest way, but Bloom and Stephen thereby become heavenly bodies, wanderers like the stars at which they gaze. (emphasis added, 257)

In a 1921 letter to Frank Budgen, Joyce describes “Penelope” as the “indispensable countersign to Bloom’s passport to eternity” (257).

Woolf’s switch of tense in this line marks it for consideration. The choice of nightingale is particularly interesting: the nightingale, or mockingbird, is notable for the male’s prominent call heard during day and night in the breeding season. The bird is also famously called Philomela in the poetic tradition, a myth that resonates with Woolf’s novel. It is also often likened to the cuckoo—a bird figuring prominently in Joyce’s text. Besides the imagery of night and day as well as birds, Ibsen’s The Master Builder’s closing scene also includes this retrospective arrangement of a lost garden. Solness returns to his earlier time of triumph and promises a repeat performance at Hilda’s encouraging “Yes—yes—yes” (292). Of course, his prediction that he’ll “swing [his] hat—and come down to earth” proves tragically literal when he falls from the church spire—a failed trajectory in the most exact sense (292). Nonetheless, Hilda seems to have secured some revenge for losing her identity in his projection: Solness has asked her, “How did you become what you are, Hilda?” and she echoes, “How did you make me become what I am?” (292).
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