A Spectacle and Nothing Strange: Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson, Djuna Barnes, and the Queering of Home

By

Elizabeth Vine

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(English)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2014

Date of final oral examination: 6/2/2014

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Cyrena N. Pondrom, Emeritus Professor, English
Richard Begam, Professor, English
Susan D. Bernstein, Professor, English
Lynn Keller, Professor, English
A. Finn Enke, Associate Professor, History and Gender and Women's Studies

Contents

Acknowledgements

I would not have completed this dissertation without: the financial support of the English department at UW-Madison; the advocacy, encouragement, understanding, and to-the-point feedback of Cyrena Pondrom; the forthright and empowering guidance of Nancy Yaffe; the continuing love and support of my parents, Pam and Ian Vine, so tangible even from 3887 miles away; and the indefatigable cheerleading, enthusiasm, and positivity of Michelle Niemann, who makes sure I eat my greens, and keeps our queer home full of care and love and thought and fun. My thanks.

Introduction: Queer Modernist Domesticities

"A Spectacle and Nothing Strange" argues that, for a number of modernist women writers, home is a means of disturbing the spatialized assumptions of binary gender and heteronormativity, a location rife with paradox that enables differently oriented and differently temporalized lives. As such, this dissertation constitutes an intervention in modernist studies, queer studies, and the study of domesticity, responding to the startling similarities in rhetoric about domesticity evident in both modernism and queer theory. Literary experimentalism, for male modernist writers at the start of the twentieth century, and sex/gender radicalism, for queer theorists at the start of the twenty-first, are predicated on a rejection and dismissal of domesticity, of the place and practice of dwelling and homemaking. Male modernist writers and queer theorists alike locate subversion outside the home, often on dangerous but dynamic city streets; both perpetuate the spatial gender essentialism that renders women synonymous with home. And both suggest domesticity as a marker of pernicious or past time – a bourgeois and moribund nineteenth century for modernist manifesto writers, the reproductive time of the straight family for queer theorists. Using the insights of queer theorists and feminist critics to read modernist women's writing, however, reveals the deviant potential of domestic space, producing and housing queer pleasures and strange families that confound the glib equation of domesticity and claustrophobic conformism.

1. Modernist Domesticities

Analyzing domestic practices and spaces in Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson and Djuna Barnes generates deviant extensions to the genealogy of modernism. Their work overlaps in form and content with a diverse array of domestic, decadent, and didactic precursors, whilst positing home as a suitable subject for experimental art, and as a space productive of non-normative identities, desires, and relations. Whilst critics have considered the queerness of Stein's *Tender Buttons* in terms of its focus on housework and household objects, the spaces considered salient to gender and sexual deviance in Richardson's *Pilgrimage* and Barnes's *Nightwood* have almost uniformly been city streets, public and commercial buildings, and seedy urban nightspots. This critical focus ignores the sheer quantity of textual time these authors devote to domestic space, only serving to reinforce the sense that, as Desmond Harding claims, it is the city that is "modernism's primary subject" (Harding 13).[1] Stein, Richardson and Barnes, however, extend the urban topography of modernism through the front door of the home, revising domestic spaces, customs, and literary forms to dispute the spatio-temporal gendering of the metropolis manifest in the figure of the flâneur. In doing so, they counter an avant-garde preoccupation with city streets often entangled with a masculinist dismissal of enervating bourgeois domesticity.

That aversion to domesticity is evident in the "heroic" trajectory of modernism, self-consciously and explicitly antithetical to "housework," that Christopher Reed identifies in

[1] That emphasis on the metropolis as the principal location of modernity and subject of modernism derives from early twentieth century commentators such as Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel, Benjamin noting the "intoxication" that "comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets" (Benjamin 417), enjoying the "properly sacred ground of flânerie" (Benjamin 420-1), and Simmel claiming that the very "sensory foundations of mental life" derive from the conditions of the metropolis, "the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life" (Simmel, "Metropolis" 70).

Bloomsbury Rooms (5), and traces in *Not at Home*; Le Corbusier writing against the sentimental "cult of the house" in *Towards A New Architecture*, and the emasculating impact of "rooms too small, a conglomeration of useless and disparate objects, and a sickening spirit reigning over so many shams"; Adolf Loos designing a Parisian house for Josephine Baker that "excludes family life" (Colomina 88); Wyndham Lewis despairing at the "wretched vegetable home existence" of the "modern city man" (qtd. in Reed, *Not* 11). Avant-garde critiques of family and domesticity, Susan Edmunds discovers, "found the very furniture of the bourgeois household guilty of preserving unjustifiable social attitudes, giving rise to such memorable interventions as Tatlin's 1930 manifesto, 'The Problem of the Relationship Between Man and Object: Let Us Declare War on Chests of Drawers and Sideboards" (Edmunds 25). However, recent critics of Anglo-American modernism, including Reed and Edmunds, have begun to reassess the place of the home and of domesticity in the development of modernism, the relationship between domestic interior and cityscape, and the connections between experimentalism and everyday household practices, challenging narratives in which "the home has been positioned as the antipode to high art" (Reed, *Not* 7). My analysis of Stein, Richardson, and Barnes extends this critical turn to the domestic to texts whose various experimental modes evoke homes and domesticities that refute the hetero-gendered assumptions manifest in the houses and writing of architects such as Loos and Le Corbusier.

In this dissertation I underscore the queer potential of modernist domesticity, and demonstrate how modernist texts perform a queer critique of hetero-gender through the domestic. I therefore read three modernist works in the light of queer critique, and read queer critique through the lens of modernist texts, to argue for the importance of the domestic to both. I

question absolute distinctions between a bourgeois nineteenth-century domesticity and modernism, as have critics such as Thomas Foster and Susan Edmunds, but do so in order to trace a queer modernist genealogy that uses domestic ideology to articulate deviant desires and identities.[2] I extend Betsy Klimasmith's observations on the degree to which American urban homes through the turn-of-the-century were enmeshed with rather than sealed off from the city, demonstrating the porosity of dwellings in London and Paris whose permeable boundaries question domesticity and heteronormativity as synonymous.[3] And whilst I work from Christopher Reed and Victoria Rosner's assertion that domesticity and modernism are not inherently incommensurate, similarly envisaging home as "a staging ground for rebellion" against gender and sexual norms (Reed, *Not* 16), I take my analysis beyond the bounds of their cultural and geographic focus on Bloomsbury (in *Pilgrimage* Miriam Henderson may live in Bloomsbury, but her domestic geography is very different from that of Woolfs and Stracheys). My differently oriented account of modernist domesticities, concerned with perverse life trajectories tangential to the straight time of the heteroreproductive family, thus adds a specifically queer bent to this critical domestic turn. The domesticities of these experimental texts, all at differing tangents to the modernist canon, invoke a transgressive urban landscape of which home is a fundamental part.

---

[2] Thomas Foster writes in *Transformations of Domesticity in Modern Women's Writing* that "many modernist women writers still retained a relation, however ambivalent, to concepts of domestic space and the feminized, sentimental values relegated to the home" (Foster 6). Susan Edmunds, focusing on the development of a "domestic exterior" via the coincidence of home, market, and an emerging U.S. welfare state, similarly notes that modernist fiction inverts rather than rejects "sentimental representations of the middle-class domestic sphere" (Edmunds 33).

[3] In doing so I also extend Sharon Marcus's analysis in *Apartment Stories* of unstable nineteenth-century domestic borders into the twentieth century.

2. Missing Queer Domesticities

The disdain for the domestic evinced in certain early twentieth century avant-garde circles, and the concomitant enthrallment with the city, find a curious echo in queer theoretical texts, and queer histories and geographies, of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[4] Domesticity, particularly for critics of neoliberal assimilationist gay politics, is inextricably linked to the affective and capitalist structures of the heterosexual family, and thus inherently suspect, a byword for radical politics gone awry. Thus Lisa Duggan, addressing a narrative of progress in which LGBT equality is equated with the legitimation of LGBT homes and families through state-sanctioned marriage, dismisses "*the new homonormativity*." It represents, she claims, a "politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising […] a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan 50). Similarly, David L. Eng critiques a "queer liberalism" in which rights are extended only to "certain gay and lesbian U.S. citizen-subjects willing (and able) to accept a heteronormative version of bourgeois family, domesticity, and marriage" (Eng 17). And in *The Gentrification of the Mind,* Sarah Schulman holds out hope for young queer folk who might be "intrigued by the potential of living for more than LGBT domesticity as their fate" (Schulman 6). Homo homes, these slights on the domestic would suggest, bespeak only an acquiescent normativity, a settling for hetero emulation, a failure of queer imagination. However, in *Tender Buttons* even Gertrude Stein, who "refers to herself and

[4] Notable recent exceptions include Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), which acknowledges that "homes are already rather queer spaces, and they are full of the potential to experience the joy of deviant desires" (Ahmed 176), and Anne Cvetkovich's *Depression: A Public Feeling* (2012), which explores the subversive potential of domestic crafts such as knitting.

Alice [B. Toklas] in the conventional terms of husband and wife" (Mellow 130), articulates a domesticity that does more than simply replicate bourgeois norms, or perform a seamless wholesale adoption of marriage and family; indeed Stein, like Richardson and Barnes, uses the domestic precisely as a means of critiquing and revising those very institutions, offering a nuanced modernist counterweight to blanket rejections of domesticity as a location for a critical queer politics.

Whilst *Tender Buttons*, *Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood* put pressure on the assumed conservatism of domesticity, they also write a queer modernist domesticity into LGBTQ histories and geographies that have generally overlooked the twentieth-century home. If domesticity gets short shrift in criticism of contemporary mainstream gay politics, the work of queer historians and geographers largely depicts deviant sexualities and gender subversion as synonymous with urban space, and most often public or commercial urban space. Julie Abraham has pointed out that writers from the nineteenth century to the present day, whether moralizing against urban evils or documenting urban pleasures, have identified the city as a queer space, and queers as paradigmatically urban figures (Abraham xiv-xv). Indeed, many key texts in LGBTQ studies are city-specific histories of gay and lesbian communities, taking their cue from John D'Emilio's oft-cited essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity," which posits urban industrialization as integral to the emergence of homosexual identity and community.[5] Thus Michael D. Sibalis, writing about Paris, can claim that "Urbanization is a precondition to emergence of a significant

[5] For example, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis's study of Buffalo, N.Y. in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (1993), George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (1994), Nan Alamilla Boyd's *Wide Open Town: A Queer History of San Francisco to 1965* (2003), and Matt Houlbrook's *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (2005). These texts also build on Allan Bérubé's 1990 history *Coming Out Under Fire*, which identifies the roots of modern gay identities and communities in the concentration of demobilized gay men and lesbians in American coastal cities post-World War Two.

gay subculture" (Sibalis 11). The study of non-normative sexualities has therefore predominantly been the study of North American and European cities, a trend similarly born out in geographical work that attends to sexuality. As David Bell and Gill Valentine note in their introduction to *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, "most of the geographical work on sexual identities and the sexuality of space remains firmly located in the urban […]. Indeed social constructionist arguments about the development of gay identity suggest that this is predicated upon the opportunities offered by city life" (Bell and Valentine 8), and the contents of their volume reflect that urban preoccupation. "The anonymity of large cities," geographers Lynda Johnston and Robyn Longhurst suggest, "has made them spaces of illicit sexualities and nonconformist gender practices," though "they are also spaces which inscribe, or enforce, gendered and sexualized norms."[6] "Researchers of sexuality," they claim, "have shown convincingly that homes are *heterosexualized* spaces" (Johnston and Longhurst 42).[7] A growing number of scholars are challenging what Judith Halberstam refers to as the "metronormativity" (Halberstam, *Time* 36) of these spatial accounts of queerness,[8] but Stein, Richardson, and Barnes allow us to broaden queer geographies even within the city, and challenge the assumption of home as monolithically heterosexualized.

---

[6] This ambiguity and tension between the city as both a place of regulation and oppressive conformity and of individual escapism is also of course evident in modernist writing; the metropolis is "home to many forms of disintegration" as well as a "site of liberation from the very forces that would seem to crush the individual" (Harding 13).

[7] Johnston and Longhurst quote Andrew Gorman-Murray's conclusion that "Over the course of the twentieth century, a combination of government policies, house design, and deeply engrained social norms have conflated the nuclear family with domestic space across the 'West'" (Johnston and Longhurst 42).

[8] For example, John Howard's *Men Like That: A Queer Southern History* (1999), Judith Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (2005), Scott Herring's *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism* (2010), Brock Thompson's *The Un-Natural State: Arkansas and the Queer South* (2010), and Karen Tongson's *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries* (2011), amongst others.

The domestic, Julie Abraham notes, is "oddly absent from contemporary accounts of gay urbanity," an absence "particularly striking given that, after all the talk about cruising and street festivals, the two terms that had come to dominate discussions of gay urbanity, 'ghetto' and 'gentrification,' both imply residence" (Abraham 267). One consequence of this neglect is queer histories that ultimately reinforce highly gendered concepts of both space and sexuality. A case in point is Matt Houlbrook's *Queer London*, where "queer," belying its inclusive and expansive potential, is merely synonym for "gay male." As Houlbrook writes, "While female sexual deviance – particularly prostitution – was inscribed within forms of surveillance that echoed the regulation of male sexualities, lesbianism [in Britain] remained invisible in the law and, in consequence, in the legal sources on which this book draws" (Houlbrook 10). Here then a particular occupation of certain public spaces and discourses translates to a visibility that forms the basis of the "queer" historical record. It is evidence of what Abraham refers to as a "recent and powerful assumption about the union of homosexuals and cities, namely, that the homosexuality of the city is always male" (Abraham xvii); that assumption reifies an opposition even within queer studies between male/public/visible/city and female/private/invisible/home, a reanimation of the logic of separate spheres that is complicated by each of the modernist authors I consider.[9]

When queer city histories do account for women's experiences (as, for example, in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* or *Wide-Open Town*), the city no longer remains an exclusively gay male space but its geography implies that not all urban spaces are created equal. *Boots of Leather*

[9] And which has been challenged by feminist scholars' work across multiple disciplines repudiating the ideology of separate spheres on both sides of the Atlantic, generating more complex accounts of the ways in which sex, gender, and space intersect.

tells the story of the working-class lesbian community in Buffalo through its bar culture, and bars and clubs provide a similar point of focus for Nan Alamilla Boyd's reference to urban lesbian experience in *Wide-Open Town*. When homes appear in either history they do so as locations for parties or for political gatherings – for public activities. Much of the historical and geographical literature that attends to the relationship between sexuality and space therefore is not only city-centric but, within its urban context, focuses primarily on public and commercial sites of sociality, consumption, and sex, tracing a queer landscape that reinforces gendered divisions between public and private, privileging uses of city space (such as cruising and public sex) that accord primarily with gay male experience, and reinforcing ideas of visibility and openness that map the logic of the closet onto the geography of the metropolis. Domestic spaces – the places that activists and artists and bar regulars and clubbers go home to – are marginalized as sites where queer sexualities and gender are negotiated, where queer desires emerge and are acted on, and where challenges and changes to, subversions and reimaginings of, heteronormative ideas of domesticity and family occur. *A Spectacle and Nothing Strange* thus addresses the neglected queer terrain of the home even within the city. Though, in coming-out narratives and community histories, the city is often figured as "home," queer scholars across multiple disciplines have paid scant attention to the domestic spaces that city-dwellers inhabit.

In fact modernity, domesticity, interiority, and homosexuality are discursively co-constituted. As Diana Fuss has noted, "Modernity is simply another name for the reign of interiority, that moment in history where exteriority is driven indoors by the domesticating passions of the bourgeoisie" (Fuss 12). The "sense of an interior" that Fuss traces is the concomitant emergence of post-Enlightenment subjectivity and of domesticity, the "interior,

defined in the early modern period as a public space, becomes in the nineteenth century a locus of privacy, a home theater for the production of a new inward-looking subject" (Fuss 9). Extending Fuss's observation, it is this same sense of an interior that allows for what Foucault terms the invention of the homosexual as a "species," a class of people defined by a particular interior terrain, "a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul" (Foucault, *History* 43). It is also what makes possible the logic of the later twentieth-century closet – a logic that conflates secrecy, privacy, domestic architecture, and household furniture, and insists that meaningful and well-adjusted gay lives can only be lived by embracing public visibility and "coming out of the closet," a spatial rhetoric that sets homosexuality at odds with the home. In the first part of the twentieth century, however, modernist women writers are rearticulating the values that comprise domesticity, and reconfiguring the relation between domesticity, interiority, sexuality, and gender. At a historical moment when the concept of homosexuality as an identity is beginning to coalesce, when gender norms are being revised, and when, as Witold Rybczynski suggests, "the very idea of domesticity itself came under attack" (Rybczynski 200), Richardson, Barnes, and Stein depict domesticities that confound a stable concept of the interior, queerly reimagining not just the boundaries and definitions of the home but also of the self.

3. Dissertation Overview

Despite the considerable formal and stylistic differences among these experimental texts, *Tender Buttons, Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood* are remarkably cohesive in terms of the characteristics of the domestic spaces they depict and in their claims for the domestic as a means of imagining non-normative lives. Homes emerge in these texts as sites of spatial paradox, both

interior and exterior, public and private, enmeshed with a disparate range of other urban locations, including the street, the circus, the theater, and the museum. As such locations suggest, each of these writers is concerned with domestic spectacle and surveillance, with tensions between revelation and obscurity, enclosure and exposure; they each interrogate the relationship between seeing and knowing, a concern manifest in their attention to the sightlines and staging of the home, its windows, doors, and carefully-curated decorative set-pieces. The dissertation thus opens with the blind glass of *Tender Buttons*, and closes with the illegible exhibitions of Barnes's house-museums. Stein, Richardson, and Barnes's extension and revision of the borders of the domestic also entails examining how gendered and desiring bodies "are shaped by their dwellings and take shape by dwelling" (Ahmed 9). All three writers attend to the uncertain distinctions between people and domestic objects and furnishings, and the kinship relations and gender identities constituted through cups, chairs, caskets, and chamber pots. The houses in these texts are often dirty and filled with furnishings described in such detail as to entirely confute Julia Prewitt Brown's distinction between "(Victorian) plenitude" and "(modern) sparseness" (Brown 3), deviating far from both bourgeois standards of respectability and the uncluttered functionality of modernist house design. Cumulatively, then, *Tender Buttons*, *Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood* posit home as porous and productive, a site of sideways relations among places, people, and things, which generate unexpected lineages and relations, dirty pleasures and deviant understandings of time and family. In doing so they assert the domestic as a valid mode both of queer critique and modernist experimentalism.

I consider *Tender Buttons*, *Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood* in chronological order of publication, though doing so does not make evident a developmental progression in female

modernists' depiction of domesticity. In fact, such an order provides a cumulative sense of the way in which each of these texts refutes home as a site of linear progression and straight narratives; considered together, they each identify a queer domesticity of spatio-temporal confusion, and collectively undermine linear attempts at literary and queer history. I therefore open with the earliest but most formally experimental text, Stein's *Tender Buttons* (1914), before considering novel-chapters from *Pilgrimage* published between 1919 and 1935 (though depicting the years 1896 to 1907, prior to the moment of Stein's text). Whilst these installments of *Pilgrimage* fill the decades between *Tender Buttons* and *Nightwood* (1936), Barnes's novel again leapfrogs backward, opening at the turn of the century, its baroque evasions and epigrammatic wit evidence of its decadent heritage even as the narrative moves to 1930s Europe. Considered sequentially, then, these texts point to a persistent engagement with the nineteenth century and an ongoing revision of its domestic legacy, suggesting a modernism not predicated on a simple repudiation of either. The repetitions so characteristic of the style and form of each of these very different texts are thus magnified by the strikingly resonant, though disorderly, domesticities replicated across them.

Chapter one argues that, in *Tender Buttons*, Gertrude Stein identifies home not as a separate, sequestered space of privacy, but as a site of relations and connections that suspend distinctions between inside and out. Stein's use of puns, her invocation of popular literary genres and common discursive forms, and her interrogation of the referentiality of language, generate an unruly domesticity at odds with the heteronormative temporality of home and family. *Tender Buttons* cites good-housekeeping practices, domestic customs, and the narrative of the marriage plot; those citations, however, both demonstrate the reiterative and material means by which

norms are established as such, and open domesticity to alternate family arrangements, and to lives at a tangent to straight time. Stein thus recycles the constitutive elements of normative domesticity, and indeed discourses which posit queerness as antithetical to home, to pry apart privacy and propriety, and to complicate the modern construction of queerness as entangled with questions of secrecy and disclosure. *Tender Buttons* subsequently identifies home as both on display and opaque, constituted by a series of boundaries that confuse distinctions, and characterized by enclosures that fail to hide their contents. It is a domestic paradox that persists in the homes of *Pilgrimage* and *Nightwood*.

Focusing in the second chapter on the central, London-based volumes of Dorothy Richardson's novel-sequence *Pilgrimage*, I argue that Richardson's domestic landscape of rented rooms and boarding houses is as important to Miriam Henderson's transgression of sexual and gender norms as her traversal of the public spaces of the city. Richardson's persistent attention to the windows and doors of Miriam's dwellings echo Stein's attention to the borders of home, and construct the domestic as partially and inconsistently permeable; these uneven borders allow for a proliferation of improper and queer encounters and relationships within the home, and for Miriam's sensual immersion in the city without being subject to the male gaze. Home, in fact, as in *Tender Buttons*, is a location where a breakdown of visual and spatial distinctions enables a breakdown of gender distinctions, for Miriam's domestic environment produces alternate understandings of gender and space. If *Tender Buttons* questions the conflation of interiority and the domestic, *Pilgrimage*'s clutter of household surfaces, merging of furniture and people, and narrative layers of irony, further distance the domestic interior from a stable interior self.

Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* perhaps most explicitly decouples home from legible and

stable interior identities. Whilst Stein and Richardson suggest home as enmeshed with commerce and connected to public and exterior spaces, Barnes writes homes as museums, circuses, and public bathrooms, their inhabitants as curators, exhibits, and performers. My final chapter therefore demonstrates how Barnes deploys home-as-spectacle, invoking a domestic dynamics of concealment and display to stymie taxonomies of deviance, to deny the "*specification of individuals*" (Foucault, *History* 42-3) that discriminates on the basis of an essential interior identity. *Nightwood*'s domestic spaces, filled with uncanny clutter, stolen goods, and circus props, balk at the aesthetics of modernist design, and suggest the material performativity of domesticity as generative of peculiar relations and queer families, of non-linear genealogies established by means other than biological reproduction.

In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa recalls a student telling her that she "thought homophobia meant fear of going home" (Anzaldúa 42). Home, domestic space, seemingly co-extensive with the hetero-reproductive family, is not just a desirable end-point of affirmation and belonging, but also a tenuous, fraught, and even dangerous place – a place to flee from as well as to find.[10] Neither Stein, Richardson, nor Barnes depict domesticity as inherently liberatory, or home as the static final location towards which narratives of emerging queer identities bend. In *Tender Buttons*, *Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood*, being at home and being oneself are both difficult propositions, and certainly not equivalent to one another. Christopher Reed suggests that the values that "comprise the notion of domesticity" are "separation from the

[10] A recent Williams Institute study found that as many as forty per cent of homeless American youth identify as LGBT, and that the principal reason for their homelessness is familial rejection on the basis of their sexual orientation ("Serving Our Youth," 2012).

workplace, privacy, comfort, focus on the family" (Reed, *Not* 7). These three texts challenge all of those values, articulating uncomfortable domesticities, enmeshed with commerce and with public sites and spectacles, and redefining what family might mean. In doing so they don't make home an unequivocally safe space, but they do identify home and homemaking as a means of modifying the spatio-temporal landscape of sex and gender.

Chapter One: Gertrude Stein's Improper Home: *Tender Buttons*

Introduction: Improper Relations

Gertrude Stein's evocation of home in *Tender Buttons* (1914) has been variously characterized as adhering "to a socially acceptable emphasis on privacy" that "represents a highly private feminist liberation" (Frost 5), and as an instance of "revolutionary Modernist art in which everyday life is a radical space of critique and celebration" (O'Connor 99). Stein is not easily situated, however, on a spectrum that travels from privacy to celebration, from careful containment to an exuberant *écriture feminine*, in part because *Tender Buttons* is itself an exploration of the logic of such a spectrum – of the propriety of privacy, and the transgressive potential of spectacle. The critical debate as to whether Stein's experimental and challenging text is a calculated evasion of the erotic reality of her queer home or a gleeful celebration of it (and, indeed, whether it can be both), overlooks *Tender Buttons*' own careful analysis of the way in which gender, sexuality, and domesticity are enmeshed with questions of privacy, secrecy, and visibility. Whilst *Tender Buttons* may ultimately fail to escape a certain social conservatism, it is certainly not due to an acquiescence to the imperatives of bourgeois privacy.[11] *Tender Buttons* thoroughly unsettles privacy and domesticity as coextensive, queerness and domesticity as antithetical, and queerness and secrecy as definitionally intertwined.

[11] *Tender Buttons* has been criticized for reorienting domesticity through the exercise of race and class privilege. As Amie Parry writes, "Although Stein provides a salient critique of the domestic in her early writings, that critique does not consider how the subjection of women within the domestic sphere […] is also significantly linked to the reproduction of labor relations that are a colonial legacy of racialized exploitation" (Parry 98). Deborah Mix similarly points out Stein's lack of attention to the labor on which her consumption depends, writing that "while Stein interrogates the domestic sphere itself, she doesn't seem to speak to or about 'the domestics' themselves" (Mix 46). And though Mix suggests that Stein's later work is perhaps more attuned to the "dirty work" undergirding consumption, "early works like *Tender Buttons* […] still bear the marks of Stein's insulation from these realities" (Mix 52).

At its most basic, Stein's poem, in Catherine Paul's words, "explores the relationships among a person, that person's possessions, and the domestic space in which the person and the possessions interact" (Paul 195). I argue that Stein's fundamental concern with relations and relationality in Tender Buttons – the state of being "in relation to" – is fundamental to the way in which she reveals home as queer. Her identification of uncertain relations among words, people, things, and spaces – words and spaces that open into others, interactions in which the difference between people and things is suspended – reconfigure the family relations constituted by and in domesticity. Stein's revision of visual, spatial, and linguistic relations enables a revision, a seeing anew, of domestic relations. This revision of the relationships that form, or are formed, by home, occurs in the form of Stein's writing – in its puns, parataxis, generic borrowings, and opaque referentiality. These formal features of the text also reconfigure the relation between the time and space of home, dislodging domesticity from generational family time and thus pre-empting contemporary queer critiques of "reproductive time" (Halberstam 5) and what Elizabeth Freeman defines as "chrononormativity" (Freeman xxii).[12]

I therefore argue in this chapter that *Tender Buttons* encompasses an unruly domesticity that posits home as a site of temporal and spatial suspensions, delays, and sideways relations misaligned with heteronormative narratives of family. I examine how Stein's puns thriftily revalue household waste and disrupt linear time, working both within and against domestic norms to write home as a site of lingering queer pleasure. Similarly considering how Stein works with the found material of household genres, I identify the ways in which *Tender Buttons*

[12] Freeman defines chrononormativity as "the interlocking temporal schemes necessary for genealogies of descent and for the mundane workings of domestic life" (xxii) as well as "the use of time to organize human bodies toward maximum productivity" (3).

imagines a disordered and temporally deviant home through the ostensibly normative popular and proverbial textual forms that prescribe domestic custom. Those customs include family relations, and I demonstrate how Stein queers family by drawing attention to its materiality and undermining the logic of its biologized taxonomy of resemblance, opening the home to different kinds of kinship arrangements. Finally, I look at how, in *Tender Buttons*, transparency as a physical quality of things and spaces, and transparency as a textual quality of determinate referentiality, intersect to evoke the queer home as neither spectacle nor necessarily closeted, but as a liminal site of connections that confute the distinction between inside and out. *Tender Buttons,* as Rebecca Scherr has suggested of *Lifting Belly*, thus questions "the relationship between 'ways of seeing' and power" (Scherr 207). Barbara Will writes that, for Stein, "it is the ordinary, the everyday or the normal that contains within it the potential for the extraordinary, the queer, the singular" (Will 92). Extending this perception, I argue that *Tender Buttons* locates the *domestic* as a site where queerness is both refuted and produced, paradoxically allowing for a queer home even as Stein acknowledges that domesticity is partly defined through the disavowal of the queer.

1. Moving Suspensions: Puns and Deviant Domesticity

While many critics identify Stein's disruption of progressive, familial time and space with a problematically feminized circularity or flow, I argue instead that *Tender Buttons* articulates a deviant domesticity through the moving suspensions of what queer theorist Kathryn Bond Stockton calls "sideways growth" (Stockton 13). *Tender Buttons* certainly disrupts what Ellen Berry (drawing on Teresa de Lauretis) refers to as the "genealogical imperative" that binds

the causal structure of narrative to "patrilineal authority, on which the traditional nuclear family is based" (Berry 85). That co-extensive disruption of narrative progress and domestic familial norms, however, is most frequently identified as deriving from Stein's development of "a poetics devoted not to forward, linear motion but to circularity and repetition" (Frost xxv). A critical emphasis on circularity, repetition, and duration in accounting for *Tender Button*'s spatio-temporal transgressions is evident from Carolyn Faunce Copeland's reading of "A LITTLE BIT OF A TUMBLER" in the 1970s as "a *duration* in which all time-lines become circular, blending and weaving back into themselves" (Copeland 90), through to Bryony Randall's recent assertion that "Stein's texts […] constantly emphasize a flow of one moment into another, strongly reminiscent of Bergsonian *durée*" (Randall 105). Spatio-temporal "flow" is similarly evident in Thomas Foster's suggestion that Stein's use of the verb "spreading" manifests *Tender Button*'s "transformation of domestic space into a site of flows across boundaries" (Foster 141). However, whether in the form of circularity, flow, or Bergsonian *durée*, these critics affix Stein's anti-patriarchal poetics to spatio-temporal understandings of the domestic that derive from the normatively gendered and heteroreproductive female body. In this they resonate with Julia Kristeva's definition of "Women's Time" in which, as Toril Moi writes, "female subjectivity would seem to be linked both to *cyclical* time (repetition) and to *monumental* time (eternity), at least in so far as both are ways of conceptualizing time from the perspective of motherhood and reproduction" (Moi 187). Thus in arguing for Stein's disruption of a patrilinear trajectory, critics have instantiated an alternate geometry that only serves to reinscribe domestic time and space as determined by a gendered and biologized reproductivity.

In distinction, I argue that *Tender Buttons*' challenge to heteropatriarchal progressive linearity, to generational structures of cause and effect, comes not in the form of a feminized cyclical or eternal "flow," which problematically reinforces the connection between domestic space and time and a normatively gendered and heteroreproductive female body. Stein evades the false distinction between *either* linearity *or* circularity in positing the domestic as a site of oscillation and suspension, of *neither* and *both*. *Tender Buttons* thus characterizes home through non-reproductive queer connections and pleasures, through relations that move sideways or backwards rather than forward. Stockton has noticed a similar pattern of "moving suspensions and shadows of growth" (Stockton 13) elsewhere in Stein's work, observing of "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" that Stein "draws this portrait as a cubist form of growth, but one building sideways through the repetition of the (code?) word *gay*" (Stockton 26). Stein, she suggests, like Picasso, "conceptualize[s] the toggle between the advance of time, on the one hand, and, on the other, the states of lingering that through repetitions give the feel of suspension" (Stockton 25). My analysis of *Tender Buttons* demonstrates how its queer spatio-temporal deviations draw on contemporary discourses of sex and gender perversion to disrupt the equation of domestic space and time with heteropatriarchal normativity, without recourse to a version of women's time understood through motherhood or reproduction.

Repetition is just one of the many forms of "connection and extension" in *Tender Buttons* that proliferate meaning laterally through a network of words, bodies, spaces, and objects. Here I will focus on Stein's use of puns, which demonstrate how her text's formal devices challenge the form of domesticity. Her paronomastic play demarcates a domesticity temporally out of step with the heteronormative household, producing "states of lingering" antithetical to what Judith

Halberstam refers to as the "middle-class logic of reproductive temporality" (Halberstam 2). Those puns also locate connections between bodies and objects as sites where both gendered meanings and queer pleasures are produced, and denote a disordered and unruly domestic scene where concepts of waste and productivity are revalued, generating a domestic poetics that exists at a tangent to the customary understandings of good household management that Stein's text evokes elsewhere.

In *Time Binds*, Elizabeth Freeman suggests that domesticity is one of "multiple discursive regimes" that "take their meanings from, and contribute to, a vision of time as seamless, unified, and forward moving," a vision of time that she contrasts to queer temporalities that offer "points of resistance to this temporal order" (Freeman xxii). Numerous critics have noted the technological, scientific, and sociocultural changes that provided the context for modernist writers to portray time as anything but "seamless, unified, and forward moving," but I am interested in the way in which Stein's puns identify the domestic itself as a point of temporal resistance, offering a modernist rebuttal to the contemporary queer theory commonplace of domesticity as antithetical to a resistant queer temporality. Rather than abiding with the distinction Freeman implies between a temporally normative domesticity and temporally disruptive queer modes of being, Stein posits an alternately-temporalized domesticity that makes home queer.[13]

A pun produces a domestic state of lingering in "END OF SUMMER" in the "Food" section of *Tender Buttons*: "Little eyelets that have a hammer and a check with stripes between a

[13] As such, Stein prefigures more recent texts such as Anne Cvetkovich's *Depression: A Public Feeling* (2012) which have started to challenge the opposition of the domestic and the radically queer; Cvetkovich locates a queer politics, for example, in domestic crafting practices such as knitting.

lounge, in wit, in a rested development" (491). Stein's depiction of what ostensibly seems to be a moment of late summer restfulness concludes, "in wit," with an obvious pun on "a rested development"/arrested development. The paradox of a "rested development," of forward movement at rest and thus not constituting a development (or, of non-developmental rest *as* development), produces a moment of pause only reinforced by the concurrent invocation of "arrested development." Whilst the form of the pun itself disrupts linear progress through the text, producing oscillating suspensions of meaning, or alternate lines of reading, in this instance the content of the pun reinforces the temporal interruption its form generates.

Furthermore, the ar/rested development with which the poem concludes is only one of a series of halting ambivalences, its delay doubling back through the text, where "lounge" and "check" might both be noun or verb, producing a proliferation of suspensions of time and oscillations in meaning, a betweenness exemplified in the contradiction of a "rested development." Suspended at the end of one season and not yet at the start of the next, there is in fact no "development" in "END OF SUMMER" – the poem starts with "END" and ends with rest/arrest. Stein's text both depicts and performs a non-developmental growth, a queer productivity, where meaning accumulates and stalls, and time shifts in non-linear ways.

Stein's pun also places the domestic moment of "END OF SUMMER" in the context of scientific rhetorics that construct queerness as outside the "straight time" of home and family, and as out of step with both normative psychosexual and broader sociocultural progress; Stein's alternate domestic temporality is partly delineated in the terms of the scientific discourse that shaped the early twentieth century development of queer identities. In punning on "arrested development," Stein invokes an idea that, originating with Huxley and Darwin, percolates

through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century study of sexual and gender deviance. Whilst sexologists, psychoanalysts, and anatomists offered a range of accounts of the nature and causes of gender deviance and homosexuality (which were often conflated), a persistent strain of thought associated both with failed or stalled development, or with backwardness and degeneracy. Such theories are evident from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's understanding of homosexuality as "functional degeneration," through to Freud's "tendency to cast homosexuality as an inhibition of 'normal' psychosexual progress," and to those of his followers who "viewed homosexuality as a form of arrested development" (Doan and Waters 44).

Stein's reference to arrested development thus articulates a moment of domestic pleasure in terms of scientific discourses that posit queerness as antithetical to the normative temporal structures which putatively constitute domesticity. It also serves to mark the domestic sphere as another site where queerness and modernist temporal disjunction overlap. As Elizabeth Freeman notes, "sexual dissidents have […] in many ways been produced by, or at least emerged in tandem with, a sense of 'modern' temporality," a temporality marked by "signs of fractured time"; as such, "gay men, lesbians, and other 'perverts' have […] served as figures *for* history, for either civilization's decline or a sublimely futuristic release from nature, or both" (Freeman 7).[14] Stein here allies the comfortable pleasures of home with a queerness and a modernist temporal disruption more frequently posited as at odds with or a threat to domestic order and the stability of civilization. "END OF SUMMER," as Elisabeth Frost has suggested of "THIS IS THIS DRESS, AIDER," "demonstrates Stein's use of puns and linguistic play to parody one thing and pay tribute to another" (Frost 21). In performing, through a pun on the term itself, the

[14] Freeman cites as examples here the modernist literary figures of Prufrock, Barnes's Robin Vote, and Renée Vivien's Sapphic vampires.

arrested development attributed to queers in certain contemporary discourses, Stein's text rewrites the domestic as a site of pleasurable temporal deviance.

Stein's rewriting of arrested development as "a rested development," exploiting the difference between "rest" and "arrest," indeed performs a revaluation of the concept that challenges the negative import of the failed or incomplete realization of normative heterosexual subjectivity. Whilst "arrested," in this context, connotes a passivity, something that happens to someone, an aberrant developmental lag produced either by congenital malfunction or a wayward script in the psychosexual drama of the family,[15] "rested" implies something rather different. Whether Stein's phrase is read as suggesting that a development has been rested by someone or something, that it is at rest or that it is (well-)rested, "rest" bears more positive, beneficial, volitional, even powerful implications. The development at hand here – the temporal progression of day or year and the development of normatively temporalized lives – is stalled not through the abrupt, imposed shock of "arrest," but through the quiet, deliberate interval of a "rest." In the doubled form of the pun, itself a challenge to linear progress through her text, Stein thus frames a medicalized and deviant departure from developmental norms as a qualitatively different type of pause – a moment of leisure and pleasure in a queer domestic context.

Whilst puns function to produce temporal shifts in *Tender Buttons*, they also serve to establish relations between bodies and household objects. Offering another series of suspensions – between the human and nonhuman – Stein thus provides an alternative account of queer lives and identities, shaped not in relation to "teleological schemes of events or strategies for living" (Freeman 4), but through lateral, oscillating relations with everyday objects. The punning

[15] And of course links that developmental lag to criminality, a perversion for which one could be "arrested."

critique *Tender Buttons* offers of the production of legible, legitimate, appropriately gendered bodies through standardized temporal narratives is particularly evident in "A WAIST" in the "Objects" section of the poem (471-472). A waist most obviously in this context is an item of women's clothing, but is also of course a scrutinized, sexualized part of the female body, one that is indeed shaped, formed, accentuated by those items of clothing most often referred to as "a waist" – shirt waists, blouses, and bodices. The text both invokes body and clothing, and suggests the body as clothing and vice versa, positing gender not as the self-evident product of a naturalized developmental narrative, but rather as shaped in and through lateral relations with the household goods and objects assembled in *Tender Buttons*, where indeed sewing and clothes-making are consistent themes.

Clothing is not the only thing, however, with which women's bodies are confused in "A WAIST." "END OF SUMMER" in its entirety constitutes an extended visual pun, where Stein might be describing a chair, but also the clothed body that occupies it, both potentially bedecked with eyelets and checks and stripes, both reclining. Similarly, in "A WAIST" Stein suggests that chairs shape the human body as much as they are shaped to accommodate it: "Object that is in wood. Hold the pine, hold the dark, hold in the rush, make the bottom" (471). In a poem that plays on the human and nonhuman duality of "a waist," this bottom (another eroticized part of the female body) is both the rush seat of a pine chair and the human seat that occupies and is "made" by it.

More significantly, however, Stein also invokes an hourglass in the poem: "A piece of crystal. A change, in a change that is remarkable there is no reason to say that there was a time" (471). A woman's body, the clothing that shapes it, the familiar hourglass image of the female

body (created by nineteenth and early twentieth century corsets), and the literal household object of the hourglass thus coincide in "A WAIST." That coincidence posits the gendered body as being as enmeshed in domestic technologies and manufacturing processes as putatively inanimate objects. But the invocation of the hourglass, as of arrested development, also foregrounds an alternative figure of time. An hourglass, notably, can be inverted and reset, and is used only occasionally; whilst it measures a set unit of time, it does so erratically and repetitiously rather than cumulatively and progressively. Stein's phrasing points to this deviation from standard time: "there is no reason to say there was a time" – there is no measurable, identifiable, sequential chronology here. The poem questions developmental narratives that posit gender as prior to the material relations through which Stein suggests gendered bodies and desires are produced – the eroticized waists and bottoms of women achieve definition and accrue meaning through the domestic technologies of clothing and furniture, in repeated everyday interactions with the nonhuman contents of the home. In the confusion of the human and the nonhuman, here and elsewhere, *Tender Buttons* thus links temporal disruptions and suspensions to alternate accounts of gendered bodies that emphasize the networked production of meaning through things.[16]

There is a further pun at work in "A WAIST," however. Whilst "waist" is both an item of clothing and a part of the body, it is also "waste," and as such continues Stein's queer challenge to what domesticity looks like. The complex convergence of female body, domestic objects, and waste both as excess and as dirt contributes to Stein's portrayal of an unruly domesticity that

[16] It also, as I will discuss later in the chapter, indicates the extent to which both gendered domesticity and Stein's queer rewriting of it are implicated in the marketplace – in consumer goods, household objects, and industrial manufacturing.

spreads beyond the strictures of good housekeeping. Kathryn R. Kent notes that the form of the pun has been considered "unnatural" and related to usury – the production of "excess or surplus value" – since Aristotle (Kent 156), and thus the very multivalence of "waist" itself points to what Kent identifies as a poetics of excess that fails to adhere to "traditional stereotypes of female labor – utility, thriftiness, and conservation," reveling instead in "expenditure and waste" (Kent 158). However, I argue that rather than simply reveling in waste, Stein repurposes and revalues it, in fact displaying just some of the "thriftiness" Kent suggests she spurns. As Bryony Randall notes, "the idea of surplus [is] incompatible with Stein's model of limitless meaning, for how can anything be seen as surplus, excessive, redundant, in a system where meaning is endless?" (Randall 119). One of the central tenets Stein articulates in "Composition as Explanation" (1926) is indeed "using everything" (518), a thrifty intent manifest in the waist/waste pun, and in punning itself, where one word or phrase enables Stein to make use of multiple meanings. Stein's complicated engagement with norms of household management therefore locates an eroticized queer domesticity moving between the virtue of thrift and the pleasures of waste.

In "A WAIST" Stein challenges the "wastefulness" of the queer body, positing its excess instead as productive of queer pleasures and desires, undoing the negative association of deviant excess with unwanted dirt, as she does throughout *Tender Buttons*, showing "that dirt is clean when there is a volume" (462). The same coincidence of playful pun, queer bodies, and waste is similarly evident in "CAKE," where Alice B. Toklas's moustache becomes "mussed ash" (490), an image that thriftily combines gender deviant facial hair and domestic disarray.[17] It is yet

[17] Alice and dirt also meet in "CHICKEN," one of the number of occasions where Stein puns on her first name: "Alas a dirty word" (492).

another example of a non-linear productivity that represents both a break from the normative values and order of the home, and a repurposing or revaluation of the labor, objects, and concepts that constitute domesticity, a domesticity that encompasses and finds use, value, and pleasure in arrested development, waste, and mussed ash.

Stein thus ironically deploys the thrifty practices of good housekeeping to reveal a domesticity at a tangent to normative temporality, reproductivity, and use-value. Stein's spreading waist/waste offers a bodily and linguistic challenge to what constitutes domesticity, connecting "A WAIST" both to other forms of eroticized bodily spreading in *Tender Buttons* (be that the "broad stomachs" of "COLORED HATS" or the spread legs of "IN BETWEEN"), and the dirt that runs through the text. Whilst this promiscuous dirt and these unruly bodies posit the domestic as abject, porous, and the site of queer sexual pleasure, Stein's poetics of household (mis)management makes use of and finds value in "a piece […] left over" (469); she carefully repurposes surplus, excess, waste, dirt – implicitly queer, inimical to domestic order, but here thriftily recycled to constitute an alternate vision of home.

"A WAIST" immediately precedes "A TIME TO EAT" in *Tender Buttons*, Stein moving from a poem that reuses its waste and challenges the linearity of domestic time, to one that rhythmically explores the temporal order of the domestic day. Meal times are evoked in a form that suggests the regimented regularity and relentless progression of the customary day: "A pleasant simple habitual and tyrannical and authorised and educated and resumed and articulate separation. This is not tardy" (472). It is a critique of "tyrannical" custom that Stein repeats in "Patriarchal Poetry," of which Michael Davidson notes that "she mocks the way that domestic life – specifically regimes of eating and cooking – is permeated by a patriarchal principle,"

suggesting that "along with daily bread one consumes an ordered logic as well" (Davidson, *Ghostlier* 52). The "not tardy" and "tyrannical and authorised" time to eat offers a distinct contrast to "a rested development" or "a big delay a big delay" (473), and it's to Stein's treatment of the order, logic, and form of custom and the customary that I'd now like to turn.

2. What Is The Custom: Queering Domestic Genres

Stein's puns adhere to the thrifty imperative to "use everything," ironically allying normative domestic practices with a temporally deviant queer domesticity through polysemic play. These puns produce textual and domestic "states of lingering" that deploy the judgmental language of sexual, gender, and household perversity ("arrested development," "waste") to generate accounts of lives and identities shaped through lateral, oscillating relationships with the spatio-temporal landscape of home. Stein's language in *Tender Buttons*, however, does not just challenge the script of domesticity through its punningly paradoxical suspensions between deviant excess and virtuous thrift, but also through its recycling of the common literary and discursive forms through which domesticity is shaped; Stein critiques domestic customs in the very genres and discursive forms through which they are constituted. Sara Blair has identified a similar citational practice in "If I Had Three Husbands," where "Stein's notoriously difficult (read: avant-garde) wordplay foregrounds its family likeness to other genres giving voice to bourgeois domesticity" (Blair 423). This "family likeness" (and I address Stein's own interrogation of the relationship between "family" and "likeness" in the third section of this chapter) is much in evidence in *Tender Buttons*. *Tender Buttons* is not only a "whole collection made" (501) of everyday objects and occasions, but also a "whole collection made" of everyday

forms of writing and composition, which Stein uses to reshape the households they prescribe. Thus, in another instance of thrift, Stein utilizes the found forms of everyday texts to unsettle the sexual and gender assumptions that undergird domesticity.

Stein's use of popular genres and domestic forms, her incorporation of the mass-produced texts and proverbial locutions that proliferate in and about the home, fuses practices of avant-garde visual art with a critique of how gender and domesticity are constructed in such genres and texts. In order to challenge the singularity of their vision of domesticity, *Tender Buttons* replicates the conventions of a number of didactic and advice literatures, proverbial sayings and clichés, traditional verse forms, and even wedding vows. In doing so, it displays its affinity with Cubist painting; as Michael Davidson notes, Stein and other poets replicated the techniques of painters such as Picasso, Braque, and Leger. Davidson writes that the poets were particularly "interested by the way painters incorporated found materials onto the canvas. Fragments of newspapers, advertising, and other forms of mass-produced copy became part of the overall construction" (Davidson, *Ghostlier* 12). Stein's use of collage serves to examine and reconfigure the content, form, and discursive constructions of gender and domesticity to be discovered in the forms of "mass-produced copy" that make their way into *Tender Buttons*. As Mary O'Connor observes, the linguistic structures of the text suggest that Stein "has learned as much from her analysis of the language of women's magazines as she has from Picasso" (O'Connor 117).[18] The collection of found forms in *Tender Buttons* both replicates and repudiates the popular discourses in which domestic norms are reified.

[18] Alyson Tischler has in fact pointed out the reciprocal relationship that existed between Stein's work and the mass-produced copy of advertising and even the signage in department store displays, leading her to conclude that "Steinian modernism and mass culture form a dialectic that can be perceived in the archival materials which reveal [Stein's] process of composition" (Tischler 15).

The effect of Stein's collage of genres is to contribute to *Tender Buttons*' consistent undermining of the distinction between home and marketplace, and to reinforce the refutation of Andreas Huyssen's "great divide" between modernism and mass culture that critics have identified elsewhere in Stein's work.[19] But the entanglement of both the domestic and the marketplace, the avant-garde and mass consumer culture, are part of a larger recycling of the textual forms that define domesticity to shape a queerly revised understanding of home and its customs. Stein writes in the "Food" section of *Tender Buttons*, "What is the custom, the custom is in the center" (483), but her use of the word "custom" and of the form of custom consistently decenters the habitual domestic practices they invoke. Indeed, even this catechistic snippet that asserts a definition of custom does so by defying it; Stein's question and answer are not distinctly separated by an interrogative question mark, but joined by a comma that eradicates the difference between question and response, questioner and answerer. Stein consistently destabilizes the construction of customs and the customary, both through her language and through the range of genres her text inhabits and evokes, participating in often definitive and imperative forms to rescript the versions of domesticity they prescribe and enact. As Margueritte S. Murphy writes, Stein borrows a "tone […] of authority" from "housekeeping, etiquette, or fashion guides," that is intended to "establish order, decorum, and domestic stability" (Murphy 390); in *Tender*

[19] Sara Blair, for example, writes that "Stein renders the vexed notion of some great divide – not just between the literary and mass culture, but also between avant-garde culture and bourgeois habits of consumption and display – strikingly moot" (Blair 423).Tischler points out that not only do Stein's newspaper clippings reveal modernism's borrowings from mass culture, but that "the producers and consumers of mass culture were also engaged by modernism" (Tischler 14). For recent work on Stein, mass culture, and the marketplace see, amongst others, Alissa G. Karl, *Modernism and the Marketplace*, Timothy W. Galow, *Writing Celebrity: Stein, Fitzgerald, and the Modern(ist) Art of Self-Fashioning*, Jonathan Goldman, *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*, Kevin J.H. Dettmar and Stephen Watt (eds.), *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, Rereading*.

Buttons, however, that tone works to very different – disorderly, indecorous, destabilizing – ends.

Stein deploys the paratactic and declarative syntax of housekeeping guides to undermine their insistence on an orderly and uniform domesticity. In "A PIECE OF COFFEE" for example, Stein's diversionary play with the language and form of household custom suggests the way in which genres of household writing disciplinarily and performatively produce the customs they purport to record. Stein writes that "The one way to use custom is to use soap and silk for cleaning. The one way to see cotton is to have a design concentrating the illusion and the illustration. The perfect way is to accustom the thing to have a lining and the shape of a ribbon and to be solid, quite solid in standing and to use heaviness in morning" (463-464). Stein here writes in the style of didactic texts that, as she says in "MUTTON," "Lecture, lecture and repeat instruction" (483). In "A PIECE OF COFFEE," the repetition of the definite article, and of the singular "one way" and "perfect way," highlights the reiterative means by which a particular "way" is established as "custom." This clamor of differing but apparently definitive ways also echoes the competing claims of advertising copy, and cumulatively produces a multitude of ways, a paratactic accumulation of advice that undermines its definitiveness, and the bounded nature of the domesticity it defines.

Though deploying the authoritative voice of the domestic advice text in this passage, Stein's repetitions with a difference refuse the domestic sphere as contained or restrictive; as she asks in "BREAKFAST," "What language can instruct any fellow" (483). Deborah M. Mix points out that "generic conventions are essentially metonymic, pointing toward the Western cultural values of […] hierarchy, linear progression, and mastery" (Mix 28). The mode of domestic

advice Stein inhabits in “A PIECE OF COFFEE” certainly refutes any one linear or hierarchical domestic “way.” A “way,” of which Stein articulates so many in “A PIECE OF COFFEE,” is of course both a mode of living or doing and a directional or topographical descriptor; this passage then maps a series of ways, of paths that follow one another on the page but do not follow one another in sequential logic, and whose repetition (one way after one way after one way) in fact stymies forward progress, the “linear progression” and “mastery” generically typical of the fashion guide, recipe book (which the “Food” section explicitly invokes with its table of contents), or guide to household management, diverting the “one” into a plurality of ways. Stein’s invocation of these domestic forms thus undoes the “order, decorum, and domestic stability” they delineate, her parodic collage of genre conventions disordering and reshaping the versions of domesticity they make possible. In repurposing the generic forms through which domesticity is discursively defined, Stein is able to disrupt and expand the forms of domesticity itself.

The challenge to household custom as a singular, self-evident “way” in “A PIECE OF COFFEE” is achieved not just through Stein’s deployment of the syntax of advice literature, but also through the word “custom” itself. In the parallel syntax of Stein’s paratactic sentences, “use custom” eventually becomes “accustom,” suggesting the reiterative process of “use” through which custom is cemented as such. “Custom” here also bears an economic as well as a social weight. Domestic custom is implicated in custom-as-trade, and indeed Stein herself trades on the word “custom” and on customary genre forms, pointing to the way in which domestic norms are established through patterns of consumption, of both popular texts and household goods. The linguistic instability of “custom” itself, and the discursive co-constitution of gender and

domesticity, are also evident in the etymological pun at work in "A PIECE OF COFFEE." "Custom" and "costume" are both variant forms of the same Old French word, and the sentences of Stein's poem are joined not just by their repetitious syntax but also by the thread of fabric that runs through them: "silk," "cotton," "lining," "ribbon." In Stein's syntactical substitutions, "see cotton" comes between "use custom" and "accustom." These materials, allied with the assertion that the "one way to see cotton is to have a design concentrating the illusion and the illustration," invoke the content of fashion guides and women's magazines, as well as the gendered domestic labor of sewing so present throughout *Tender Buttons*. They also serve to blur the distinction between custom and costume; custom here *is* costume, not evidence of certainty and fixity, of a given domestic order, but bound up with the changeability and exteriority of dress, with "design," "illusion," and "illustration."

Indeed, Stein's formulation suggests that the only way in which to see cotton is in the form of a "design" – cotton only becomes visible through an act of mediation, through the commercially-driven processes which turn cotton into a fabric pattern, a clothes design, an illustration in a magazine or catalogue. Cotton and custom are both made visible, both given shape and meaning, in popular texts and manufactured goods. Stein's scraps of fabric and scraps of didactic and commercial genres thus demonstrate the interconnection of market, domesticity, and the gendered material of everyday life. The clothing customs/costumes of *Tender Buttons* – "A LONG DRESS," "A PETTICOAT," "A WAIST" – attend to a (literal) fabric of domestic femininity that Stein's play with language and form queerly reimagines (as is so evident in "A WAIST"). "A PIECE OF COFFEE" then demonstrates how Stein's stitching together of popular

texts in different ways produces alternate versions of domesticity that resist linear trajectories, combining avant-garde technique and quotidian forms to break open domestic custom.

Both that replication and breaking open of custom is similarly present in Stein's invocation of the housewifely wisdom of the rhyming proverb. Stein's "unconventional arrangement" of proverbial form, and its relation to domestic form, is evident at the start of "Rooms," where she writes that "They do not eat who mention silver and sweet," and a few lines later, "Then tender and true that makes no width to hew is the time that there is question to adopt" (498). Whilst Stein here makes modernist art of the lowbrow commonplace, the rhymingly trite, her deployment of yet another definitive and universalizing form challenges the closed surety and normative wisdom it conveys. As Margueritte Murphy suggests, in *Tender Buttons*, Stein "explains and fortifies with the tones of maxims her own unconventional arrangement" rather than acceding to the "conventional wisdom" she invokes (Murphy 391). Both of Stein's neo-proverbial locutions occur in the context of the opening declaration of "Rooms," "Act so that there is no use in a centre" (498), and as we have seen, Stein earlier asserts that "the custom is in the centre" (483). *Tender Buttons*' unbalancing of the domestic geography of center and periphery, of what is normative and what is aberrant, is manifest in Stein's unbalancing the meter and rhyme of her proverbial forms. The closed assertion of "tender and true that makes no width to hew," whose closedness is emphasized by rhyming "true" with an absence of space, with "no width to hew," is extended and opened by the addition of "is the time that there is question to adopt." The regular measure of a narrow truth is disrupted by an irregular confusion of "time" and "question," unsettling the "common sense" of the proverbial

form and suggesting (very much in the spirit of an anti-proverb or perverb) a widening of the field of domestic knowledge, of what people might "hew" to as "true."

In challenging custom through the discursive forms in which it is codified, Stein is "making do" with the stuff of everyday life, participating in the kind of practice and poetics of use delineated by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Stein is a consumer of mass-produced copy who generates "indeterminate trajectories" through and with these texts because, "Although they use as their *material* the *vocabularies* of established languages […], although they remain within the framework of prescribed *syntaxes* […], these 'traverses' remain heterogeneous to the systems they infiltrate and in which they sketch out the guileful ruses of *different* interests and desires" (De Certeau 34). As Bryony Randall notes, "Stein's textual techniques resonate with the improvised […] and evasive operations that we have come to associate with the everyday" particularly through De Certeau's work (Randall 92). Stein "invents" her queer "everyday life" by "*poaching* in countless ways on the property of others" (De Certeau xii), using the quotidian and indeed clichéd texts that, as Barbara Will points out, constitute the "'habitual' or 'automatic' background of everyday life" (Will 92), to fashion both a critique of the gendered domestic norms they produce, and to articulate a revised domesticity that exists at a slant to those norms.

Like Stein's puns and wordplay, the everyday forms she poaches in *Tender Buttons* particularly serve to disrupt the "chrononormativity" of bourgeois domesticity, the articulation of the domestic as a particular arrangement of time understood through progressive developmental norms and the hetero-reproductive family. The conventions Stein appropriates, the content of her text, and the critical response to her work, frequently invoke a childishness that queers the

straight temporal narrative of domesticity. Marjorie Perloff writes that parts of *Tender Buttons* have a "childlike insistence," their tone recalling "a second-grade reader or speller" (Perloff 148). Such child-like, or child-appropriate, form surfaces in "ROASTBEEF," where Stein writes: "Lovely snipe and tender turn, excellent vapor and slender butter, all the splinter and the trunk, all the poisonous darkening drunk, all the joy in weak success, all the joyful tenderness, all the section and the tea, all the stouter symmetry" (479). Margaret Dickie claims that in this passage "the lilting iambic meter of traditional love poetry conserves Stein's own subversive tune" (Dickie 12). Whilst I agree that Stein is offering a subversive take on a traditional form here, the rhyme scheme and meter invoke something rather different than the "iambic meter of traditional love poetry," having more in common with the trochaic sing-song of nursery rhymes ("Twinkle, twinkle, little star"); the form and content of the passage also invoke the nonsense verse of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear (a snipe indeed features in the rhyming couplets of Lear's "The Scroobius Pip"). In *Tender Buttons*, love poetry, the sensuous depiction of commingled domestic, gustatory, and erotic bodily pleasures, takes the form of nursery rhymes and nonsense verse. Stein's childless household is thus once again associated with a backwardness, an "arrested development," Stein using childish forms to articulate the pleasures of a queer domesticity that deviates from reproductive temporality.

Stein's contemporaries were only too quick to derisively identify both her and her work as arrested and childish. In *Time and Western Man*, writing on the evidence of Stein's early work, Wyndham Lewis claims that she "relapses into the role and mental habits of childhood" (Lewis 62), but that "*the child* with her is always overshadowed by the imbecile" (Lewis 63). Writing in the thirties Michael Gold suggests that the work of writers such as Stein reveals "their

souls as astonishingly childish or imbecile" (Gold 209), and Nicola Pitchford has demonstrated how the criticism of Stein published in *Transition* after the appearance of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* mingles accusations of childishness with homophobic and misogynist critiques of airing domestic gossip in the public marketplace (Pitchford 651). Stein's critics assume a developmental scale that posits childishness, imbecility, and queerness, as analogous markers of lag, delay, and backwardness. Her use of childish forms, however (as with her reworking of "a rested development"), asserts the domestic pleasures of perverting straight time, of "linger[ing] at midpoints" (Stockton 25) along the normative developmental path. In *Tender Buttons*, childishness thus offers a space and time of queer expression, Stein working within the pejorative to suggest an alternately temporalized domesticity.

Stein's nursery rhyme meter and repetition, her use of childlike syntax or children's genres, not only constitutes a reclamation of the temporal deviance associated with inversion, but also invokes the uncanny and disruptive figure of the queer child. *Tender Buttons* thus resonates with contemporary theoretical work on the queerly unsettling potential of children and childhood. The verse of "ROASTBEEF" confuses innocence and experience, the nursery rhyme form articulating what Dickie refers to as a "synesthesia of desire" (Dickie 12). There is a heady "poisonous darkening drunk" amidst intensifying repetitions of "tender" and "tenderness," "joy" and "joyful"; an overlaying of delight in bodies and delight in food – tender and slender and stouter and joyful; a greedy repetition of "all" gathering it together. The passage fuses the pleasures of different types of flesh and consumption in simple sing-song form; in doing so, it undermines the linear continuum of innocent childhood to knowing adulthood, and the coextensive temporal demarcations of child/adult and innocence/knowledge. It is these types of

binaries that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick identifies as infused with anxieties around queerness, such that "gay or proto-gay children" are unimaginable in such terms, "constituting precisely a *gap* in the discursive fabric of the given" (Sedgwick 42-43) because of their contravention of the interlocked definitions of "child" and "innocence." As Kathryn Bond Stockton discusses in *The Queer Child*, since the Industrial Revolution being a child has definitionally come to mean being innocent, and homosexuality is culturally defined as the opposite of innocence, characterized by illicit knowledge, worldly experience, and deviant sexual desires and behaviors. Stockton points, however, to the very queerness of innocence itself; innocence is a "form of normative strangeness […] innocence is alien, since it is 'lost' to the very adults who assign it to children" (Stockton 30), thus "Innocence is queerer than we ever thought it could be" (Stockton 5). Stein's childishness, her deployment of childish forms, therefore represents not just a Foucauldian reverse discourse, an ironic portrayal of the queer pleasures of home in light of a pervasive understanding of queerness as arrested development. It also questions the epistemological framework through which normative life trajectories (the narrative of what it means to be human) are understood, identifying the intersection of queer and child as a tear in "the discursive fabric of the given" where differently temporalized lives might be articulated.

That alternate temporalization, the use of a standard form to trace differently organized lives, is similarly evident in the metrical structure of the passage in "ROASTBEEF." The trochaic march of this passage, with its metronomic progress and insistent rhyme, both suggests the rhythmic and easy to memorize structure of rhymes for children, and a strong, routinized regulation of time. Its regularity indeed evokes the "tyrannical," "authorized," and "habitual" regularity of "A TIME TO EAT," and its meter and final rhyme on "symmetry" bring to mind

"The Tyger" and Blake's industrial landscapes. Blake's allusive presence, and the regularity of Stein's meter, thus bear intimations not just of the child-like, but also of the mechanical, of automated, regulated, industrial time. And whilst this formal coincidence of nursery rhyme and "tyrannical" regularity thus once again suggests the extent to which family time and commercial time (the progressive narratives of the hetero-reproductive family and of technologized capitalism) are enmeshed, Stein also, again, tracks a deviant domestic time within these constraints. Michael Davidson has noted Stein's wonder at and enthusiastic "endorsement of modern American technology and industry," but points out that that endorsement is "countered by her lifelong commitment to literary techniques that defy instrumental reason and thwart narrative progress" (Davidson, *Ghostlier* 48). Here, too, Stein's writing thwarts the progress of the types of narratives its form invokes. The passage's formatting as prose functions to deemphasize its rhyme and meter, and its repetitions of course stall and double back, the recurring "all" invoking a cohesion and wholeness that the passage's sense and content fail to provide. Moreover, in the middle of the passage, Stein claims a "joy in weak success." "Success" is a temporally-inflected measure of social place and value, "to succeed" being both to follow a progressive narrative of achievement, and to follow after, in a sequential and generational sense. As the succession of phrases in the passage stymies any narrative progress, any progressive sequence, so the rhyme scheme that pairs "all the joy in weak success" with "all the joyful tenderness" links the text's queer eroticism ("tenderness") with the inadequately or insufficiently successful/successive. "Weak" echoes the association of both queerness and Stein's writing with cognitive or developmental impairment, its paradoxical, joyful, "success" invoking the same pleasure in perverse delay as "a rested development." Stein's queer household, and the text of

Tender Buttons itself, are successes of the "weak," using common forms to map domesticities that aren't explicable within straight narratives of success and succession.

Stein's formal borrowings utilize a queer invocation of the childish or child-like as a means of rethinking straight domestic time; her appropriative use of common written and spoken forms, however, extends beyond nursery rhymes, proverbs, and didactic guides to good housekeeping. *Tender Buttons* also deploys the infinitive form common both to dictionaries and to standard Protestant wedding vows, and in doing so redefines the performative speech act so central to Anglo-American understandings of domesticity. Thus, in a later passage in "ROASTBEEF," Stein writes:

> To bury a slender chicken, to raise an old feather, to surround a garland and to bake a pole splinter, to suggest a repose and to settle simply, to surrender one another, to succeed saving simpler, to satisfy a singularity and not to be blinder, to sugar nothing darker and to read redder, to have the color better, to sort out dinner, to remain together, to surprise no sinner, to curve nothing sweeter, to continue thinner, to increase in resting recreation to design string not dimmer. (481)

In *Bodies That Matter* Judith Butler suggests that the social legitimacy conferred through the performative pronouncements of the marriage ceremony marks that legitimacy as a heterosexualized disavowal of "an imaginary chorus that taunts 'queer!'" (Butler 226). David L. Eng subsequently notes that, in our current moment, "'I do' and 'You queer' no longer need be at odds" (Eng 28), but "ROASTBEEF" points to a much earlier, and less straightforwardly assimilative, queering of the marriage ceremony. Unlike the infinitive declarations common to

wedding vows ("to have and to hold," "to love, cherish, and to obey"), Stein here provides a series of infinitive phrases not framed or anchored by the requisite elements of a full grammatical sentence, attaching them neither to subject nor object, therefore suspending them without grammatical closure in a series that itself disintegrates by the final phrase, where "to increase in resting recreation" and "to design string not dimmer" are neither joined by "and" nor separated by a comma.

In deferring grammatical closure, this litany of infinitives also defers the closed gendered binary of heterosexual marriage. These vow-like phrases – "to surrender to one another," "to remain together" – appropriate important elements of the content but disrupt the grammar of the wedding service and the regularity and regulation it represents. Here and elsewhere (in "Sacred Emily," for example), Stein overtly co-opts marriage vows for queer purposes, calling into question the dualistic and gendered structure of those vows that restricts them to heterosexual couples. Ulla Dydo suggests that the "'unconventional' lesbian relationship, crisscrossed with conventional patriarchal marriage terminology, breaks usage open in indeterminate modernist texts" (Dydo 30). In this instance, by grammatically breaking open the formulaic terminology through which marriage is effected, Stein rescripts one of the fundamental social rituals of domesticity, the underpinning of the legitimate reproductive family. The series of infinitive phrases refutes both the narrative chronology of grammar and the temporal plot of wedding vows ("from this day forward," "till death,"), invoking again a relationship and a household at a slant to straight time. Stein's grammatical suspensions and subsequent evasion of the binaries of the wedding service open up the kinds of relationships that such vows might enact.

Stein's parodic echo of the form of the dictionary definition in fact refutes the definition of marriage suggested by the grammar of wedding vows.[20] Her unbound vows and indefinite definitions, in their deferral, offer another instance of lag and stymied narrative, which is replicated in their content, Stein proposing "to suggest a repose and settle simply" and "to increase in resting recreation." To "increase in resting recreation" in particular echoes the paradoxically productive stasis of "a rested development." As Bryony Randall notes of *Tender Buttons* in general, "recreation here should be read as retaining its two primary meanings: as 're-creation', a creative, and perhaps specifically aesthetic, act; and also as another word for leisure activity" (Randall 97). This household is structured around re-creation rather than pro-creation: recreation as pleasure and leisure, but also recreation as recreating, recycling, remaking, replicating with a difference the form of the home, and the textual forms that give it shape (the "imitation, more imitation, imitation succeed imitations" of "BREAKFAST"). "Increase" here is allied with neither a financial nor familial increase, but an increase precisely in an absence of customary ideas of productivity – an increase in repose, settling, resting, in the backward-looking, or sideways-shifting process of re-creation; and an increase in the scope of what constitutes domesticity. The reproduction at hand here is not a linear narrative of familial generation, but a recursive reproduction of the forms of familial domesticity that challenges the definition of both the familial and the domestic, partly by attending to the textual reproduction of the home.

[20] Jamie Hilder writes that Stein "Achieves the destabilisation of nouns in part through her parody of the dictionary format, where all words are treated as objects, as nouns, to be defined (or portrayed) by the words following them" (Hilder 74), but Stein's multiple generic invocations here also destabilize how the verb "to wed" is defined.

3. A Space Between: Family and Domesticity

Tender Buttons' invocation and repurposing of the form of the wedding vow points to yet another set of generic conventions that Stein both identifies as a constitutive force in the shaping of hetero-gendered domestic norms, and utilizes in her queer rescripting of domesticity – the marriage plot of domestic fiction. Ulla Dydo notes, in reference to work Stein was producing much later, that "love stories" are "about boys and girls, men and women," and they "conclude with weddings and marriages, which in turn make regular, chronological histories or patriarchal narratives." Stein, she claims, "rejects this narrative form" and instead looks "for love stories that are not determined by the patriarchy and not tied to rigid roles of gender and sexuality" (Dydo 147). The earlier *Tender Buttons*, however, contains traces of precisely such narrative forms, used in a way that actually pries apart the relation between "weddings and marriages" and "chronological histories," disarticulating straight time and domesticity. In *Tender Buttons*, Stein depicts a "wedding journey" (465), but one that challenges the linear resolutions of the marriage plot, and explores the material means through which marriage is enacted. The poem thus, as in its invocation of other common generic forms, does not so much seek "love stories that are not determined by the patriarchy," as divert ostensibly normative narratives to queer ends, opening them to alternate understandings of family and relationality, of the legible forms of social organization on which domesticity depends.

The "wedding journey" that *Tender Buttons* describes, contrary to some critical readings, is not queer only by dint of the fact that the positions of "husband" and "wife" are both occupied by women.[21] Rather, Stein disarticulates marriage and straight time, and denaturalizes the

[21] Kathryn Kent, for example, asserts that by "borrowing markers of heterosexual union, such as 'husband,' 'wife,' and 'wedding'" Stein "uses these identities to parody their claim to naturalness" (Kent 157).

marriage narrative, both by associating weddings with queer sex, and by drawing attention to the materiality of marriage, its performative constitution through the consumption, display, and use of household goods. Stein's occupation of the ritual of marriage as a space of queer eroticism is evident in the "tenderness" of the vows in "ROASTBEEF," but also in "A LITTLE CALLED PAULINE," where she writes, "I hope she has her cow. Bidding a wedding, widening received treading, little leading mention nothing" (474). Here Stein's familiar reference to orgasm ("I hope she has her cow") is followed by an evocation of queer sexual pleasure ("widening received treading") as marriage ("Bidding a wedding"), "wedding" part of a pattern of rhyme and repeated consonant sounds that evoke a highly physical queer erotic union. This version of the marriage plot posits "a wedding" as a very different type of narrative climax, and one that certainly revises the trajectory of sentimental domestic fiction and its version of female intimacy.

Tender Buttons joins this repurposing of the language of weddings to an account of the materiality of marriage, Stein stating in "BREAKFAST" that "A white cup means a wedding" (484), and that "A BOX" is "to be lighter than some weight, to indicate a wedding journey, to last brown and curious, to be wealthy" (465). These objects, on display in the "whole collection made" of the rue de Fleurus household, both suggest *Tender Buttons* as an account of Stein and Toklas's "wedding journey," a non-narrative version of a lesbian marriage "plot," and posit marriage as a relation constituted through household items and consumer goods. Weddings are performed not just through vows, but also through a trousseau, a honeymoon, a wedding breakfast, in the acquisition and use of boxes and cups. As such, they are instantiated in lateral relations between people and things, extensions across and suspensions between boundaries, rather than in a rigid schema of gendered hierarchy and linear temporality. Stein is thus

concurrently replotting the wedding trajectory and identifying a materiality to marriage that both denaturalizes it and enables a queer occupation of its conventions.

A closer reading of the fulsome taxonomy of crockery that Stein provides in "BREAKFAST" further illustrates both her critique of the regulatory conventions of marriage and her claiming it as a means of articulating an alternate domestic relationship. Once again echoing the authoritative tone of a guide to etiquette or good housekeeping, Stein writes that "A white cup means a wedding. A wet cup means a vacation. A strong cup means an especial regulation. A single cup means a capital arrangement between the drawer and the place that is open" (484). The simple formula of "*x* means *y*" suggests a straightforward, transparent series of equivalences, an obvious and self-evident relationship between china and a particular event or situation. These definitive correspondences present a closed circuit of meaning in which there is an unquestioned relationship between a "single cup" and a wider, more abstract state of being. Whilst there is clearly parodic intent here, Stein exaggerating the absurdities of genres of writing that determine social order through the minutiae of the management of cups, Stein is also describing how the material contents of the home generate social meaning and contribute to the construction of the domestic in straight time. The repetitive, definitive syntax of the passage aligns cups, points in domestic time ("a wedding" and "a vacation"), and an "especial regulation," content and form insisting on a relationship between temporal regularity and domestic convention. Weddings are posited as part of a rigid regulatory scheme of both time and objects, whereby the normative narrative progression that they mark is implicated in both the generic form of household advice texts and the material contents of the home.

Closing her taxonomy of cups with "A single cup means a capital arrangement between the drawer and the place that is open," Stein once again suggests – in "capital arrangement" – the extent to which the home is shaped by consumer forces and modern manufacture. Indeed, the repetition of different types of cups and what they signify might also be a catalogue of the items necessary to furnish a home or of goods to buy for a particular occasion ("A white cup means a wedding"), and the repeated series of cups resembles the repetitions of a production line. Domestic propriety, then, doesn't derive so much from naturalized hetero narratives of marriage, as from particular styles of furnishings or ownership of particular goods, opening up a more explicitly material understanding of domestic relations that suggests that "an especial regulation" does not exclude divergent forms of arrangement that challenge the normative organization of familial time and domestic space. Stein's series of closed equivalences actually ends with a "place that is open," and that a "wet cup means a vacation" can be read both with vacation as meaning holiday, and as the wet cup signifying that it has been vacated of its contents. These gestures to the open suggest, in the case of the wet cup, an inversion characteristic of *Tender Buttons*, with an object evoked either through its contents or through the negative space that surrounds it – by its location in relation to what it is not. And a wet cup again suggests the female body and a queer eroticism, Stein thus combining a reconfiguration of space, a different perspective on a household object, with queer bodies and desires. Queer desires in domestic space open new relations, and make visible the queerness of existing relations, between people and stuff, suggesting the home both as a site of "especial regulation," and as a "place that is open" to differently gendered domestic arrangements.

Weddings and marriage are not the only means through which Stein rethinks the social structures with which domesticity is enmeshed. In *Tender Buttons*, her use of the nomenclature of kinship and familial relations intersects with a wider questioning of relationality (spatial, visual, linguistic) itself, challenging the biogenetic and generational family as the only narrative in which domesticity can be thought. As I have argued, Stein's invocation of the childish and the child-like certainly queers the linearity of the reproductive family; her play with the language of family further serves to skew domestic relations and their articulation in generational time. Stein foregrounds family as a means of determining and destabilizing similarity and difference from the outset of *Tender Buttons*, when she describes "A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS" as "A kind in glass and a cousin" (461). Stein draws on the resonance of both kind-as-kin and kind-as-type in this description of a household object, evoking, as Marjorie Perloff writes, "the most familiar of family relationships – a carafe is larger than a cup and smaller than a pitcher, and so on […] it is part of a larger system which we might call the glass family" (Perloff, "Readymades" 144). Stein's use of familial language to designate these relationships between objects, her invocation of a "glass family," does more, however, than speak to Stein's "arrangement in a system to pointing"; it also emphasizes the family as a means of thinking about or designating relationality, as a primary taxonomizing structure through which we identify and sort more than just people. The text subsequently troubles not just our understanding of a carafe, but also of family. The use of "kind" in its sense of "type" and "kin," as indeed kin to "cousin," speaks to the etymology, the genealogy, of the word itself, of its own linguistic familial relations. The family history of "kind" and the carafe as a member of the glass family – both the object and the language used to describe it – posit family-as-resemblance as an organizing

principle that determines identity through similarity. This initial deployment of the language of kin ostensibly seems to conceive of family conventionally, its biogenetic and marital meanings shorthand for resemblance and proximity in general. But Stein thus draws attention to the strangeness of the common coincidence of familial relations and relations between things, of the proverbial metaphorical extension into the material world of human relations determined by blood and social conventions. In doing so, she questions the self-evident, biologized, socially-sanctioned constitution of the family; if inanimate, manufactured glass objects display "the most familiar of family relationships," if we understand certain objects as part of "the glass family," how might that extension of familial logic legitimate forms of relation not dependent on biological reproduction and heteronormative marriage?

Furthermore, "A CARAFE" then works to undermine the resemblances it initially invokes; a poem that opens with family actually vacates it as a model for ordering and classifying. "A kind in glass" rhymingly echoes "A BLIND GLASS," and whilst "kind" and the rhyme establish a relationship through similarity, "blind" also suggests an incomplete or uncertain similarity, or one not visibly discernible. That uncertainty is also evident at the conclusion of "A CARAFE," where Stein writes "All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading" (461). The double negative of "not unordered" is a disordered, indirect mode of suggesting an order based not on resemblance but on "not resembling," on "difference." Thus "A CARAFE," whilst invoking the familial as a structure of thinking relationality and identity, in fact suggests that kinship and relationality might be conceived of paradoxically through difference. Perloff suggests that it is *Tender Button*'s distinction "to establish relationships that we never knew existed" (Perloff 145), but the poem

also serves to defamiliarize those relationships which structure domesticity. By taking family as the standard measure of resemblance and identity, and then undercutting it, Stein disrupts not just language but also family as "an arrangement in a system to pointing," as a means of explaining or understanding relationality. In describing a household object, Stein therefore interrogates the categories and relations that define domesticity, establishing from the very start of *Tender Buttons* that family and kinship are not self-evident points of reference or simple ciphers for a naturalized set of relationships, but that both the familiar and the familial might actually look very different, and be constituted by means other than straight kinship and lineage.

In "A CARAFE" Stein unsettles the types of relationships designated by kin/kind, and her frequent use of "kind" in *Tender Buttons* thereafter, in verb, noun, and adverbial forms, continues to confuse who and what we recognize as kin and kind, and how we do so. "A CARAFE" establishes kind-as-kin and kind-as-type as related to the text's other "kind"nesses ("kindness is not earnest" [479], "This which was so kindly a present" [467]), and as particularly resonant when Stein uses the word to suggest exchange, something provided in lieu, "In kind" (478). Stein thus uses the kinship structures of "kind" itself to delineate a linguistic and familial instability that counters taxonomies of family likeness. There are many kinds of "kind" here, overlapping and divergent, working against any definitive structure of "kind"ness, and thus putting into question the stability of the familial system of relation and resemblance around which the concept of domesticity is constructed. The family of objects and words that Stein introduces in "A CARAFE" produces a network of relations that zigzag away from the generative linearity of the heteronormative family.

If in "A CARAFE" Stein initially establishes and then undermines kin/kind as a means of thinking relation and resemblance, in "ROASTBEEF" she inverts the process. Family becomes difference in "A CARAFE," and in "ROASTBEEF" difference becomes family. In the densest use of "kind" in *Tender Buttons*, Stein writes:

> The time when there are four choices and there are four choices in a difference, the time when there are four choices there is a kind and there is a kind. There is a kind. There is a kind. There is a kind. Supposing there is a bone, there is a bone. Supposing there are bones. There are bones. When there are bones there is no supposing there are bones. There are bones and there is that consuming. The kindly way to feel separating is to have a space between. This shows a likeness.

The suggestion of "four choices in a difference" seems to identify a clear taxonomy of discrete choices, and "there is a kind" supports that, acting both as a definitive statement of a singular type of thing, and as a directional gesture, pointing out a particular object. However, the repetition of "there is a kind," rather than serving to identify "four choices in a difference," actually erases the difference between them. Stein's directional, spatial gesture ("there") suggests, as she does at the end of the paragraph, that the "space between" these choices, that which is separating them, in fact "shows a likeness." Thus, whereas in "A CARAFE" Stein invokes "kind" to suggest likeness, and then undermines that likeness, in this moment in "ROASTBEEF" she uses "kind" to connote difference (different kinds, one of a kind), only to reinscribe likeness. In *Tender Buttons*, identifiable lines of resemblance, discrete lineages, are confused, partly through the very language of kinship itself. Family thus fails to designate a closed and coherent set of relations, a familiar boundary within which the domestic can be

defined. Rather, Stein's "kind" marks a suspension of certitude about similarity and difference, extending relations in ways that make the familial strange.[22]

In *Tender Buttons*, Stein therefore suggests that the arrangement of families is not self-evident, not a given. Neither marriage nor kinship are commensurate in the text with progressive, procreative, or linear narratives in which there is an essential, natural ordering of things and people, either in time or in relation to one another. Indeed, the constitutional instability of family, its precarious discriminations in proximity and difference, is further evident in Stein's use of specific familial nouns. For example, in a passage in "Rooms" that is generally read as an account of Alice Toklas moving into and Leo Stein leaving the rue de Fleurus, Stein writes that, "The sister was not a mister. Was this a surprise. It was. The conclusion came when there was no arrangement. All the time that there was a question there was no decision. Replacing a casual acquaintance with an ordinary daughter does not make a son" (499-500). The passage posits a series of relations that both queer the heteroreproductive family and emphasize family relations as relative, as accruing meaning only within a particular arrangement of people. Thus, "The sister was not a mister" – "sister" is defined by what a sister is "not." In this instance, however, it is "a surprise," rather than a defining difference, that the sister is "not a mister"; the sister has usurped the relational position expected to be occupied by a mister. Stein's rhyme both relates "sister" and "mister," pointing out their proximity, and confuses that proximity – whilst "sister" is a specific familial relation, "mister" is a broad gender category, uninflected with familial

[22] "ROASTBEEF" is further enmeshed in questions of typology, taxonomy, and relation through its titular Anglicization of the common French nickname for the English, through its emphasis on "bones," and through Stein's customary conflation of sexual and gastronomic pleasure. "Kind" in the context of "ROASTBEEF" is akin to kine, cows in Stein's poem represent orgasms, and *rosbif* signifies both a group of people and a way of preparing meat. The boundaries of humans, animals, sex, and food (different types of "consuming") are all uncertain here.

particularity. Furthermore, these connected but not equivalent social identifiers are unmoored from any explicatory framework of relatives, any orienting arrangement; Stein's text disorients family, unfixing gendered identifiers of relation from a system of meaning recognizable as family – there is "no arrangement" here.

There is instead a sense of exchangeability (present in the sister/mister rhyme) that evokes family as produced by a series of sideways substitutions, rather than a generational lineage. Hence the confusion of exchange and reproduction evident in "Replacing a casual acquaintance with an ordinary daughter does not make a son." Whilst "ordinary daughters" and "casual acquaintances" can replace one another, that act of substitution, again confusing questions of proximity and relationality, "does not make a son," it does not replicate or reproduce the patrilineal family. In this queer act of replacement, as in the invocation of wedding vows and marriages, Stein thus articulates disorderly domestic relations that do not fit within the linear trajectory of the marriage plot. *Tender Buttons* traces lateral extensions of family that cross gendered boundaries and seek to reconfigure how we think of being related, to delineate relatedness and think family at a queer tangent to heteroreproductive norms.

4. A Hint of More: Transparent Domestic Space

Stein's proliferating wordplay, subversion of domestic genres, and confusion of the relationships that constitute domesticity, contribute to an ostensible absence of transparency in *Tender Buttons*. If *Tender Buttons* is concerned with alternate forms of domestic relations,

familial relations, relations between people and the materiality of home, it is also concerned with how to relate those relations, how to articulate relations not visible or legible within the standard narrative of domesticity. An extensive list of critics have subsequently tied the text's perceived opacity to the queerness of its domestic scene, suggesting either that Stein's work reflects the fact that lesbian sexuality is inherently unrepresentable in phallologocentric discourse, or that oppressive social mores compelled Stein to elaborately encode the representation of her transgressive household. Thus Margaret Dickie can claim that Stein hides "within a radical experimentation in language in order to conceal the full nature of her subject" (Dickie 4), and Harriet Scott Chessman suggests that "reality" enters Stein's writing only "obliquely, allowing itself to be sensed rather than known or seen" (Chessman 79). Stein's own preoccupation with transparency in *Tender Buttons*, however, suggests a more complex critique of knowing and seeing in a queer domestic context.

In *Tender Buttons* there is a collision between transparency as a physical property of objects and spaces, and transparency as clarity of meaning and understanding. In Stein's text, the former type of transparency countermands the latter; the multi-layered visibility of the poem, its very openness and connectivity, stymies attempts at classification, identification, discrimination. It is not so much that that there is nothing to see here, but rather that there is too much. As in a Cubist painting, the multiplying perspectives and planes question the very means by which we perceive and recognize domesticity, and in doing so they confront the fact that, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes, by the end of the nineteenth century "one particular sexuality […] was distinctively constituted *as* secrecy" (Sedgwick 73). If queerness represents the juncture at which

knowledge and secrecy coincide, *Tender Buttons* exists self-consciously at this juncture, considering the queer dynamics of concealment and disclosure within a poetics of the domestic.

A critical focus on the opacity, secrecy, encodedness of Stein's text resonates with the fact that *Tender Buttons* is full of containers, objects and spaces meant to enclose and conceal, but which consistently fail to do so. This failure of containment is replicated in the architecture of the home that emerges in *Tender Buttons*, distinguished by a proliferation of windows and doors, breaches in the border of the home and the bounds of the domestic. As Stein asserts in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, *Tender Buttons* was written at a time when she was "tormented by the problem of the external and the internal" (112). In her focus on these liminal household locations, these breaks in the architecture and logic of secluded domesticity, Stein generates spatial as well as temporal and linguistic suspensions and deviations, lingering over the threshold of the queer spectacle of home.

The "Rooms" section of *Tender Buttons* is thus structured by both explicit and implicit windows and doors, gaps in the literal and discursive fabric of the home that disrupt the gendered and hierarchical organization of space that defines domesticity. Stein writes, for example, that "A curtain, a curtain which is fastened discloses mourning, this does not mean sparrows or elocution or even a whole preparation, it means that there are ears and very often more altogether" (505). The window here is a site of paradox, something that can concurrently be covered by a "fastened" curtain whilst still revealing, "diclos[ing] mourning." Closing curtains when there had been a death in the household was a widespread mourning practice in the nineteenth century, the fastening of curtains thus not only providing privacy for mourning, but also making the windows of the home a site for the advertising that mourning. The spatial and visual paradox of Stein's

"fastened" and "disclosing" disrupts both the queerly-inflected binary of secrecy/disclosure and the hetero-gendered division of interior/exterior. Home as both revelatory and hidden away scrambles any easy mapping of analogous social, sexual, and spatial binaries, muddling lines between the decency of domestic privacy and queer secrecy, between public display and familial propriety. The windows and doors of Stein's "Rooms" suggest domesticity as more public, and queerness as more domestic, than customary definitions would allow.

The doubling rather than dividing nature of the curtained window is also evident in the homophonic slip between "mourning" and "morning"; curtains fastened back rather than fastened closed disclose the morning, the new day. Windows are a point where normative domestic time is marked through appropriate material ritual, both "morning" with its "sparrows" and "morning" and "mourning" each with a particular "elocution or even a whole preparation." The suspension of meaning between "mourning" and "morning," the oscillating question of how the curtains are being fastened and of what is being disclosed, point to the way in which the form of Stein's writing reworks the form of the home. At the uncertain transparency of the window, the home itself becomes a site of the sideways extensions evident in Stein's writing, challenging "the narrow the quite narrow suggestion" of what "the building" might represent (507). The sense of dislocation and ambiguity at the home's porous margins is reinforced by the visual-auditory overlay of disclosure, elocution, "ears and very often more altogether." Speech acts and visual performance, morning noise and mourning display, are transmitted through and coalesce around the transparent boundary of the window. The form of *Tender Buttons*' disclosure posits home as an ambivalent site of concealment and revelation and therefore definitionally enmeshed with queerness. Stein's text is neither a coming out story not a deliberately opaque paean to the

unspeakable, but an exploration of the misalignment of domestic architecture and the straight family; *Tender Buttons* thinks queerness and domesticity together in ways other than through the oppositional logic of inside/outside that hides queers in the closet and yet excludes them from the domestic.

Notably, the curtained window that "discloses mourning" is defined by its covering and is not named. Stein's writing points both to the window's physical transparency and to the problematic gap it represents. The space of the window is delineated by that which can be seen over, through, or framing it; as Stein writes elsewhere in "Rooms," "glass is confusing it confuses the substance which was a color" (500) (resonating with the very start of *Tender Buttons* and the "single hurt color" in the "blind" "glass" of "A CARAFE"). Windows thus, like other glass objects in *Tender Buttons,* manifest transparency as confusion, disrupting the equivalence of visual transparency and transparency of meaning, and challenging how and what we see. Indeed, Stein explicitly links windows and visual aids, writing that "No eye-glasses are rotten, no window is useless […] there always is and there is no dimness, not a bit of it" (501). Here, as throughout *Tender Buttons,* Stein confuses spectacle and spectacles, that which is seen and the way in which we see it, her proliferating negatives in this passage generating a linguistic "dimness" and uncertainty that replicates the qualities of the glass she is describing. Looking through the windows of Stein's home is thus not an exercise in decoding the queerness hidden in plain sight, but of considering how the material and discursive framework of home determines what sort of home lives are visible within it. In drawing attention to how windows are made visible by what they are not, and yet how their "substance" is difficult to see due to their transparency and all the clutter visible through and around them, Stein certainly highlights home

as bound up with questions of visibility, spectacle, and display, rather than defined by seclusion, privacy, and separation. She also suggests, however, that attending to how we perceive the fabric of home, its spatial and visual suspensions and multiplicities, demonstrates its capacity to house differently mapped lives.

As much is also evident in the extent to which the structural features of "Rooms" are enmeshed with *Tender Buttons*' account of gender and sexuality. Another unnamed window is evoked near the start of "Rooms" as "A whole centre and a border make hanging a way of dressing" (498). Stein posits the window as an empty center, "whole" and a hole, bordered and dressed by hanging curtains. The window thus becomes a (center-)stage, draped with curtains like a theater, identifying the borders of home as a two-way pivot of performance and spectatorship, looking inwards and turned outwards, to be stared at and to be gazed from. Stein makes a center of a problematically porous periphery, of the gap that suspends distinctions between exterior and interior, of the confusion of transparency. In doing so, she reorients home around the features that trouble and extend the limits of what "home" means, a reorientation only reinforced by the prevalence of windows and doors in "Rooms," their centrality in the form of Stein's text. The reference to "dressing," however, also implicates interior décor with gendered identity; in *Tender Buttons* both windows and bodies, sites of performance and display, are dressed, covered with fabric that concurrently reveals and conceals (like "A WAIST"). Stein thus once again suggests that gender and domesticity are custom-bound performances achieved through the prosthetic means of the material world and able to be perversely re-seen.

A perverse re-seeing of the dressed, framed absence of Stein's windows invites a mapping of the female body onto the structure of the home, a confusion of bodies with the space

they occupy, as *Tender Buttons* similarly consistently confuses bodies with clothing and furniture. Whilst this rendering of the female body as home, and vice versa, might seem to reinforce a biologized connection between women and the domestic,[23] the ideas of what constitute both women and the domestic are changed in Stein's rendering. Home and bodies here are sites of queer pleasure that disorder the spatial distinctions implicated in both hetero-gender and the domestic, and both home and bodies are posited as accruing meaning within a network of lateral relations between human and non-human actors. The coincidence of queer corporeal eroticism and domestic architecture is manifest when Stein writes, "Is there pleasure when there is a passage, there is when every room is open. Every room is open when there are not four, there were there and surely there were four, there were two together. There is no resemblance" (500). Whilst Stein's enumerations seem to indicate a series of discrete spaces, the home arranged in distinct rooms, her unclear antecedents fail to distinguish between what might be an accounting of either rooms or the people occupying them. Indeed, any orderly or conventional separation of space, or separation of space and occupants, is undercut in the "pleasure when there is a passage," "when every room is open." The openness of Stein's "Rooms" in fact makes it hard to separate and identify them, to discern how many there are, or to differentiate them from what they contain. "Rooms," of course, is also the only part of *Tender Buttons* not divided into smaller, individually-titled sections of text, Stein's portrait of home concluding with a negation of the ostensible taxonomies of "Objects" and "Food."

In this context, Stein's use of "passage" resonates with a material and textual connectivity. "Passage" has the obvious double meaning of being both a physical feature of a

[23] One that, perhaps, analogizes the permeable space of home with a sense of women's porously unstable bodies.

house and a section of a text, once again joining the form of Stein's writing with the form of home, in this instance in a way that emphasizes both as shaped by connections and suspensions. Passageways separate and join spaces, are sites of transit indeterminately suspended between them, and this passage in "Rooms" identifies a deviant pleasure in lingering in the in-between, "when every room is open," a lingering that the duality of "passage" itself performs. "Passage" also, however, connotes a journey, and the voyage through the open rooms of the home here makes the "wedding journey" of *Tender Buttons* one that joins domestic space with queer sexuality, with the pleasures of "two together" and of bodily as well as textual and spatial passages. That overlay of textual, sexual, and spatial passages, and their shared sense of liminality, of being between states and places, like Stein's emphasis on windows, redraws the plan of the home. *Tender Buttons* posits the fraught borders of the domestic as sites of pleasurable extension and suspension, where spatial fault lines provide locations from which to rethink the relations the home embodies.

Stein's opening, or perhaps outing, of the home in *Tender Buttons* is also signaled by the attention she pays to its physical connections to the world beyond. Whilst most criticism of *Tender Buttons* focuses on the objects the poem contains, and the means by which they are depicted, "Rooms" identifies the home itself as another container that can be evoked through the inversion of interior and exterior, by attending to what surrounds it. As such, Stein's rooms are delineated not just by their contents, but also by what can be seen and felt from them, beyond them, and within them; they are permeated by natural light, weather, and changes in "climate" (505, 506), by "sky which is admitted to be there and the stars which can be seen" (501), "south which is a wind not rain" (503), and "star-light" (504). Rooms by definition are indoor spaces,

but Stein's rooms unexpectedly contain meteorological and astronomical phenomena along with the furniture, the porosity and transparency of domestic space once again serving to suspend it between interior and exterior, rendering it a locus of connectivity and visibility that questions both the seclusion of domesticity and the invisibility of queer homes. Stein suggests here, as throughout *Tender Buttons*, that changing the way in which we look at the home changes the types of lives we can envision within it. And the furniture itself is similarly implicated in this process of seeing through the home, of multiplying what is visible within its unsteady frame. Stein's rooms, for example, also feature trees, "The name is changed because in the little space there is a tree, in some spaces there are no trees, in every space there is a hint of more" (504-505). In this moment, the discrimination of space through naming opens into the unbounded sense of "a hint of more," and Stein's trees might be landscape features or wooden furniture, wood a shifting form that designates both interior and exterior space and joins them. Stein has after all suggested that "A TABLE" is a "revision" of wood, that a table had been a tree in "a stand, a stand where it did shake" (474). Other spaces and objects are visible in and through each of the spaces and objects Stein portrays, as other possibilities of meaning are evident in her punning wordplay, generating a cluttered transparency that, rather than creating an obfuscatory smokescreen, invites us to look more carefully at home from different spatio-temporal perspectives. Stein does not lay her home open to prurient surveillance, but disorients domesticity through queerly angled sightlines that make home a site of lingering liminality and alternate possibilities.

Conclusion: Seeing Through Domesticity, or Gertrude Stein's Glass Closet

Tender Buttons cannot unequivocally be claimed as a liberatory demolition of the twentieth-century closet in the very early stages of its construction. Stein's revision of domesticity not infrequently depends on using consumption to legitimate a queer home, buying into the commercial imperatives of domesticity even as she ironizes them. Nevertheless, *Tender Buttons* finds within the relentless commercialization of domesticity a valuable means of seeing home differently, of "seeing through" domesticity to insist on the comforts of a queer home and alternate domestic relations. In *Tender Buttons*, Stein "sees through" domesticity in a typically double way. The emphasis on the material and discursive construction of domesticity and domestic relationships – their production in and through housekeeping guides, women's magazines, the display and use of particular goods – sees through naturalized narratives of home and family. In *Tender Buttons*, the domestic is not merely an inevitable material reflection or extension of the gender normative, reproductive, middle class family; rather, Stein's text demonstrates how the domestic is in fact shaped by and enmeshed with industrial production, marketing, and commodity capitalism. Gender norms, families, and the concept of domesticity are generated through the circulation of popular and proverbial forms, and through interactions with the material stuff of the home. Stein sees through the narrative of the marriage plot to posit domesticity as emerging in a network of sideways relations rather than in a linear and progressive hetero family history. Thus whilst Cary Nelson claims that Stein is "quite impossible to naturalize and domesticate" (Nelson 179), Stein herself pries apart the equivalence of the natural and the domestic, and in doing so reveals a queer topography of home and kinship.

Tender Buttons also sees through domesticity in the sense that it depicts the home as a site of complex transparency. From Stein's recurring attention to glass, glasses, and windows, to

her pun-propelled polysemy, both the text and the home it describes emerge as sites where there is more to be seen, where a different way of looking reveals a different spatio-temporal sense of home. The "whole collection made" of *Tender Buttons*, as Sara Blair also notes of later work, suggests that Stein understands home "as intimately linked with other metropolitan sites of production, marketing, and display" (Blair 419). Such sites include the museum, for example, which Catherine Paul suggests has a "reciprocal" relationship of influence with *Tender Buttons* (Paul 195), as well as the department store window displays that Alyson Tischler documents as explicitly referencing Stein's work in the 1930s (Tischler 23-24). The transparency of *Tender Buttons*, however, writes the queer home as something other than a scrutinized storefront or museum exhibit; Stein's transparency, like the semi-permeable dwellings of *Pilgrimage* and *Nightwood*'s anti-revelatory homes, stymies the discrimination, taxonomy, and discipline perpetuated by other sites of display. It disturbs the relationship between seeing and knowing that generates the scopic logic of the closet, of being "in" or "out," a logic that pervades contemporary critical evaluations that insist Stein is most "concerned with manipulating language to cover up meaning that might become too explicit for the taboo subject of lesbian eroticism, which was her central concern" (Dickie 4). Stein's queer home is neither hidden nor in plain sight, as the layered textual and spatial transparencies of *Tender Buttons* confuse interior and exterior, suspending the distinctions that enclose the definition of domesticity.

Chapter Two: Dorothy Richardson's Dingy Rooms: *Pilgrimage*

Introduction: Dirty Homes

Miriam Henderson, the protagonist of Dorothy Richardson's thirteen-volume novel sequence *Pilgrimage*, takes the opportunity of a flea infestation in her rented shared Bloomsbury rooms to remark to her roommate the advantages of being what Miss Holland terms "the unfortunate possessors of thin skins." Miriam does not envy the thick-skinned: "Those people with skins like felt; they miss everything" (*The Trap* 435). Miss Holland, she thinks, shares that "dull" "obliviousness" (*The Trap* 499). *Pilgrimage* itself revels in permeable boundaries, the text characterized by a thin-skinned awareness of the interactions between bodies and their physical environment, the porous proximities of people, places, and objects. The domestic spaces Richardson so extensively details are therefore part of the text's bodily and material landscape of fragile borders, the fleas of Flaxman's Court but one moment where dirty homes prove a site of uncertain social distinctions and border crossings. Dirt in *Pilgrimage*, as in *Tender Buttons*, points to a reconfiguration of domestic values, with pests and grime allied to a perverse permeability.

The domestic interior in *Pilgrimage* thus questions home as the locus of a stable sense of an interior, Richardson rendering it a shifting terrain of open and closed, public and private, permeable and impermeable. Home in this text is not a static arrangement of inside and outside with liminal or threshold spaces in between, but as geographer Doreen Massey writes of the spatial in general, it is an "ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification," where the "lived world" emerges as "a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting,

aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox and antagonism" (Massey 3). Richardson demonstrates how those spatial relations produce unstable gender, sexual, and class identities, and enable queer relationships, suggesting through a series of deviantly transient and shared dwellings that domesticity is not the inherently constrictive point from which Miriam flees.

Pilgrimage consists of thirteen "novel-chapters." The first twelve novel-chapters were published between 1915 and 1935; *March Moonlight*, the final unfinished installment, appeared in a new edition of the work published in 1967, a decade after Richardson's death. I will focus on seven of the central novel-chapters first published between 1919 and 1935: *The Tunnel* (1919), *Interim* (1919), *Deadlock* (1921), *Revolving Lights* (1923), *The Trap* (1925), *Dawn's Left Hand* (1931), and *Clear Horizon* (1935). Although composed after 1917, the events in these texts cover a time period that George Thomson has identified as spanning 1896 to 1907. I have excluded the first three novel-chapters (*Pointed Roofs*, *Backwater*, and *Honeycomb*), as well as the ninth (*Oberland*) and the final two (*Dimple Hill* and *March Moonlight*), because I am concerned with the texts that depict Miriam Henderson's attempts to forge an independent existence in turn-of-the-century central London. The early installments are set, sequentially, in a girls' school in Hanover, a north London suburb, and a country home outside of London; *Oberland* details Miriam's two week stay in a Swiss resort, *Dimple Hill* is set in the Suffolk countryside, and the incomplete *March Moonlight* consists largely of flashbacks. It is in the novel-chapters set in London that Richardson most thoroughly interrogates the relationship between public and private space, and the gendered implications of that relationship. The setting of the imperial metropolis provides the opportunity for an extended exploration of ideas of home and the domestic that

differs from those afforded by the foreign, suburban, and rural locations of other novel-chapters.[24] Thus whilst it is important to consider the central novel-chapters of *Pilgrimage* in relation to those that focus on non-urban and non-English locales, it is the texts set in central London that display Richardson's fullest and most sophisticated examination of dwellings and their implication in the performance and construction of gender and identity.

1. Continually Towards the Window-Space: The Partially Permeable House

Miriam Henderson's marginal domestic spaces, hovering on the rather tattered fringe of respectability, celebrate home as a site both permeable to and sheltered from the city in which it is located. Dorothy Richardson thus revalues the domestic as generative of a productive "tension between porous openness and protection" (Bronfen 20), neither stifling nor secluded but providing, "paradoxically, precious solitude as well as an enduring attachment to the transient world outside" (Harvey 168). This permeability, however, does not fully dissolve the difference between home and city, though prevailing critical opinion emphasizes just such a dissolution. Critics such as Elisabeth Bronfen, Jean Radford, and Joanne Winning have identified *Pilgrimage*'s domestic porosity as making home analogous to, or indistinguishable from, the city: London "assumes the role of an external approximation of [Miriam's] own room" (Bronfen 20); the "room in Mrs. Bailey's house symbolizes 'London' […]; its physical boundaries often blur into the city's boundaries" (Winning 47), and Richardson "extends the figure of the house

[24] Amy Kaplan rightly argues in "Manifest Destiny" that "*domestic* has a double meaning that not only links the familial household to the nation but also imagines both in opposition to everything outside the geographic and conceptual border of the home," and that we therefore need to "consider the domestic in intimate opposition to the foreign" (Kaplan 581). Both Tamar Katz and Jane Garrity have taken up that challenge, considering how the domestic in *Pilgrimage* constructs interconnected national, sexual, and gender identities.

[…] to the city" (Radford 52). However, I argue for the importance of attending to the specific properties of Miriam's paradoxical dwellings, which continue to differentiate those dwellings from the city even as they prove permeable to it. Miriam's homes do not signify "women's new freedoms" (Radford 53) simply by dint of merging with the liberatory space of the city street. Rather, these down-at-heel and queer domiciles suggest that it is their very suspension between the propriety of home and the public streetscape that enables a different means of inhabiting the city, one that challenges gendered spatial divisions through an alternate account of the sensory boundaries of home.

Miriam Henderson consistently performs a domestic flânerie, a loitering in and moving through the home, that refutes the visual as the primary means of interacting with the city, disrupting the disciplinary urban field of vision in which, as Elizabeth Wilson notes, men have been portrayed as taking "visual possession of the city" (E. Wilson 78), whilst women are either a sexualized spectacle or censoriously hidden, leaving intact gendered spatial divisions that "accept at face value and on its own terms the nineteenth-century ideological division between public and private spheres" (E. Wilson 79). Feminist critics who have addressed the spatiality of *Pilgrimage* have overwhelmingly identified Miriam's challenge to gender norms as connected to her usurpation of male privilege in walking and cycling through city streets. In *Streetwalking the Metropolis*, for example, Deborah Parsons categorizes Miriam as a female flâneur, who gains an "unconstrained masculinized perspective on the city" through walking and frequenting bohemian cafés (Parsons 106). Kristin Bluemel ties Richardson's textual innovation to Miriam's transgressive wanderings, noting that the "novelty of our extended, unauthorized journey through the interior spaces of a female character's consciousness is matched only by the novelty of

Miriam's unauthorized journey through the public spaces of a male-dominated culture" (Bluemel 2). More recently, Kerstin Fest has characterized *Pilgrimage* as charting Miriam's flight from the "horrors of domesticity" (Fest 164). The London novel-chapters, Fest suggests, highlight the city, most particularly its streets, shops, and cafes, as a place of possibility that allows outsiders such as Miriam to experiment with identity and find independence. Miriam herself observes, however, that "there is actually no such thing as travel… There is nothing but a *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 167). This statement leads Jane Garrity to conclude that "ultimately what *Pilgrimage* privileges is Miriam's topographical journey through imaginative space," "fusing the division between public and private spaces" (Garrity 86) only in as much as they are both "spatialized representation[s]" (Garrity 90) of Miriam's consciousness. Miriam's dwellings, however, render the boundary between city and home as a site of sensory exchange that foregrounds the connectivity of domestic space, engaging with the specific physical qualities and material features of her rooms that privilege them as a site from which to reorient the gendered cityscape. It is not solely, then, Miriam's city strolling that constitutes *Pilgrimage*'s reconfiguration of urban topography – her tenuous domesticity, rather than signaling bourgeois confinements to be fled, suggests home as a point from which to imagine different spatial relations.

Richardson's concern with those relations, and her attention in *Pilgrimage* to how they are implicated in the visual, is evident in the recurring focus on windows. On the very first page of the entire novel sequence Miriam "move[s] to the nearest window" (*Pointed Roofs* 15), and thereafter she is repeatedly depicted looking through windows and compulsively opening them, wondering later of a sister with different habits, "How could Eve shut out life […]?" (*Deadlock*

93), and lamenting of another that "she used to be so fond of open windows" (*Deadlock* 95). Richardson's evocation of Miriam's dwellings, her representation of how Miriam perceives them, is similarly characterized by a recurrent fixation on windows. Moving into her room at Mrs. Bailey's Tansley Street lodging house in *The Tunnel*, Miriam's first act of home improvement is to open the window; the heavy repetition of the word "window" and references to specific types of window ("skylight," "dormer") in the first few pages of Miriam's encounter with the room establish the "brilliance of the window space" (*The Tunnel* 14) as one of its most significant features. Windows are also a prominent feature of the rooms Miriam shares with Miss Holland at Flaxman's Court. Indeed, Miriam's journey up through the house at Flaxman's Court at the opening of *The Trap* mirrors her journey up through the house at Tansley Street at the opening of *The Tunnel*, her passage marked by references to windows: a "staircase window," the "window of the large front room," a "square window" in the backroom; the rooms are "window-lit" with "Windows wide" (*The Trap* 401). Miriam's urban domesticity is thus shaped by the gaps in the physical boundaries of the home that windows represent, the domestic interior experienced and understood through the reciprocally revealing frame of windows that render the house in some ways permeable to its larger environment.

That permeability, however, is not principally visual; the windows to which Richardson affords such prominence offer only a constricted view of the city and, likewise, do not expose Miriam to scrutiny or surveillance. Despite the tenuous privacy of Miriam's series of rented dwellings, their proliferation of windows do not render her visually vulnerable, but rather stymie sightlines even as they allow for alternately sensed interactions with the city. Miriam's view from her first room at Tansley Street is in fact mainly of other windows; moving towards her

"window space" the "outside world appeared; a long row of dormer windows and the square tops of the larger windows below them, the windows black or sheeny grey in the light, cut out against the dinginess of smoke grimed walls" (*The Tunnel* 14). Opening her window, "she saw the whole length of the top row of windows across the way and wide strips of grimy stucco placed across the house fronts between the windows" (*The Tunnel* 15). Otherwise, all that is visible are trees against "distant buildings blocking the vista," and a "distant view of the courtyard of Euston station" (*The Tunnel* 15). These dingy windows and distant buildings depict the city as thwarted spectacle, Miriam's window one amongst many that paradoxically hinder rather than enable sight, suggesting Tansley Street as turned away from or outside of a visual economy dominated by a putatively male gaze, and Miriam's occupation of the city as characterized by not adopting that gaze. Miriam is indeed anxious about the proximity of neighboring windows and of the potential for being seen: "When the gas was on she would be visible from the opposite dormer window." However, as dusk falls and her neighbor's light comes on, "Watching carefully she could see only a dim figure moving amongst motionless shapes. No need to trouble about the blind. London could come freely in day and night through the unscreened happy little panes; light and darkness and darkness and light" (*The Tunnel* 16). Thus although Miriam's room seems transparent to the city, "unscreened" from it, her window the point through which "London could come freely in," she is nevertheless specifically protected from *view*. The city's commingling with Miriam's domestic space markedly does not occur in the visual realm. At Tansley Street she will have "no one watching or speculating or treating one in some particular way that had to be met" (*The Tunnel* 17); Miriam's domestic space, rather than a confining site enforcing gender

norms, allows for a promiscuous interaction with the city whilst evading any prescriptive gaze or disciplinary surveillance.

Furthermore, when Miriam's much-described windows afford her the opportunity to scrutinize others, or provide her with a vantage point from which to reverse the male gaze, to be the one who looks rather than who is looked at, she recognizes but hesitates at the possibility. Instead of establishing the domestic as a space women might gaze from rather than simply be hidden or on display in, the windows through which Miriam's rooms are defined emerge as a site where the gendered power dynamics of sight are confounded rather than simply reversed. Richardson posits this porous point in the boundary of the home not as the location of an inversion of norms, but of their uncertain suspension. Thus, although Miriam claims that, given a pension, she would by preference "Spend several years staring" (*The Trap* 436), she is alarmed when she and Miss Holland, watching a storm from their rooms at Flaxman's Court, observe Yeats in a house on the other side of the street. Yeats's "dark eyes were looking straight across" and, drawing back from the window, Miriam wonders, "Was he dismayed at the sight of Philistines invading the retreat where he lived hidden amongst unseeing villagers?" (*The Trap* 438). She vows "not again to look across when there was any sign of his presence. He should be invaded without knowing it. She would see him go in and out, see without seeing: screening him even from her own observation" (*The Trap* 438). The window here presents a field of vision marked not by hierarchy but by confusion, by blurred and indirect sightlines that put seeing in a contorted relationship with knowing. The windows at Tansley Street are "unscreened" but protective, the windows here "screening" the observed from knowledge of his observation.

Miriam's empathetic speculation about Yeats's possible dismay initially indicates that the window has occasioned a moment of cross-gendered reciprocity, where Miriam is able to see and recognize Yeats, and where she sees Yeats as seeing her as more than an "unseeing villager." However, her statement that "He should be invaded without knowing it" is grammatically indeterminate, the "should" either a conditional future consequence of Miriam's possible actions, or a determination of the way in which she ought to look; that Yeats might be "invaded" is then either self-censorious concern on Miriam's part, or the stealthily aggressive observation strategy she plans to adopt. That uncertain doubleness is further complicated by the paradoxical claim that she will "see without seeing," and the complicated scenario in which she envisages "screening him even from her own observation" – both gazing at Yeats and shielding him from her gaze, observing him whilst obscuring the act of her observation, watching him and imagining her watching him from his perspective. The accumulation of references to and synonyms for sight in this short passage contrarily signals an absence of direct vision; Miriam is neither subject to, steadily returning, nor straightforwardly subverting Yeats's gaze. Rather than a moment of reciprocity and recognition, or of role reversal, Miriam's window-gazing occasions a dissolution of seeing as knowing, an uncertain relation between or separation of observer and observed. Like the Tansley Street window that only reveals other blind windows, the windows of Flaxman's Court confuse the act of looking, unsettling the boundary between home and city at the point where they might become visible to one another. That boundary is thus not simply dissolved, but established as *partially* permeable, and as framing sights that refute the centrality of vision to a gendered spatial account of the city.

Domestic space subsequently emerges in *Pilgrimage* as somewhere both where Miriam is screened from scrutiny, and from where she is unable or unwilling to perform a counter-surveillance; Richardson in fact suggests that home is not reducible to or collapsed within the visual economy of the streetscape, but a site where the gendered assumptions of that economy might be confounded. Moving back to Tansley Street from Flaxman's Court, Miriam has a similar moment to her encounter with Yeats, witnessing another neighbor in the "house-fronts across the way," where "that upper window, away to the left on a level with her own, was again lit and uncurtained. The solitary was still there" (*Clear Horizon* 354). Whilst Miriam's discovery of Yeats results in a contorted hesitancy at the invasiveness of watching, in this later instance she turns away; whilst "the solitary" had "doubtless been sitting there at work every evening since she came home from Flaxman's," the "whole of her consciousness had flowed, as soon as her work was done, backwards towards Amabel's room down the passage" (*Clear Horizon* 354). Miriam relinquishes the opportunity to use the domestic as a location from which to look out at the city, turning "backwards" instead to the queer interior she shares with Amabel, orienting home not toward exterior spectacle but to the pleasures of "this shut-in, skyless prospect" (*Clear Horizon* 354). Miriam's "shut-in" domestic space actually allows for a different "prospect" of both domesticity and the city, suggesting home as open to queer domestic arrangements as it exists at an oblique tangent to public spectacle.

The contradiction of a "shut-in" "prospect" only serves to emphasize the non-visual nature of the way in which domestic space is open to the city in *Pilgrimage*. Whilst Miriam's rooms are turned away from a relationship of visual porosity to or exchange with the city outside the window, Richardson nevertheless posits windows as a point through which Miriam is

immersed in the city via other sensory means. Miriam synesthetically anticipates her first room at Tansley Street as being "bright and flat and noisy with light" (*The Tunnel* 12), and on opening her window is met by a "soft fresh breeze"; the "distant murmur of traffic changed into the clear plonk and rumble of swift vehicles," the "cheeping of birds came faintly from the distant squares and clear and sharp from neighbouring roofs," and from "somewhere down the street […] came the sound of an unaccompanied violin" (*The Tunnel* 15). London is "just outside all the time, coming in with the light, coming in with the darkness, always present in the depths of the air in the room" (*The Tunnel* 16). Whilst the view from the window is only of other blank windows and far-off buildings – marking the room as visually separate and distant from its surroundings – sound, light, and moving air immerse Miriam in a more finely textured and immediate sensory cityscape. Rather than the dim proliferation of windows amidst "grimy stucco" that refute both Miriam and the city as spectacle, the soundscape is "clear and sharp," the open window enabling a non-visual immediacy and intimacy whereby London is "always present" in the room. Miriam's sensory immersion in the city is repeated in her other dwellings; The "St Pancras bells" she finds "clamouring in the [Tansley Street] room" on her first morning of occupancy are similarly noted "cheerfully thumping the air" when she wakes at Flaxman's Court (*The Trap* 436), and still present when she returns to Mrs. Bailey's, the "tuneful booming of St Pancras clock" bringing "before [Miriam's] eyes the tree-filled space across which it reached the stately old streets" (*Clear Horizon* 355-356). The multi-sensory permeability of the windows of each of Miriam's dwellings is also evident on her second stay at Tansley Street, when she notes "the gradual realization of the freshness of the air pouring in from the squares, in place of the foul reek of the cat- and garbage-haunted waste ground at the back of Flaxman's" (*Clear Horizon*

355). There is thus a sensory unevenness to the way in which home in *Pilgrimage* is open to the city, contrary to criticism that characterizes the relationship between domestic interior and urban exterior as one of complete fluidity, inversion, or replication.

Richardson posits home as a location where Miriam comes into a more fully embodied knowledge of London, extending her flânerie indoors and de-emphasizing strolling and gazing as the only means of experiencing and understanding the modern city. In *Deadlock* Miriam reflects that "everywhere at moments, in houses, was the sense of the life of the whole world flowing in," and imagines that "to have a house, […] would be to have a vantage point for breathing in the life of the world" (*Deadlock* 223-224). In this passage Richardson once again posits a domestic porosity that decenters sight as the privileged sensory means of interaction with the city. Here, whilst a house offers a "vantage point," it is not for seeing the world but for "breathing [it] in," a bodily commingling, a somatic incorporation, which bypasses the dimness and distance of sight for an involved immediacy, a sensory flânerie dispersed across the partial boundaries of the domestic interior. And whilst she does not own or occupy a house, Miriam's own marginal dwellings function in the same way, enabling an intimate and corporeal interaction with the city not centered on sight, and thus in distinction to her experience of the street. For instance, coming across two men on a park bench, Miriam notes the "horrible leer of their talk" and, as they turn to look at her, suggests they "identified her with their vision," the "whole masculine sense of womanhood" that they "perceived only with the body." The men's reductive, sexualizing perception, their leering public gaze from which Miriam suggests there is "no escape" (*Deadlock* 208), proffers a marked contrast to Miriam's sensory engagement with the city through her domestic vantage point. The fact that their entire bodies are co-extensive with sight, vision and

sexual response indistinct, is at odds with Miriam's bodily, and often erotically, non-visual sense of London, exemplified during a cycling trip in *Revolving Lights*, when she envisages returning to London to "break into the shuttered house and gain her room and lie, till she suddenly slept, tingling to the spread of London all about her, herself one with it, feeling her life flow outwards, north, south, east, and west, to all its margins" (*Revolving Lights* 272-273). It is in and through Miriam's windowed domestic spaces that Richardson depicts her as shaped by and enmeshed with the city, inhabiting and experiencing London in multi-sensory ways that undercut seeing as the primary means of knowing.

Julia Prewitt Brown cautions against "studies of the bourgeois interior" that "are interested in collapsing entirely the separation between the house and the world." She is concerned with only partially collapsing that distinction: "One reason for preserving the distinction is the relative privacy and security of the English middle-class home in comparison with the dwellings of those below the middle-class" (Brown 20). Miriam and her London dwellings occupy an uncertain, liminal class position, and cannot lay claim to much of the privacy and security that Brown attributes to the middle-class family home. Nevertheless, Richardson's narrative does not collapse "entirely the separation between the home and the world." Rather, it puts them in a different sensory relation to one another, suggesting the domestic interior as beneficially apart from the visual dynamics of the streetscape, even as it enables a non-visual sensory commingling of interior and exterior, an immersion in the sensory life of the city that exceeds and evades a public exterior defined through visibility and sight. Miriam's domestic spaces thus undo gendered accounts of urban space and public spectacle; whilst Miriam's streetwalking certainly challenges the male flâneur as the defining occupant of

the modern city street, Richardson extends that challenge through depictions of dwellings where sight is confounded even as those dwellings are otherwise permeably enmeshed with the city.

2. The Door of a Seedy Room: Shared Dwellings and Queer Connectivity

If Richardson pays extensive attention to windows as a point at which an alternate understanding of gendered urban spatial relations is manifest, where distinctions between the domestic and the public are both maintained and disrupted through boundaries differently porous to different senses, she is similarly attentive to the disturbances effected by domestic doors. *Pilgrimage* is concerned not just with divisions between home and city, but also with socio-spatial divisions within the home, a concern that coalesces around doors. Jean Radford has noted the importance of exterior doors in *Pilgrimage*, which emphasize Miriam's repeated exits from houses, and her crossing of the domestic threshold, as a positive indication of the expansion of "women's sphere of movement during the period 1896-1906" (Radford 53). However, Richardson also explores the interior door as a point of separation and connection that reconfigures spatialized domestic relations. Miriam's rented dwellings both refute contemporary anxieties about the impropriety of transient and shared domestic space, and bear them out in celebratory fashion, as Richardson locates narrative, social, and sexual pleasure in the socio-spatial transgressions enabled by multiple occupancy homes. *Pilgrimage* thus suggests that privacy and propriety are not co-extensive, and that the semi-permeable, partial privacy of liminal lodgings produces queer proximities and transgressive encounters that subvert gender, sexual, and class norms.

The way in which nineteenth and early twentieth century houses were designed to

embody and reinforce such norms, and the way in which certain dwellings threatened those norms, has received considerable critical attention, and demonstrates the ambivalent place Miriam's residences occupy in relation to contemporary discourses about the home. Sharon Marcus, surveying Victorian architectural publications, notes that "Throughout the nineteenth century, architectural discourse defined the house as an impenetrable, self-contained structure with distinct and specialized rooms." Within the house, "Each room […] was designed to secure occupants from observation and intrusion" (S. Marcus 94). Victoria Rosner similarly discusses the deliberate socio-spatial compartmentalization evident in the ideal middle-class home, where "the division of rooms reflected a carefully conceived vision of social order" that emphasized the necessity of separating men from women and family from servants (Rosner 61). Rosner suggests that the "plan of the house, with its carefully secured divisions between private and public spaces, offers an extension of the doctrine of separate spheres" (Rosner 84).[25] Lodgings, boarding houses, and rented rooms – the types of domestic space Miriam occupies – of course fall far outside the criteria of the ideal home. Such spaces diverge from two "important aspects of the domestic ideal: the separation of households […] and the assignment of an entire house to each household." Marcus notes that "observers deplored that in lodging houses, the conventional dwelling unit (a house) was segmented into several parts (sets of rooms, a single room, a single room divided by a screen)" (S. Marcus 105). Miriam's homes, then, would appear to be inherently antithetical to domestic propriety, lacking the spatial divisions that produce and enforce gendered and classed social divisions; as Richardson writes, at Tansley Street Miriam

[25] Rosner's analysis of autobiographical essays by Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf illustrates how modernist writers continued to depend on these ideas of public and private even as they challenged concepts of sexual and gender propriety.

occupies only “a seedy room in a cheap boarding-house, neither hers nor another’s, a lodger’s passing abode” (*Deadlock* 136).

However, on a number of occasions, Miriam lauds the extent to which her dwellings actually conform to the desire for compartmentalization that Marcus and Rosner record, and Richardson suggests that such compartmentalization can be freeing rather than constraining, offering a counter-intuitive or contrary way of spatially evading social norms. At Tansley Street, for example, the house's “huge high thick walls held all the lodgers secure and apart, fixed in richly enclosed rooms in the heart of London” (*The Tunnel* 77); Miriam’s second room at Tansley Street is “In the house, but not, too much, of it. Supported and screened by the presence of the many rooms that made the large house” (*Dawn's Left Hand* 195); there is “the sense of people all about her in the house, but not impinging” (*Clear Horizon* 355). The socially dubious environs of Mrs. Bailey’s boarding house thus provide precisely the spatial separation they were feared to inherently preclude, Miriam's room of her own “screened,” “held […] secure and apart,” each lodger “fixed” and “enclosed,” not “impinging” on one another. Richardson attributes to the socially fraught fluidity of the lodging house the ideal separation and seclusion of the middle-class family home, thus using conventional architectural rhetoric to articulate a transgressive domestic space where Miriam can enjoy “the freedom of the great dark house, the daily oblivion of moving about in it” (*Deadlock* 31), and “her own dream world at home in her room, her strange unfailing self, the lovely world of lovely things seen in silence and tranquility, the coming and going of the light, the myriad indescribable things of which day and night, in solitude, were full, at every moment” (*Deadlock* 208). This home is where “she was going to live, in freedom, hidden” (*The Tunnel* 29). The fact that at Mrs. Bailey's there is “no one

watching […] one" (*The Tunnel* 17) demonstrates how architectural concerns with privacy might actually enable a protected "solitude" and "hidden freedom," a solitude and freedom that shape Miriam's self and allow her immersion in the "indescribable things of […] day and night." Melinda Harvey has noted that, in *Pilgrimage*'s boarding houses, the "life of communal apartness simulates the exhilarating public-privacy of the *flâneur* in modernity" (Harvey 177). Far from being constraining, the confines of Tansley Street are paradoxically the means through which Miriam's non-normative sense of self and her commingling with the life of the city occur.

In this regard, then, Richardson suggests the interior of Mrs. Bailey's boarding house as producing the same tension between separation and contact, privacy and proximity, as Miriam's windows. Miriam may be "held apart" from the other lodgers, but she also has "the sense of people all about her in the house"; the unexpectedly normative seclusion of these rented rooms nevertheless allows for a promiscuous sensory interaction, a familiarity, with both her fellow boarders and London at large. Richardson's focus on the function of interior doors similarly delineates a domestic interior that both divides and connects those within it, rendering the internal boundaries of the house as partially porous as the windows between house and city; as Georg Simmel writes in "Bridge and Door," the door "represents […] how separating and connecting are only two sides of precisely the same act" ("Bridge" 67). Thus, lying in bed at Tansley Street, Miriam experiences an "attack on her nostrils from within the house: not the mingling of stale odours perpetually rising through the confined dust-laden air of the Flaxman tenements, but, stealing up from Mrs. Bailey's vast, cheerful kitchen and carrying through keyholes and the creaks of doors its invitation to breakfast, the savoury smell of frying rashers" (*Clear Horizon* 355). Although Richardson makes a distinction between the relative olfactory

intrusions of Flaxman's Court and Tansley Street, both are the site of an "attack on her nostrils from within the house," the interior of the buildings mounting a sensory assault, varyingly pleasurable, on her bodily interior. At Tansley Street, the smell of frying bacon joins Miriam in her bed with Mrs. Bailey in her kitchen, staging an indecent proximity between distant parts of the house, between landlady and lodger, and between cooking and sleeping, by synesthetically "stealing" "through keyholes and the creaks of doors." The doors of the house, even as they physically and visually divide its interior, allow, like windows, for the transmission of sounds and smells, intimate sensory phenomena that transgress socio-spatial divisions and emphasize what Sharon Marcus refers to as the "impossibility" of domestic divisions that screen sights, sounds, and smells (S. Marcus 94). Miriam's domestic space thus once again permits a corporeal pleasure in the sensory breaching of spatialized class and gender boundaries, and an uncertain division between herself and her surroundings.

The socioeconomic topography of the domestic interior, and the perturbing presence of doors, is similarly evident in *Dawn's Left Hand* when, in an extended comparison of Tansley Street and Flaxman's Court, Richardson devotes a paragraph to Miriam's recollection of the doors in the former residence. Miriam conjures an acoustic tour of the building that focuses not on its rooms but on the doors that both enclose and join them, emphasizing Mrs. Bailey's as characterized as much by interior movement and connection as freeing isolation and quiet. Thus Richardson charts the "upstairs drawing-room's softly, silkily closing door, a well-mannered, muffled sound, as if it were intent on doing its duty in such a way as not to interrupt the social life going on within"; the "heavy brown doors of the second-floor bedrooms, still with wooden knobs like those below, closing leisurely and importantly, seeming to demand the respect due to

the prices of the rooms they guarded"; and the rooms on the upper levels of the house, "whose yellow, varnished doors shut lightly and quickly, one with a soft brassy click, very neat and final, one with a sharp rattle of its loose metal knob echoing over the linoleum-covered stairs and landings of the upper floors" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 195). This auditory inventory of doors is allied with Miriam's joy at "everything that makes up the adventure of ascending and descending flights of stairs" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 194) in depicting Tansley Street as a site where the classed architectural strata of the house's floors are vertically integrated through the sensory phenomena of sound and smell as well as the built features of doors and stairs. Whilst Richardson focuses on how each of these doors closes, and whilst they clearly index the varying socioeconomic value attributed to different parts of the house, they nonetheless constitute a cumulative series of connections, of means by which Miriam can sensorily and physically move through the building, finding "her own life" "extending even into those [rooms] she had never entered" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 194). Thus the very features of the domestic interior designed to mark and maintain social difference enable Miriam to find pleasure in socio-spatial transgressions even before she steps out the front door, experiencing an expansion of self beyond the gendered and classed boundaries within the home as well as without.

Doors, stairways, and corridors produce liminal spaces within the home, enabling transgressive interactions even as they attempt to avoid them, contributing in *Pilgrimage* to a sense of home as a place of partial privacy, suspended (sometimes pleasurably, sometimes not) between protective enclosure and porous commonality. That interior tension between public and private, between suitable separation and improper encounters, is illustrated in a series of scenes of boarding house life that Miriam recounts to other acquaintances. These stories constitute a

narrative loitering, lingering at doorways that mark the physical and figurative limits of domesticity. Miriam thus entertains the Brooms by describing an occasion when Mag and Jan were awoken in their boarding house in the middle of the night by the groaning and vomiting of a drunken Hindu on the staircase outside their room (*Interim* 294-295); it is a story that presages one she later tells Selina Holland about a "drunken Irish journalist who used to come blundering up the stairs at all hours of the night" at Tansley Street (*The Trap* 433). Both of these tales of drunken fellow residents hinge on the door separating the female boarders in their rooms from the common hallway. Mag and Jan "heard the man collapse with a groan against their door" and then "heard him being violently *ill*" (*Interim* 294), and whilst he is no longer there in the morning the women discover he has left something of himself behind (*Interim* 295). Miriam is prompted to recall the Irish journalist in a conversation with Selina Holland about locking the door to their shared rooms at Flaxman's Court, noting that although Tommy O'Laughlin's door "was at right angles to hers" and he "used to stumble about on the landing, and sometimes, poor dear, be sick," she never locked her room at Tansley Street. After each of Miriam's revelations about O'Laughlin (he was drunk, sometimes sick, had an infatuation with her, was seeking a divorce), Miss Holland's disapproval and incredulity increases: "It was a most extraordinary establishment. But I think the oddest thing is that you should not have made fast the door" (*The Trap* 433). Regardless of the social impropriety of Tansley Street, Selina Holland considers Miriam's failure to even think about locking her door the greatest breach of decorum.

Both of these incidents undermine the prevailing architectural wisdom that a "room entered only from a corridor, and not from other rooms, would […] circumvent the danger that the people or purpose of one room might unexpectedly mix with another" (S. Marcus 94). It is

precisely the doors, corridors, and stairways of these boarding houses that occasion an unexpected mix of people, that neither Richardson nor her protagonist consider a "danger," but rather a source of social pleasure in the retelling – fodder for anecdotes with a transgressive frisson, able to both shock and amuse Miriam's audiences. Indeed, in performing Mag and Jan's story for the Brooms, Miriam deploys mimicry, emphasis, and careful pauses, enjoying "holding them all silently eager for her voice again to fill out the spaces of their room" (*Interim* 295), offering a moment of meta-narrative that embeds the text's domestic spaces both within one another and the novel itself. These entertainingly unorthodox interactions, however, occur only through the material mediation of a door, their improper intimacy limited to sound rather than sight or touch (traces of vomit notwithstanding). Thus these shared dwellings that ostensibly deviate from middle-class norms once again prove but partially porous. Domestic space in such anecdotes is expansive enough to provide material for Miriam's emerging identity as a storyteller, to "fill out the spaces" of bourgeois dining rooms with tales of less salubrious London interiors, her comic narrative achieving a similar auditory mixing of differently classed spaces as the boarding house itself does. Yet that domestic space also remains secure from intrusion; despite the "queer odd men" with whom she shared "her lonely top floor" at Tansley Street, Miriam "had never, at night, given them a single thought" (*The Trap* 433). As such, Miriam's dwellings, like Miriam herself, occupy an ambivalent class status, hovering between slumming story and the maintenance of respectability, their uneven and uncertain boundaries an extension of Miriam's own.

In *Queer Phenomenology* Sara Ahmed suggests that "Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional

genealogy" (Ahmed 107); by this measure, the lodgings of *Pilgrimage* have a distinctly queer orientation, enabling extra-familial encounters that place disparate bodies within proximity to one another. And those proximities extend to more explicitly deviant personal and physical interactions, which might not prove as appropriate for dinner table stories. The doors at Tansley Street open as well as close, admitting physical movement as well as allowing for the transmission of sounds and smells. Miriam's sensory domestic flânerie, palatable in the Broom's dining room, is thus accompanied by a more literal traversal of interior space, positing home as a site of transgressive wandering in its own right, of border crossings within the threshold of the domestic. Thus, crossing the boundary at Tansley Street between the rooms used by the boarders and Mrs. Bailey's living space, "a sense of release enfolded [Miriam] as she closed the door of the little room. It was as if she had stepped off the edge of her life, out into the wide spaces of the world" (*Deadlock* 32). Her landlady's room is "full of unsightly necessaries, all old and in various stages of dilapidation," but there is "something vital, even cheerful in the atmosphere," and Miriam finds herself "rejoicing in the disorder" (*Deadlock* 33). Richardson's evocation of both the room and Miriam's reaction to it encapsulates the paradoxical play of enclosure and freedom that characterizes domestic space throughout *Pilgrimage*. Miriam experiences "release" but is "enfolded"; the room is "small" and "crowded" but amongst the "wide spaces of the world"; its contents are "old," "unsightly," and dilapidated, but the atmosphere is "vital," the room a "lively centre." The sense of entering Mrs. Bailey's living quarters as providing access to the "spaces of the world" echoes Miriam's claims later in *Deadlock* that houses are pervaded by "the sense of the life of the whole world flowing in," and provide "a vantage point for breathing in the life of the world" (*Deadlock* 223-224). However, in the case of Mrs. Bailey's room, the

border crossing that challenges and extends Miriam's sense of self, such that she "steps off the edge of her life," happens entirely within the domestic interior: "in her deliberate excursion into this little room she was free" (*Deadlock* 37), as her landlady's room is somewhere "where without will or plan or any shapely endeavor in her life, she was yet so strangely accepted and indulged" (*Deadlock* 38) – where she is welcomed though her life deviates from standard plans and shapes. Miriam's deviations from binary gender and class propriety occur not just through her street excursions but also through how she dwells, how she navigates and inhabits domestic space. Her voyages around the rooms of London do not dissolve distinctions between interior and exterior, but suggest the doorways of domestic space as both productive and protective of queer encounters and deviant behaviors in ways more commonly attributed to the city street.

As much is evident in the array of socio-sexual transgressions that occur within Miriam's homes, improper relations enabled precisely by the "freedom of the great dark house" and the "oblivion" it affords (*Deadlock* 31). Thus Miriam, accepting a concert invitation from one of the Canadian doctors lodging at Tansley Street, can enjoy the "swift sunlit decision and freedom of his innocent reception of her in his bedroom" (*Interim* 386), and, in the course of her late night conversations with Michael Shatov, she considers the house the "friendly guardian of this wide leisurely night-life" (*Deadlock* 171). In both these instances Richardson depicts domestic space as characterized by an inversion that enables Miriam to pursue encounters which transgress bourgeois social norms: a man's bedroom, rather than being closed off beyond the boundaries of propriety, becomes a "sunlit" and "innocent" site of "freedom"; the enclosed domestic interior of Tansley Street the location of a "wide leisurely night-life." Though the house thus seems turned inside out, its interior aligned both with the sunlit innocence of public encounters and with the

louche adventures of the nighttime street, it proves the "friendly guardian" providing access to a deviant but specifically domestic landscape. Tansley Street indeed fosters a series of irregular relationships, such as that between the widowed landlady Mrs. Bailey and twenty-two year old Mr. Gunner, one of her boarders. Miriam considers the relationship an "extraordinary thing" (*Deadlock* 35), but discovers it has developed due to Mr. Gunner's sense of being at home in the boarding house, "he says this is the first home he's had; he's never been so happy" (*Deadlock* 36). And Tansley Street also facilitates Eleanor Dear's liaison with Mr. Rodkin, and hides her subsequent pregnancy; towards the end of that pregnancy Richardson details Michael Shatov "stealing to her room night by night […] to sleep at her side and say consoling things," while Mrs. Bailey, "true as steel," is "Serenely warding off the women boarders…gastric distension." As Miriam thinks, "What a story for proper English people…" (*Revolving Lights* 284). The stories of boarding-house life with which Miriam entertains her "proper English" friends, dependent on the two-fold porosity and propriety of doors, are therefore joined in the larger telling of Richardson's novel-sequence with stories where the borders those doors instantiate are deliberately and pleasurably physically breached. The doors of Tansley Street provide the concomitant connectivity and privacy, openness and seclusion, to enable a series of non-marital sexual and emotional relationships that cross boundaries of age, class, and nationality.[26] Thus, paradoxically, the boarding-houses of *Pilgrimage* do confirm contemporary fears about the social and moral transgressions they might enable, whilst upholding many of the spatial distinctions appropriate to the "gentleman's house" – Shatov can share a bed with the pregnant

[26] Betsy Klimasmith observes a similar phenomenon in American literature of urban domesticity in the period 1850-1930, noting that "In urban boarding houses, apartment buildings, and hotels, the halls, stairways (or later, elevators), lobbies, entryways, and dining rooms facilitated extra-familial connections within the walls of the place called home" (Klimasmith 5).

Eleanor Dear even as Mrs. Bailey's gatekeeping conceals that pregnancy from other boarders.

The shifting doubleness in these transient dwellings, an inconsistent permeability that defies simple binaries of interior and exterior, public and private, thus enables domestic lives and relationships that transect socio-spatial distinctions, as is also borne out in Miriam's queer relationship with Amabel, the relationship that orients her "backwards," away from the window and "towards Amabel's room down the passage" (*Clear Horizon* 354). Miriam's relationship with Amabel again suggests the domestic in *Pilgrimage* as a site conducive to deviations from social and sexual norms, its uneven terrain producing space for queer connections. Thus Miriam recalls "Amabel downstairs at dinner, ignoring everyone but me, both of us using the social occasion to heighten our sense of being together, making it impossible for any one to break into the circle where we sit surrounded and alone. So strongly enclosed that not one of those with whom at other times she talked and flirted could mistake the centre of her interest"; the two of them are in a "magic enclosure" (*Clear Horizon* 286). The occasion of a boarding house dinner enables Miriam and Amabel to be "together," "alone," and "enclosed," despite being "surrounded." Richardson's language here replicates her descriptions of Tansley Street holding its inhabitants "secure and apart," each lodger "enclosed" within the house, with "the sense of people all about" "but not impinging." The more public location of the dining room nevertheless allows for the same paradoxical privacy as the house as a whole, its inconsistent spatial distinctions enabling transgressive pockets of intimacy such that Miriam can think that "the house […] now was nothing but a casket for Amabel" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 247).

This dining room moment also signals how *Pilgrimage*'s uncertain and varying distinctions between interior and exterior percolate through the form of Richardson's text itself.

It is one of the scattered occasions on which the narrative unexpectedly and briefly shifts into the first person, a rapid and rather intoxicated outburst of "me," "us," "our," "we" before Richardson returns to the indirect third person. Richardson thus multiplies spatial confusions across scales and through coincident content and form: Miriam and Amabel are publicly performing an intense and private intimacy, excluding the other guests at the table even as their witnessing presence is necessary to the couples' sense of involved isolation, whilst the shift to the first person provides a more direct sense of Miriam's interior even as its suddenness further unsettles the distinction between author, narrator, and protagonist, and between the boundaries of Richardson's narrative and Miriam's consciousness. That Richardson does so in language which so clearly echoes Miriam's sense of the Tansley Street house itself underscores the extent to which *Pilgrimage* identifies domestic space as implicated in, indeed constitutive of, shifting boundaries of sexual, gender, and class identity, each of these contingent, and changing in and through the terrain of the domestic interior. The indistinct, unsteady, partially permeable boundaries of that interior thus suggest such identities as themselves not determined by or anchored to an individual's interior terrain as distinct from their physical surroundings, from the other interiors in which they find themselves.

3. Why Did People Get Into Cupboards? Domestic Things and the Interior Self

A sense of the interconnectedness of subjectivity and space, of the ways in which identities are shiftingly generated in and through the material surroundings of home in a manner that generates a concomitant instability of personal and domestic interiority, is evident in a consistent merging of people and structures throughout *Pilgrimage*. Walking through north

London, Miriam wonders at the "marvel of the mere existence of a building," and aligns buildings with clothing and speech: "all the strange unnoticed marvel of buildings and clothes, the even more marvellously strange unnoticed clothing of speech, all existing alone and independent outside the small existence of single lives and yet proclaiming them..." (*Deadlock* 210-211). Miriam here allies the built environment with more obviously performative speech. And whilst she insists on the separation between human subjects and their concrete environs – the latter are "alone and independent outside the small existence of single lives" – in so doing she appears to grant buildings an agency of their own (they have an "independent" existence), and suggests buildings as interpellating those "single lives," "proclaiming" them as does the "speech" an individual "wears." Richardson thus suggests that both clothing and speech are performative means by which identity is articulated, and that buildings are somehow too. In this passage, buildings, clothing, and speech constitute an intertwined series, linked through patterns of repetition. The replication of "marvel" and "marvellously," "existence" and "existing," "clothes" and "clothing," the double use of the adjectival phrase "strange unnoticed," indicates the interconnection and importance of these seemingly disparate entities for the "single lives" they proclaim. Grouping buildings in this moment with other markers of identity that link bodily exterior ("clothes") and interior subjectivity ("speech"), signals *Pilgrimage*'s concern with the shaping of "single lives" in relation to their material environment. That concern is manifest in the text's domestic spaces, where Richardson's language frequently blurs the lines between people, rooms, and furniture, positing home as a site of identity slippage rather than consolidation.

Richardson's domestic interiors are thus not just semi-permeable sites of compromised and deviant privacy, partially porous to the city and generative of queer domestic proximities.

They also constitute uncertain and moving boundaries between people and the spaces they inhabit, producing confusions that fissure coherent gender and class identities. As much is evident in the coincidence of domestic space, clothing, class, and gender that characterizes Miriam's move into shared rooms at Flaxman's Court with Selina Holland. Negotiating and organizing their shared space, Miriam and Miss Holland agree to divide their sleeping quarters with a curtain. Miriam thinks her new living arrangements will be a success, but not "until the curtain was up and the strip of privacy was there." Miss Holland, she suspects, is not quite so invested in the necessity of the curtain, the "curtain, for her, was an affair of modesty, a physical not a spiritual covering. Spiritually she had nothing to hide. She had no back premises. No reservations." For Miriam, however, "the coming of the curtain would be the moment of dropping the mask of attention, the moment of soaring freely within this new life" (*The Trap* 406). Richardson again invokes structure as clothing; the curtain that is to function as a partition is, for Miss Holland, a physical covering to preserve modesty, and for Miriam a replacement for a figurative item of social wear ("the mask of attention"). Miriam's formulation of their differing perceptions of the curtain bespeaks differing understandings of privacy; Miss Holland is concerned with a surface performance of propriety, "physical not spiritual," whilst Miriam considers the "strip of privacy" an opportunity precisely to abandon the "mask" of social performance and thus "soar freely." The curtain therefore both divides the room and separates Miriam's sense of privacy from the one she projects Miss Holland as having; the curtain generates for Miriam a sense of her own interior, of a self divergent from the norms of bourgeois femininity she considers Selina Holland to represent.

The curtain's instantiation of differences of class and gender is thus bound up with

differing ideas of public and private, the room in Flaxman's Court producing differing accounts of domesticity. Miriam sees in Miss Holland's approach to the curtain the

> secret of the effortless decorous speech of the 'gentlewoman.' And the secret of its tiresomely unvarying form. […] They not only spoke as they thought, but thought as they spoke, guided and fashioned their thought, even to themselves, in forms of decorous speech. Anything that could not be so moulded was banished. Anything 'unspeakable' – their strongest term of contempt. Thus they were, even when alone, permanently at attention. (*The Trap* 406)

Miriam posits the classed gender identity of "gentlewoman" as constructed through a continual public and exterior performance, even in the purported privacy of the home. Selina Holland has "no back premises," there is no separation between her thought and speech, no sense of interior self separable from the carefully maintained edifice of "gentlewoman" – "decorous," "fashioned," and "moulded," a carefully crafted and seamless display. For Miriam, Miss Holland thus seems to invoke a gendered bourgeois domesticity whose respectability is defined through a relentless exteriority, performed under a self-surveillance so continuous as to indeed evacuate the post-Enlightenment connection between home and psychic interiority; "gentlewomen" craft their thoughts "even to themselves"; "even when alone" they are "permanently at attention." In this model, the propriety of the domestic interior is dependent on, and produces, an erasure of women's subjectivity, the private space of the home constituting respectable women as perpetually scrutinized decorous surfaces, part of the furnishings. But Miriam's reading of the curtain asserts an alternative narrative of domesticity to the one she thinks constrains Miss Holland. Rather than being "permanently at attention," subject to a military-like discipline, at

home Miriam can shed "the mask of attention," slip out from under the performance of respectable femininity, and, "soaring freely," claim home as a site for evading disciplinary scrutiny rather than being defined by it. The temporary, flimsy division of the curtain therefore allows Miriam both to theorize conventional middle-class womanhood and domesticity and to generate a divergent account of the domestic interior that, like her experience of Tansley Street, identifies a form of freedom within the unstable borders of home. Home, rather than where the "unspeakable" is suppressed, is precisely the location of "the myriad indescribable things of which day and night, in solitude, were full" (*Deadlock* 208).

The Flaxman's Court curtain is notably an improvised, impermanent, far from solid structural division, and thus hardly suitable to the propriety Miriam rather ironically suggests Miss Holland perceives in it. Indeed, that this curtain functions as a point where social distinctions seem to proliferate only underscores their fragility, as do the contortions of interior and exterior, public and private, that characterize the two versions of domesticity Miriam imagines on either side of it. The intermingled literal and figurative interior spaces in this passage actually serve to further destabilize distinct domestic maps of class and gender. Thus Selina Holland's absence of "back premises" would also appear to support her status as "gentlewoman" by distinguishing her both from servants (hidden occupants of the back premises of the bourgeois domestic interior), and from the lower class commerce of shopkeeping (where the family do business in the front of the property and live themselves in the back premises). She is thus apparently distanced from the taint of "back" as meaning "'inferior, mean, obscure' as in back alley, back lane, back road, back slum, back streets" ("Back," *OED*). However, Miss Holland and Miriam literally have no back premises at Flaxman's Court, having no room or

funds for servants. It is in fact Miss Holland herself who cooks and keeps house, her absence of back premises in this regard highlighting her poverty and indicating the extent to which she deviates from the status of gentlewoman. And Flaxman's Court itself is a "back alley, back lane, back road, back slum"; the curtain, and the room and building in which it is hung, rather than concretely affirming clear social distinctions, demonstrate their inconsistency, and how they shift in relation to the domestic landscapes in which they are produced, giving lie to the sense of gentility in which Miriam supposes Miss Holland is trapped. It is Miss Holland who, when Miriam finds herself confronted with an "unspeakable thing" – a cockroach – swiftly deals with the problem, and Miriam who suggests it is "Not a thing one could testify at a dinner-table" (*The Trap* 414). The distinctions Miriam perceives in the curtain are themselves therefore rendered suspect by Richardson's text, tracing in domestic moments a yet more disjointed articulation of identity.

The shifting production and delineation of gender in the domestic interior, generated in the interaction of the human and the material home, is manifest in the moments in *Pilgrimage* when Miriam envisages herself as a man. As Richardson rather satirically describes Miss Holland holding forth on all that can be achieved with a damp duster, "Miriam wondered whether, after all, housework might not hold some strange charm. […] Always, in relation to household women, she felt herself a man. Felt that they included her, with a half-contemptuous indulgence, in the world of men" (*The Trap* 412). Ironically, then, in this instance it is domesticity rather than flânerie that produces a deviant sense of gender identity in Miriam; Richardson does not simply claim the domestic as a site of women's agency and autonomy, but suggests that it constitutes gender as contingent, constantly being shifted and realigned through

social and material encounters that produce a queer incoherence. Such is also the case at Tansley Street where, Mrs. Bailey having upgraded her establishment from a lodging house to a boarding house, Miriam ventures into the drawing-room and eventually sits down to play the piano, Richardson writing that this "dingy woman playing with the directness and decision of a man was like some strange beast in the room" (*Interim* 335). The four page passage of which this moment is part posits the boarding-house drawing-room as a location of blurred distinctions, where encounters with the material furnishings of domesticity disturb the categories through which subjectivity is articulated, and people are rendered legible as such.

The drawing-room prompts a series of identifications and rejections that manifest the moving contours and uncertain intersections of Miriam's class and gender. She is associated with and at home in the room, and simultaneously uneasy in and alienated from it. Thus, prior to Richardson evoking Miriam as a "dingy woman," she has repeatedly emphasized the room's dinginess, Miriam noticing a "dingy antimacassar," "dingy books," and "dingy lace curtains" (*Interim* 331-2), the repetition making Miriam part of the room's shabby and tenuous respectability. But that merging of person and room is inconsistent, incomplete, positing the pervasive dinginess as not merely pathetic fallacy, but as part of a series of spatio-temporal points in a more finely textured rendering of the production of identity in place. Despite her camouflaging dinginess, in taking "possession" of a little velvet chair, Miriam "felt she was in her place in the room; out amongst its strange spaces" (*Interim* 331), that strangeness is reiterated when the "dingy woman" playing the piano like a man becomes a "strange beast in the room." Furthermore, in another example of the narrative's recurrent focus on doors, the room's door knob "told her callously that her real place was in the little room upstairs with the bedroom

crockery cold in the morning light" (*Interim* 333). Whilst Miriam shares the dingy markers of Tansley Street's marginal gentility, chairs, door knobs, and pianos triangulate her yet more marginal class and gender location, rendering her a "strange beast" in the house's "strange spaces," at odds with shabby versions of drawing-room delicacy and door-determined social stratifications alike.

The domestic interior here, as in so many moments in *Pilgrimage*, suggests an instability in identity derived from shifting relations with the material contents of the home; Richardson writes domesticity not as a stable anchor for a coherent interior self, but as a site where identity categories are being constantly modulated through spatial and material interactions. Consequently, the interiors of Miriam's dwellings (partially porous to the surrounding city, as we have seen) are characterized by an array of surfaces, often indistinguishable from one another. These confused series of exteriors perpetuate Richardson's disruption of a bounded domestic or psychic interior. In the drawing-room passage, those surfaces accumulate in dense repetitions of adjectives and things:

> In the narrow strip of mirror that ran from the table high up the wall between the two French windows, stood the heavy self-conscious reflection of the elegant jug. It was elegant and complete; the heavy, minutely moulded flowers and leaves festooned about its tapering curves did not destroy its elegance. It stood out alone and complete against the reflected strip of shabby room. […] It was an imitation of something. A reflection of some other life. (331)

The jug invoked here is not singular, but perceived in a series of reflections rendered through heavily repetitive language: the jug's "heaviness" and "completeness," are all doubled, its

"elegance" and "reflection" tripled. That its reflection is also "self-conscious" further multiplies the surfaces being apprehended – the jug is looking at its own reflection as Miriam is looking both at the jug and its reflection. And the jug is not just the reflection of itself, but also of "some other life," an imitation of the more proper, more genteel home Mrs. Bailey is attempting to emulate. Furthermore, the descriptors of the jug are repeated in the room's other furnishings: the piano too is "elegant," the room's cornices "heavy," and the "shabby" room contains "shabby" velvet chairs and a "shabby" bamboo tea-table. There are further mirrors and reflections: a "chiffonier in black wood" is "supporting and reflecting in its little mirror a large square deeply carved dusty brown box" (*Interim* 331), and Miriam stares

> at the vague scatter of vases and bowls and small ornaments standing in front of the large overmantel and dimly reflected in its dusty mirror. Two tall vases on the mantelshelf, holding dried grasses, carried her eyes up to two short vases holding dried grasses standing on the wooden-pillared brackets of the overmantel, and back again to themselves. (*Interim* 332)

This relentless interconnected series of repetitions, doublings, and reflections evokes the drawing-room of Tansley Street as a dizzying set of linked surfaces that undermine clear distinctions between objects, objects and their reflections, objects and observer.[27] Those unclear distinctions resist a reading of the domestic interior as revelatory of a stable interior self, deflecting attention from surface to surface in a manner that emphasizes replication and

[27] Jane Garrity notes that "there is a kind of uniformity and surface quality to the novel's profusion of encyclopedic detail. Miriam's observations of daily life may be acute, but she deliberately neglects to subordinate and hierarchize the flood of information that filters through her consciousness" (Garrity 89). Miriam's description of the Tansley Street drawing room certainly emphasizes a uniformity to its many contents, including herself, with its long series of detailed but repetitive surfaces flattening hierarchies between Miriam and her material surroundings, and between observer and observed.

imitation, the interior itself nothing but a citation or reflection of "something else," some other drawing-room, a copy without an original. Dingy Miriam in this dingy room of mirrors again demonstrates *Pilgrimage*'s definition of the domestic through compromised or confused sight, the overwhelming detail in which the drawing-room is evoked ironically not affording a stable sense of Miriam's interior but rather culminating in the fantastic image of herself as a "strange beast," her strangeness generated through the shabby, daily strangeness of Mrs. Bailey's house.

The suggestion that it is in material encounters with quotidian objects that identity categories are both produced and revealed as contingent and unstable is reinforced by Miriam's much later assessment that, "Perhaps, in the end, things, like beloved backgrounds, are people. […] In things, even in perfectly 'ordinary and commonplace' things, life is embodied" (*Clear Horizon* 368). That lives are given shape by "ordinary and commonplace things," which thus have a life of their own, is evident in the relationship between Miriam and the furniture on which she writes. The ink-stained table in her room at Tansley Street is where she discovers the escape to be found in writing, and her identity as a writer; however, like the foray into the drawing-room discussed above, where Miriam reconnects with music, the physical, material conditions of her writing are not simply the means by which she discovers something about herself, a prop in the coalescing of her subjectivity. Rather, her identity is intertwined with objects in space that actually appear to have an uncanny life of their own; they, rather than Miriam, are at the center of her becoming a writer. Thus, in Miriam's first moment of writing, she thinks "Nothing would matter now that the paper-scattered lamplit circle was established as the centre of life. […] Held up by this secret place, drawing her energy from it, any sort of life would do that left this room and its little table free and untouched" (*Deadlock* 134). Writing is not an inherent part of

Miriam's identity that emanates from her and is merely reflected, materialized in, or coaxed out by her surroundings; it is her domestic space that constructs her identity as writer. This productive lateral relationship with her household furnishings is reinforced when the following day Miriam notes that the "spell of the ink-stained table had survived the night. Moving about, preparing for to-day, she turned continually towards the window-space as to an actual presence […] It was as if she had entered a companionship that now spread between her and the life she had so far dealt with unaided" (*Deadlock* 135). She leaves her "seedy room in a cheap boarding-house, neither hers nor another's, a lodger's passing abode, but holding a little table that was herself, alive with her life" (*Clear Horizon* 136). The table is not separate from her, a tool to self-actualization, or a symbolic means of indicating her new writing consciousness, but an "actual presence" that is "herself"; Miriam's sense of self is thus figured as inhering in relationships with the scant furniture of her transient dwelling.

The ink-stained table at Tansley Street is replaced with an imitation Chippendale bureau at Flaxman's Court. The bureau is one of the pieces of new furniture at Flaxman's Court that "peopled the room with clear reflections" *(The Trap* 410). Richardson's verb identifies the furniture as a constituent element in the population of the room, again suggesting that human and non-human actors are equal parts of the social fabric of the space, a suggestion reiterated in Miriam's claim that it "was experience; seen from any angle it was joy complete. Added to life and independent of it. A little thing that would keep its power through all the accidents of mood and circumstance" (410). The bureau is part of Miriam's identity, a part of or means of accessing her "experience," but is also independent of her life, and able to produce certain effects, wield a particular "power," regardless of the other "accidents of mood and circumstance" that shape that

life. Here then is another example of a domestic object, a piece of furniture, that operates as more than scenery, and more than as a simple foil for the characterization of Richardson's protagonist.

There is also, as in the scene in the drawing-room in *Interim*, an emphasis on the reflective properties of the bureau and the other furnishings in the Flaxman's Court rooms. Richardson writes that "upon the polished surfaces of the little bureau, set down with its back to the curtain, and upon its image, filling the lower part of the full-length strip of mirror hung opposite against the wall, were bright plaques of open sky" (410). Here, as with the vases and jugs in the drawing-room at Tansley Street, it is difficult to trace the series of reflections; the sky is reflected on the surface of the bureau, but also on the surface of the bureau as seen in its reflection in the mirror on the wall. Richardson's series of modifying clauses repeatedly delay the moment of discovering exactly what is being reflected, emphasizing instead the series of reflections and the surfaces doing the reflecting. The fact that it is the sky that is being reflected points again to the extent to which interior and exterior are not easily separated in *Pilgrimage.* In the earlier description of Mrs. Bailey's drawing-room the exterior space of the city similarly makes its way in amongst the surplus of shabby furnishings: "Between the curtains she could catch a glimpse of the balcony railings and strips between them of the brown brickwork of the opposite house" (*Interim* 332). In both instances the glimpse of the outside world that each room affords is slender, and framed and mediated by the domestic space in which Miriam is situated. However, rather than suggesting domestic space as constrictive or oppressive, these framings and reflections indicate the influence of the private on the public, the domestic on the city; the city is mediated by the structure of the home. And the home is not an enclosure, but a series of surfaces that reflect rather contain. Whilst these surfaces could be read simply as "reflecting" Miriam's

consciousness of the conventions of the society in which they exist, they actually proffer a more structural insight into the ways in which those conventions and Miriam's identity come into being.

The only possession or furnishing on which Richardson dwells that is not simply rendered as a surface is a bog oak casket in which Miriam keeps her letters from her married lover, Hypo Wilson. The casket "had held grannie's bog oak bracelets, chain, and brooch more than half a century ago, and might be older than that" (*Clear Horizon* 367). It is one of the heirloom items that Miriam generally so conspicuously lacks, a material connection to a family history. The fossilized, ancient materiality of bog oak emphasizes its historicity and persistence through time. In using it as storage for Hypo's letters, it connects Miriam's familial past to a heterosexual and potentially reproductive present moment, materially establishing a heteronormative continuum. The locked casket, however, is broken by Amabel; she renders porous one of the novel's few places of complete concealment and enclosure, fracturing that material evidence of historical continuity. Amabel exposes the casket's "magpie-hoard" (*Clear Horizon* 366), and Miriam, imagining Amabel in the act of smashing the casket to the ground, acknowledges "the appeal of Amabel's determination to drive through veils of secrecies" (*Clear Horizon* 367). Amabel's status as a "tornado, sweeping oneself off one's feet and one's possessions from their niches" (*Clear Horizon* 367) once again establishes a connection and equivalency between people and things, and posits Amabel as a disruption to the lineages and alliances manifest in the casket. Indeed, her destruction of "veils" and "secrecies," and the locked hiding place of the casket, suggests queer not as a closeted matter of the unspoken and hidden, but as a breaking open of established genealogies, connections, and associations. In an

ironic reversal, it is Miriam's (admittedly transgressive) heterosexual liaison that gets hidden away, and her lesbian partner who seeks to bring it to light.

4. Masquerading Under Various Guises: Domestic Space and Commercial Space

The London rooms in *Pilgrimage*, barely adjacent to the frayed edge of middle-class respectability, share with the Parisian home of Stein's *Tender Buttons* a proliferation of semi-porous boundaries, confused sightlines, surfaces that challenge the domestic as a readable interior, and dirt. As a result, both Richardson and Stein pry the domestic apart from hetero-gendered propriety and normativity, suggesting home as a place of deviant potential. Richardson's focus on transient domiciles, however, presents a domestic landscape yet more explicitly implicated in commerce than Stein's. The boarding houses and furnished rooms through which Miriam passes are businesses, as well as homes to tenants and landlords alike.[28] Domestic space is thus not a locus of familial sentimentality, or a place of respite from work, but a means of generating income, a calculated commercial enterprise refuting the division between dwelling and workplace that standard historical accounts identify as giving rise to the very idea of domesticity.[29] Thus Miriam laments her landlady's pragmatic commercialism when Mrs.

[28] Sharon Marcus points out that one of the ways in which nineteenth century London homes failed to uphold culturally embedded ideas about the domestic ideal was in the paucity of home ownership and prevalence of rented dwellings: due to historically entrenched concentrations of landownership, "a majority of the middle class leased rather than owned homes" (S. Marcus 108). Furthermore, "although London's homes displayed the facades of private houses, internally they were divided into apartments"; houses already occupied on leasehold were further subdivided and sublet, or operated as boarding or lodging houses (S. Marcus 85). As Leonore Davidoff notes, houses were therefore enmeshed in a series of leasing arrangements, and landlords and landladies were themselves invariably tenants (Davidoff 78). It is precisely this type of multiply-leased housing that Miriam occupies, *Pilgrimage* thus exemplifying the extent to which the ideal of single family home ownership diverged from reality, as well as the extent to which domestic space is implicated in commercial transactions and arrangements.

[29] For instance, in *Home: A Short History of an Idea*, Witold Rybczynski traces the emergence of domesticity, which he considers self-identical with the family home, to seventeenth-century Dutch cities where "The house had ceased to be a place of work, and as many artisans became well-to-do merchants or *rentiers*, they built separate

Bailey decides to change her business from lodging house to boarding house: “The house meant nothing to her just as it was, with its effect. She had to make it pay. If another house would pay better she would just as soon have another house” (*Interim* 451-2). Homes across the class spectrum in *Pilgrimage* are sites of labor and commercial exchange, but Richardson is particularly attentive to the domestic coincidence of commerce and sex, further complicating the relationship between home, social propriety, and gender and sexual norms. Whilst the impropriety of commercial sex shadows Miriam’s street wandering, as she encounters, identifies with, and is mistaken for the city’s prostitutes, Richardson suggests domesticity as thoroughly implicated in the business of sex. In doing so, she further separates the domestic interior from a sentimental vision of the hetero-reproductive family, suggesting both that sex is domestic labor for women, and that home is a site of deviant sex, that sexual transgression is not just the province of the street.

As we have seen, Bloomsbury’s boarding houses produce a range of queer and non-marital intimacies. Their potential for impropriety, however, derives not just from the boarders’ proximity within the house’s partially porous spaces, but also from the commercial nature of its domesticity. Historian Leonore Davidoff points out that “lodging and boarding began to carry moral opprobrium” from the eighteenth century onwards (Davidoff 68), and that the suggestion of sexual impropriety lingered in particular around the figure of the landlady, whose roles could be “as diverse as housekeeper or prostitute” (Davidoff 65), and who “was seen as the equivalent of the 'tart with the heart of gold'” (Davidoff 90). In *Pilgrimage*, Mrs. Bailey does see her switch to taking in boarders as an opportunity to improve the marriage prospects of her daughters; she

---

establishments for their businesses, and employees and apprentices had to provide their own lodgings” (Rybczynski 59). In this reading, domesticity is inextricable from the small, modern, middle-class family.

tells Miriam that "It'll give my chicks a better chance. It isn't fair on them – living in the kitchen and seeing nobody" (*The Tunnel* 286), and notes that "Mrs. Reynolds has married three of her daughters to boarders. She's giving up" (*The Tunnel* 287). Mrs. Bailey is therefore not just renting domestic space, but using domestic space to market her daughters, which, the example of Mrs. Reynolds suggests, will help her secure her own future.[30] The boarding house is thus a marketplace for domesticity and marriage, founding families and achieving financial security merged in the business of home. If Stein emphasizes the material performativity of marriage through mass-produced household goods, Richardson suggests marriage as a transaction achieved through the proximities of the commercial home.

Home as a site of display and deal-making, where ostensibly normative family life is produced through domestic commerce and performance, is not confined to the boarding-house fringes of respectability. In *Pilgrimage*, Richardson consistently evokes differently-classed domestic spaces as commercial entertainment venues, as theaters. In doing so, she again indicates the home as connected to, rather than separate from, more public city spaces, and further disrupts the socio-spatial linking of domesticity, heteronormative family, and a stable interior self. As the furniture in which Miriam sees herself embodied proves but a series of reflective surfaces, so she perceives even her most meaningful relationships as a series of externalized performances. Thus in a conversation with Michael Shatov at Tansley Street, Miriam thinks the "cold shabby room" transformed into "a theatre, without walls" (*Deadlock* 78). At the start of her relationship with Amabel, seated in the semi-private space of her club

[30] Joyce writes a less benign version of the boarding-house landlady as brothel madam, bargaining for her daughter's marriage, in *Dubliners* (1914). In "The Boarding House," Mrs. Mooney maneuvers the illicit encounters enabled by her establishment into a marriage between her daughter, Polly, and unfortunate boarder Bob Doran.

with the younger woman kneeling at her feet, "Miriam began clearly to realize both how very weary she could grow of the plastic poses and that she herself was not playing the part expected of her" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 191). Even this scene, which Kristin Bluemel suggests erases "any strict divisions between characters' gender identities or roles" (Bluemel 45), is couched as role-playing, written in the same theatrical terms as the normatively-gendered relationships Miriam disdains. Indeed, Bluemel notes that the scene depends on some of the "most conventional tropes of love and sexuality" (Bluemel 45). Like Stein and Barnes, Richardson finds in performative domestic norms space for the articulation of queer desires; the commercialized and partial privacy of home generates queer replications of standard domestic narratives.

The attraction and incoherence of such narratives is evident when Miriam, conversing with a male guest at her sister Harriet's house, considers that she could play "the ideal wife and mother" to his "bad fast man who wanted to be saved"; it was "an easy part to play," "making the home a sanctuary of rest and refreshment and religious aspiration" (*The Tunnel* 27). Miriam's emphasis on the scripted nature of heterosexual family romance, and the performativity of bourgeois gender roles, undermines the naturalized domestic narrative of home as "sanctuary." That "sanctuary of rest and refreshment" is in fact a product of labor, the morally dubious work of theater, and the middle-class home is akin to the text's boarding houses and women's clubs, its domesticity co-constituted through perpetual social performance that refutes the connection between being at home and being oneself.[31] *Pilgrimage* traces a domestic cityscape articulated in terms of the stagey artifice of commercial entertainment, rendering home a spectacle, a

[31] Not even the respectable environs of Wimpole Street (notably both home and dentists' office) offer any more certain stability or privacy; when Mr. Leyton gets engaged to be married his courtship makes Miriam's room at the dental practice "like a little theatre where at any moment the curtain might go up on a fresh scene" (*Revolving Lights* 274).

constitutive element of the performance of intimacy and romance, even in Richardson's queer reworking of straight scripts.

Perhaps the most explicit coincidence of sex, commerce, and queer domesticity in *Pilgrimage* is evident in what Micki Nyman has recently referred to as the "alternative lifestyle" of Miriam's friends Mag and Jan (Nyman 108). Their home, one of the text's series of same-sex households, is a telescoping site of deviancy, their queer cohabitation situated in a house of ill-repute on an improper street. The coincidence of commercial sex and Jan and Mag's gender-deviant intimacy separates privacy and propriety, inverting the spatialized norms of respectability that align middle-class womanhood with the domestic interior. Mag and Jan tell Miriam that their landlady, Pierson, is also a prostitute: "We're living in an improper house – the whole street's improper, we're discovering" (*The Tunnel* 84). They do not plan to leave the house, however, because Pierson is so much more "self-respecting" than they are: "out of doors she's a model of decorum and good style," to the extent that they are "ashamed" and "skip into the gutter" when they meet her. Indoors, "she's a perfect landlady," "She doesn't drink; she's most exquisitely clean," her husband and servant are "devoted" to her, and she has a daughter at boarding school (*The Tunnel* 85). By contrast, Mag and Jan claim they would "die" of "boredom" if they were to marry, horrified at "not being able to turn up on a Sunday morning in your knickers, with your hair down" and enjoy "That first cigarette over the *Referee*" (*The Tunnel* 90). They are anything but models of domestic decorum. In Pierson's house it is the prostitute-landlady who proves the epitome of respectability, particularly on the street, whilst making money selling sex and leasing living space in a commercialized and disreputable domestic interior. Indeed, outside the home it is young educated women like Mag, Jan, and Miriam who appear disreputable (Miriam is in fact

propositioned twice on her late-night walk home from her friends' rooms). This home challenges both the deviancy of prostitution and its separation from the supposed sanctuary of bourgeois home and family, whilst rendering distinctions between interior and exterior unreliable indices of class, gender, and sexual norms. Nyman suggests that the "private space Miriam witnesses – the space that 'houses' Jan's and Mag's intimate relationship – expands Miriam's thinking so that she can contemplate the possibility of an alternate way of living" (Nyman 116). It also, however, demonstrates *Pilgrimage*'s revised definition of domesticity, where privacy, comfort, and propriety intersect at odd angles with commerce and sexual and gender deviancy. Richardson's definition suggests the heteronormative family as produced within an economy where sex is labor, but also posits the commercialized home as encompassing non-reproductive sex and alternate visions of family.

The contortions of interior and exterior generated by the commodification of domesticity in *Pilgrimage* posit home as implicated both in the contingent spatial performance of heteronormative gender and in its subversion, staging encounters and intimacies that manifest revisions of the narratives they nonetheless cite. Richardson thus writes a persistently ironic domesticity, where the uncertainty between interior and exterior is commensurate with the slippage between normative narratives and their deviant citation. Richardson's irony, in fact, produces a series of layered narrative surfaces that deflect from the domestic interior as a signifier of depth, of an identity-determining inward landscape. That pervasive irony is manifest as Miriam embarks on an affair with the married Hypo Wilson. Dining in a private room, Hypo remarks, "This is very nice and domestic. You are experiencing your first share of domesticity, Miretta." Miriam thinks that "This *was* perhaps her share of domestic life" (*Dawn's Left Hand*

225), and tells Hypo that "Women carry all the domesticity they need about with them" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 226). Miriam recognizes the incongruity of her share of domesticity being a clandestine encounter with a married man in hired space, a commercial replica of the marital home which in fact varies little from *Pilgrimage*'s other domestic spaces. However, she also refutes the ironic distance between this moment and more normative domestic scenes which Hypo assumes in his "comedic" observation; in positing domesticity as portable, she undermines the normative link between women and stable, emplaced domesticity on which Hypo's rather patronizing humor depends – this *is* domesticity, not just an illicit parody of it.

By way of reinforcement, Miriam observes that her response "had launched him," and as he talks she "comfortably went on thinking; reminding herself of the many wives in whose eyes she had surprised private meditation going its way behind an appearance of closed attention to a familiar voice" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 226). Having negated the distance between this moment and "genuine" domesticity, Miriam then opens up spaces within both that refigure the domestic landscape: there are privacies other than those defined by marriage, and in this moment, though physically with Hypo, Miriam is actually thinking of Amabel. Indeed, as Miriam and Hypo undress, Hypo says, "You *are* a pretty creature, Miriam. I wish you could see yourself." Richardson writes, "With the eyes of Amabel, and with her own eyes opened by Amabel, she saw the long honey-colored ropes of her hair framing the face that Amabel found beautiful" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 231). In this moment, then, both domesticity and self are without certain location, neither attached to a stable interior. Richardson generates layers of irony: Hypo ironizes Miriam, the narrative ironizes Hypo ("he now resumed his usual role in any shared experience: conductor" [*Dawn's Left Hand* 225]), both ironize the domestic – this encounter either wryly at

odds with or wryly constitutive of domesticity. But that irony multiplies textual and domestic interiors, rather than revealing a singular one. Miriam's sense of self, indeed, is routed through others, and through other domesticities: she recognizes herself in the eyes of wives paying but surface attention to their husbands, and through the eyes of her female lover, an illicit, extra-marital moment of straight intimacy mediated through a deviant circuit of queer vision, wherein Miriam yet contemplates herself from the outside. Richardson's irony thus also encompasses the fact that, when urged to look at herself, Miriam looks as someone else, pointing to *Pilgrimage*'s porous sense of the self emerging in socio-spatial domestic relations that manifest uncertain interiors and shifting identifications.

Conclusion: Amphibious Habitat

Kristin Bluemel has noted "Miriam's tendency to adopt different gender identities within variously gendered narrative spaces," which "erodes the divide between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Bluemel 42). Miriam's shifting sense of gender, however, does not align with a static and pre-existing gendered map of London in which it is possible to identify what Bluemel refers to as "feminine spaces" (Bluemel 59). In *Revolving Lights*, Miriam can thus pity men who "hovered about the doors of freedom, returning sooner or later to the hearth, where even if they were autocrats they were not free; but passing guests, never fully initiated into the house-life, where the real active freedom of the women resided" (278), and then in *The Trap* identify with them, thinking that "Always in relation to household women, she felt herself a man" (412).[32] Miriam's gender identity is, as Jean Radford observes, "a complex series of

[32] It is an inconsistency equally evident in Miriam's café life, where she can both state that "she was there as a man, a free man in the world […], a connoisseur of women" (*Interim* 394), and on another occasion see Michael Shatov

provisional positions" (Radford 80); she is "a permeable, ever-changing subject whose discontinuities mock our desire for her essence" (Katz 143). Richardson posits the domestic as fully implicated in those discontinuities, not a "feminine" location where gender is either oppressively reified or freeingly inverted, but produced as contingent and incoherent through odd encounters, partial borders, commercial transactions, and material relations. The connection between Miriam's oscillating gender identity and her dingy homes, between her contradictory experiences of gender and place, is manifest in her remark to Michael Shatov that at Tansley Street she is "amphibious," "neither a lodger nor a boarder" (*Deadlock* 81). Miriam is a queer fish, her itinerant experience of London's less salubrious domiciles demonstrating that being at home is not incommensurate with being "amphibious," and that domestic spaces can produce and protect "strange beasts" not legible in spatialized accounts of binary gender, as Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* also suggests.

---

notice a group of prostitutes at a nearby table, and feel "a rush of angry sympathy; a longing to *blind* him; in some way to screen them from the intelligent unseeing glance of all men in the world" (*Revolving Lights* 279). She can both gaze at women as a man, and then desire to protect women from men's gaze.

Chapter Three: Djuna Barnes's Shadowy Interiors: *Nightwood*

Introduction: Domestic Freak Show

The contents and description of the cluttered interiors of Djuna Barnes's 1936 novel, *Nightwood*, refuse the "clean" lines of both genealogical surety and modernist design. Their furnishings and collections of curios and art objects are both the means by which Barnes's characters negotiate their marginalized status, and a generative source of queer social and spatial connections that challenge the grounds of that marginalization. *Nightwood*, like *Tender Buttons* and *Pilgrimage*, detaches home from heteronormativity; Barnes also distances home from the production of straight/forward identity narratives predicated on a geography that opposes the domestic to an excluded exterior other. Barnes's domestic aesthetic deviates from the paradigmatic modernist architectural insistence on transparency and function, her text replicating the domiciles it evokes in its digressive flourish, ornate syntax, and scattershot breadth of historical reference (as Scott Herring observes, *Nightwood*'s "language is anything but sleekly modern" [Herring 175]). The interactions Barnes invokes between people, objects, and places produce home as an unintelligible location of deviant genealogies.

Nightwood is not typically considered a domestic text, either in form or content. Whilst critics have attended to space and place in the novel, they have inevitably focused on its infamously seedy urban landscape, dealing with its characters' nighttime perambulations, café dwelling, and predilection for public sex. Thus whilst Thomas Heise is concerned with how "sexual difference is spatialized" in *Nightwood* (Heise 307), it is in terms of a geography of "the city's unofficial spaces of pleasure – pissoirs, slums, seaports" (Heise 289). He provides a

reading of the novel that accords with the conventions of what Scott Herring identifies as the slumming narrative, positing Barnes's text as a "verbal joy-ride" through an urban underworld of "filth and sexual submission" (Heise 307). When *Nightwood*'s homes and their contents do appear in the criticism, it is rarely in the context of a consideration of domesticity. So Robin Blyn, for example, reads the Volkbeins' house to make a claim about the novel's Decadent heritage rather than its interiors ("Freak Dandies" 513).[33] Blyn's earlier exploration of the function of the freak show tableau in *Nightwood* suggests that, in a freak show, the stage and setting, the "backdrops, props, and costuming," are designed to enhance – or even create – the anomaly of the freak on display, providing visible 'proof' of the freak's freakishness" ("Stage" 139). But she fails to note that in Barnes's novel the backdrops and props that frame her freakish characters, the tableaux in which they are posed, are overwhelmingly domestic. Those critics who have undertaken readings of the objects that clutter these domestic tableaux (including Jane Marcus, Brian Glavey, and Daniela Caselli) have similarly not placed them in the context of the home. The paucity of attention paid to *Nightwood*'s domestic spaces belies the fact that the majority of the novel's action – if it can be called such – takes place in domestic locations, and that Barnes, like Richardson, evokes her characters' homes in an excess of detail.

Homes in *Nightwood have* been given sustained attention, however, by Kathryn Rose Taylor and, most recently, Mary Wilson. Taylor posits domestic space in the text as a museum/home hybrid that negotiates the struggle Barnes's gay and lesbian characters have for both public visibility and private safety and seclusion, whilst Wilson, considering *Nightwood* in terms of the domestic form of the novel genre, suggests the Barnesian home as "an impossible

[33] Though the text's literary lineage and its treatment of lineage are of course connected; *Nightwood*'s textual deviance enacts a modernist family tree as promiscuous and oblique as those the novel traces.

noplace, a utopia" (M. Wilson 433). Although I agree with both Taylor and Wilson in seeing *Nightwood*'s domestic spaces as fraught with questions of identity and visibility, and suggest, as they do, that the novel's homes are sites where public and private, interior and exterior are confused, I wish to focus more on the queer upshot of Barnes's domestic clutter and confusion. That clutter and confusion, as is the case with the opaque transparency of *Tender Buttons* and the contorted sightlines of *Pilgrimage*, identifies home as a queerly paradoxical site of concealment and display.

I work from the interpretive basis established by a number of other queer critics who have addressed Barnes's novel, in particular Scott Herring and Kathryn Bond Stockton. Although Herring does not deal directly with *Nightwood*'s domesticity, his characterization of the text as "antirevelatory" (Herring 184), as a text that "thwart[s] classificatory knowledge about the mysteries of homosexuality" (Herring 14), underpins my reading of its interiors. Domestic interiors in *Nightwood* manifest a "denial of interiority" (Blyn, "Stage," 148) that, in "embracing" the "mystification" Herring identifies (Herring 14) refute the production of a knowable queer subject within disciplinary discourses. As in my analysis of Stein, I also invoke Kathryn Bond Stockton's concept of "sideways growth," "the back-and-forth of connections and extensions that are not reproductive" (Stockton 13), to think about the strange social and spatial relations *Nightwood* fails to fully map. Stockton identifies *Nightwood* as beginning with and moving through suspensions both "literal and figurative, that look more like limbo than they look like movement" (Stockton 107), and I put sideways shifts and uncanny suspensions in the context of space (rather than just time, as Stockton does), demonstrating how, in Barnes's novel, they queer the interconnected institutions of family and home. Sara Ahmed has noted that

perversion "is a spatial term" that can refer to "what is wayward and thus '*turned away* from what is right, good, and proper'" (Ahmed 78); I argue that *Nightwood*'s perverse domestic spaces enact a turning away from both revelatory scrutiny and the straight and narrow of heteronormative reproduction, producing an improper domesticity of sideways relations.

1. Family History: Perverse Parenting and Queer Genealogies

Spanning the Impossible Gap: The Matter of the Volkbein Family Tree

Barnes's concomitant queering of family and home is evident from the very first page of the novel, with her depiction of Hedvig Volkbein giving birth, and of Guido Volkbein's attempts to furnish himself with an alternative heritage. Barnes's evocation of the Volkbein house suggests that interactions between humans and objects produce deviant genealogies that undo the assumption that the domestic is inherently and inevitably hetero-reproductive. Guido is "a Jew of Italian descent" who seeks to secure his marriage to Hedvig, "a Viennese woman of great strength and military beauty" (1), by claiming an Austrian baronetcy. Guido and Hedvig's relationship is transgressive not only because it seeks to "span the impossible gap" (3) between Jew and Gentile, but also because of the couple's gender deviance. Whilst Hedvig plays the piano with "the masterly stroke of a man" (5), the buttons on Guido's clothing give his body "the obstetric line seen on fruits" (2). At the outset of the novel Barnes thus provides a double invocation of the pregnant man (an image whose function in *Nightwood* Michael Davidson has recently discussed[34]); as Robyn Blyn notes, whilst "the military and mannish Hedvig gives birth in the first paragraph of the novel, in the second it is her husband Guido who carries the pregnant

[34] See Michael Davidson, "Pregnant Men: Modernism, Disability, and Biofuturity in Djuna Barnes" (2010).

physique" ("Stage" 150). In Barnes's description of Guido, "fruit" obviously works with "obstetric" to suggest fecundity and procreativity, but it also bears the slang connotations of dupe or homosexual, buttoning up contrary images of success and failure, reproductive futurity and deviant sterility, in Guido's rotund body.[35] Such contradictions pervade this queer encounter between gendered stereotypes of effeminate Jew and martial Aryan, which is negotiated through the materiality of domestic space – the house in Vienna that Guido purchases and furnishes as a testament of his purported aristocracy. Whilst Guido thus buys into domesticity as normativity, investing in the home as a site of consumerist self-fashioning that consolidates bourgeois identity and national and racial belonging, Barnes's description of the house refutes that equation. Instead of establishing the identity Guido desires, his home – its collection of objects, their provenance and arrangement, and Guido's relation to them – produces queer narratives of generation and lineage that undermine the identity categories it is intended to promulgate.

The house through which Guido seeks to perform his desired identity as Austrian baron, and Christian, is acquired through trade, suggesting identity as bound to exchange and consumption. Guido appears to see identity as acquisition, performed in the domestic sphere through goods and property. However, the nature of Guido's trades, and Barnes's description of the process of acquisition, undermine the stable relation between possessions and identity in which Guido invests. Guido establishes his identity as Austrian aristocrat "by various deals in

[35] Critics from Jane Marcus to, more recently, Robin Blyn and Kathryn Bond Stockton, have elucidated the connections Barnes makes between Jewishness and sexual and gender deviance. Blyn suggests that "the marriage between Hedvig and Guido prefigures the discursive intercourse between the queer subject and the Jew in *Nightwood*, an intercourse that not only renders the racial subject a pervert, but also renders the queer subject a 'Jew'" ("Freak Dandies" 515), and Stockton notes that Barnes "makes her novel's Jews and homosexuals windows onto each other's pain (Stockton 107). Alex Goody contends, however, that "the Jew does not feature in *Nightwood* simply to enact metonymically the outcast position of other Others (transvestites, gays, lesbians, blacks among them), but points to the central concerns of the text with intelligibility," with the relation between standard structures of knowing and lives that exceed them (Goody 190-1).

household goods, and by discreet buying of old masters and first editions and money changing." These deals enable him to buy and furnish the "large, dark and imposing" Viennese house that becomes a "fantastic museum" of his marriage to Hedvig, and thus of his purported heritage (5). He seeks to transmute the commodity value of both quotidian necessities ("household goods") and objects of historical worth ("old masters and first editions") into a history for and of himself, laid out in his marital home. Later in the novel, Guido's son Felix parenthetically discloses that he too has "been doing a little dealing in old masters lately," and is tempted to take the price he is offered for a painting "for my stay in Vienna" (103). Guido's trade in and for family is therefore established as a family trade – the family established by Guido's deals in household goods and aged objects is sustained by a continuing investment in goods as familial surety. Felix replicates his father's exchange of goods for a place in the city, bartering the value of objects for the social value of geographical belonging, suggesting the identity that home embodies as a tradeable, acquirable commodity; domestic space constructs an identity that can be bought.

However, the tenuous, transmutive process through which the Volkbein family is brought into being does not merely gesture at the materiality of identity, but also points to the reiterative and precarious constitution of the Volkbeins. Guido's trades and "money changing" (money changing to goods changing to money changing to goods) do not posit a stable correlation between commodities and identity, which would allow Guido consciously to fashion his chosen identity in the material of his home, but instead suggest the continual deferral of the completion of Guido's identity project. The passage in which Barnes describes Guido setting up his home reads in full:

> In the Vienna of Volkbein's day there were few trades that welcomed Jews, yet

> somehow he had managed, by various deals in household goods, by discreet buying of old masters and first editions and by money changing, to secure for Hedvig a house in the Inner City, to the north overlooking the Prater, a house that, large, dark and imposing, became a fantastic museum of their encounter. (5)

Barnes's syntax makes Guido's house, and the marriage and claim to identity it seeks to materialize, seem anything but "secure." The story the sentence purports to tell, of Guido's journey from excluded Jew to Inner City, trading his way from periphery to center, is diverted and held up by Barnes's repetitive, cumulative qualifications, creating a narrative of meandering circularity rather than sure-footed progress. Indeed, that narrative concludes in a museum, repository of the past, looking backwards rather than moving forwards. Barnes's prose does not suggest the Volkbein house as the secure endpoint of a narrative of assimilation through acquisition; rather, the home manifests an unstable family identity predicated on the shifting uncertainty of material relations.

The contents of the Volkbeins' Viennese house similarly undermine both Guido's investment in identity as commodity, and the equation of the bourgeois home and domesticity with heteronormativity. Guido's furnishings, in their acquisition, already bespeak a non-normative sense of identity as malleable rather than absolute; moreover, the provenance and arrangement of those furnishings produce deviant genealogies that queer home and family in ways which spiral away from Guido's desire for acceptance in the dominant culture. The logic of Guido's performance of Austrian aristocracy insists both that there is a fixed correlation between a particular identity position and the material world (an Austrian baronetcy equates to a home in a certain location furnished with certain items, and vice versa), and that "Austrian baron" can

subsequently be decoupled from specific bodies and histories, having no stable referent other than the material means by which it is performed. Guido's "remorseless homage to nobility" (2) thus suggests the instability of the very institution he reveres. But beyond this paradox, Barnes's careful cataloging of the Volkbeins' décor demonstrates how domestic interactions between human and non-human actors generate skewed lineages and strange families.

The domestic production of the Volkbeins' queer family tree is manifest in the two "life-sized portraits of Guido's claim to father and mother" that are the centerpiece of the Vienna house. These portraits highlight family as what Judith Halberstam calls a "false narrative of continuity," as a construction that works to make "connection and succession seem organic and natural" whilst being anything but (Halberstam, *Queer Art* 71). Thus, although the portrait of the gentleman bears "a remarkable resemblance to Guido Volkbein," the "likeness was accidental. Had anyone cared to look into the matter they would have discovered these canvases to be reproductions of two intrepid and ancient actors" that Guido had found "in some forgotten and dusty corner" (6). The progenitors Guido "claims" (both alleges and acquires) are things and images, filtered through layers of commerce and artifice; they are reproductions of actors, a framed chain of replication and citation. The form of "reproduction" by which the Volkbein heritage is produced is material and representational rather than genetic and procreative, traced through bad art rather than bloodlines. As Halberstam writes of a very different text (the 2005 animated film *Robots*), the production of the family here is "queer in that it is shared and improvised, of culture rather than nature, an act of construction rather than reproduction" (Halberstam, *Queer Art* 45). This queering of the linearity of familial connections builds on Barnes's observation that Guido had "adopted the sign of the cross" (3). Guido's desire for

cultural assimilation is figured as “adoption” – only mimetic of reproduction of “the cross,” which is a sign of genetic hybridity, geometric interconnection, erasure, opposition, martyrdom. The straight lines of the family tree, of biological inheritance and reproductive futurity, are thus replaced by “dusty corners” and cross-wise identifications that queer genealogy.

In exposing the illegitimacy of the adopted, improvised, and acquired Volkbein forebears, Barnes suggests the constructedness of the idea of legitimacy itself – of the means by which subjects are deemed genuine, lawful, proper, and entitled to rights by lineal descent. Guido's “adoption” not of children or heirs but of ancestors and a past invokes the backwardness of narratives of legitimacy, familial futurity dependent on the construction of historical narratives. Whilst the novel opens with the birth of Guido's actual heir, he is born on furniture (a bed adorned with the “wings of the House of Hapsburg” and the “Volkbein arms” [1]) and in a space (the house-museum) through which Guido, with his “obstetric line,” has also birthed his ancestors.[36] This backwards reproduction, oriented away from the future, both invokes the degenerative backwardness attributed to Jews and queers in quasi-scientific early twentieth century discourses, and troubles the fictions of origins, heredity, and progress that such discourses produce. Guido's paintings, rather than functioning merely as stage props in his elaborate aristocratic masquerade, generate unforeseen lineages that extend in odd directions. That lineage, manifest in his home, reveals home as producing queerly material families, rather than reifying blood relations.

The after-life of Guido's family paintings, inherited by his son Felix, continue to proliferate deviant lineages even as they become a token of patrilineal kinship. As Felix tells

[36] Guido is only the first of *Nightwood*'s perverse parents, birthing families backwards or sideways.

Matthew O'Connor, Jenny Petherbridge attempts to buy one of the paintings: “she wanted the portrait of my grandmother, which on no account could I bring myself to part with” (103). Jenny's acquisition of the painting would enact a highly crooked lineage – as Jenny's lover, Robin, is Felix's estranged wife, Jenny is effectively trying to secure a portrait of her lesbian partner's “fake” grandmother-in-law. The circulation of Guido's “intrepid and ancient actors” traces the material means by which queer families are produced in *Nightwood*. Felix's naturalization of his relationship with the “sumptuous Florentine” actor in the painting (6) – he refers to her as his “grandmother” – performs an absorption of material objects into the extended family, highlighting objects as actors that produce ideas of family, and positing family as a queer assemblage of people and things. Familial identity in *Nightwood* is constituted by furnishings; the portraits are now a “part” of the family with which Felix cannot “part.” Whilst Guido's acquisition and narrative framing of the paintings changes their meaning and value (imbuing them with precisely the affective importance that Jenny covets), they in turn shape Felix's sense of himself as a Volkbein. The contents of the Volkbein house do, therefore, suggest domestic space and family as co-constitutive, but the families that the novel's homes produce are far from the biologically-related, procreative norm.

As in Barnes's description of the acquisition of the house overlooking the Prater, her evocation of Guido's parental portraits both appears to carefully trace their history and yet stymies the construction of a historical narrative, further eroding the stability of the Volkbein genealogy whilst refusing to replace it with any more fixed account. As Daniela Caselli notes of this passage, “apparently stable truth is rocked by the use of the subjunctive” (Caselli 172). Barnes's conditional, dependent, and hesitant constructions comically pick their way through the

description of the portraits: the gentleman "*seemed* not so much to have mounted [his horse], as to be about to descend upon him"; his "dress was a *baffling mixture* of the Romantic and the Religious"; the "whole conception *might have* been a Mardi Gras whim"; his eyeballs "curved out of the lids *as if* another medium than that of sight had taken its stand beneath that flesh"; "*Had* anyone cared to look into the matter they *would have* discovered these canvases to be reproductions of two intrepid and ancient actors" (6) (emphasis mine). Whilst Barnes seems to expose Guido's sham aristocracy in her revelation of the paintings' particulars, she in fact offers an image that only produces more uncertainty, "baffling" objects that only "might have been" what they "seem." The portraits therefore generate both queerly material genealogies, and queerly opaque material histories, concurrently laying Guido open to scrutiny and rendering him illegible. Anyone who "cared to look into the matter" of Guido's heritage would only discover as much as Barnes reveals – an imprecise account of objects of uncertain provenance.

Even in the case of a continuity of lineage, of Guido and Hedvig having a living heir, Barnes does not trace a straight line of inheritance, but insists on an oblique transmission of a partial narrative. The portraits, and the memory of the house in which they hung, and are passed via an aunt to Guido's orphan son Felix who, "thirty years later, turned up in the world with these facts, the two portraits, and nothing more" (7). The portraits, and the details of the Vienna house, constitute the extent of Felix's inheritance, all that fills the gap between his adulthood and his mother's death after she delivered him, the "point" at which "exact history stopped for Felix" (7). The gaps between points of history are filled by found paintings, theatrical props deployed in a fiction of continuity that renders the notion of "exact" family history, grounded in "facts," inherently nonsensical. In a typically Barnesian inversion, Felix later insists that it is precisely

his absence of knowledge about his family that makes it so exact: “My family history is preserved because I have it only from the memory of a single woman, my aunt; therefore it is single, clear and unalterable” (101). Judith Halberstam has recently noted how “forgetfulness can be a useful tool for jamming the smooth operations of the normal and the ordinary. These operations, generally speaking, take on an air of inevitability and naturalness simply by virtue of being passed on from one generation to another” (Halberstam, *Queer Art* 70). Felix's absence of memory, his inheritance only of a “hearsay house” (50), calls attention to the unnatural, constructed nature of family identity. Ironically, the “single, clear and unalterable” history that resides in his aunt's uncontestable memory, testifies to a family narrative that *Nightwood* renders as anything but “single, clear and unalterable.”

That uncertainty is similarly manifest in Barnes's dense account of the other features of the “hearsay house” that provide the context for the family portraits. They too suggest family history as a material construction that queers the connection between home and hetero-reproduction. Barnes writes of Guido that “he had said that he was an Austrian of an old, almost extinct line, producing, to uphold his story, the most amazing and inaccurate proofs: a coat of arms that he had no right to and a list of progenitors (including their Christian names) who had never existed” (3). Barnes posits Guido's claims to heritage as both spectacle (“amazing”) and contradiction (“inaccurate proofs”), setting up a dialectic of revelation and evasion that persists in her evocation of the Volkbein home, and that characterizes the novel's engagement with the domestic. As Robin Blyn notes in her discussion of *Nightwood*'s relation to the freak show, the novel is “a surface composition exorbitant with detail that refuses to explain” (“Stage” 148), and Barnes's description of the Volkbein house exposes Guido's manufacture of his aristocratic pose

whilst refusing to position a stable, knowable identity beneath it.[37] Thus the "Medici shield" and "Austrian bird" that hang over the fireplace in the "great salon" are revealed as "impressive copies" (5). Likewise, the "silver-headed brads" that adorn the couples' "rambling desks" bear a design "executed under the supervision of Guido who, thinking on the instant, claimed it as the Volkbein field, though it turned out to be a bit of heraldry long since in decline beneath the papal frown" (5). Orienting himself to and by the objects he has at hand, Guido's family identity is performed through these replica furnishings and improvised claims. Indeed, it is literally on this invented heraldic "field," on a "feather coverlet […] on which, in massive and tarnished gold threads, stood the Volkbein arms," that Guido's son is born (1). Home here is not a physical manifestation of the pre-existing family, but calls that family into being; Barnes demonstrates material possessions as more important to the generation of the Volkbein family than biological reproduction; in so far as his parents' marriage is dependent on the family tale told by Guido's house, Felix's birth is only enabled by heraldic coverlets and elaborate silver work.

Relatives in Another Generation: The Reproduction of Robin Vote and Nora Flood

Nora Flood and Robin Vote, their relationship and their shared apartment on the rue du Cherche-Midi, provide another node in *Nightwood*'s network of queer domesticity, contributing to Barnes's portrayal of a deviant domestic landscape that challenges home as the stable locus of heteronormative family. The capacity of home to create queer relationships, and the material

[37] As previously noted, Alex Goody indeed suggests that the Jew in *Nightwood* "points to the central concerns of the text with intelligibility" (190-191), as Mairéad Hanrahan argues that the "difficulty of defining the Jew opens onto the wider epistemological impossibility of achieving any definition whatsoever" (Hanrahan 33). Guido and Felix in this reading then are not mere ciphers for the novel's other outcasts, or for the rootless modern subject, but speak to Barnes's poetics of indistinction.

constitution of queer families, are evident from the very introduction of Robin and Nora's home. Nora buys the house Robin chooses, as Robin "kept repeating in one way or another her wish for a home, as if she were afraid she would be lost again, as if she were aware, without conscious knowledge, that she belonged to Nora" (50). Robin, like Guido (and, indeed, Matthew O'Connor and Jenny Petherbridge), has the highly conventional desire for home as stability and belonging, as the opposite to "lost" and unmoored, a longing that endorses normative understandings of home (and of queers as exiled from home, and subsequently marked by a yearning lack). However, Robin senses that she "belonged to" rather than "belonged with" Nora, and that confusion of people and property, subject and object, affective and material relationships (similarly evident in Guido's making ancestors of purchased paintings, Matthew O'Connor's collection of casual sex partners, and Jenny Petherbridge's looting of emotional ties), indicates not just the psychosexual dynamic of Robin and Nora's relationship, but a larger interrogation of the relationship between humans and the material world, and how individuals become legible (or not) as humans in spatial and material contexts. Barnes writes that "In the passage of their lives together every object in the garden, every item in the house, every word they spoke, attested to their mutual love, the combining of their humours" (50). The anthropomorphic suggestion that house and garden objects can "attest" to Robin and Nora's love renders them more than the mute material side effects of a relationship that exists outside of them, as does their parallel equivalency with "every word [Robin and Nora] spoke." Barnes connects the agentive capacity of domestic objects to the more obvious performativity of speech in their ability to call Robin and Nora's queer relationship into being, and signals how non-normative relationships can be produced in the interaction among people, place, and objects.

The contents of Robin and Nora's home, the objects that materialize their relationship, also generate strange familial relations that deviate from the vertical progressions of the family tree. The family created by, performed through, and sheltered within the rue du Cherche-Midi is not deviant merely by dint of consisting of two women. Rather, the house is enmeshed in further manifestations of the novel's queer parenting, deviant children, and non-linear, non-sequential genealogies. In Robin and Nora's domestic landscape, for instance, toys generate queer affective bonds. Visiting Jenny Petherbridge's home, Nora notices that "Sitting up against the pillow was a doll. Robin had given me a doll" (127), and explains to Matthew that when a woman gives a doll to another woman "it is the life they cannot have, it is their child" (128). Here, reproduction (as with Guido and his parental portraits) is explicitly construed as material rather than biological; Robin having a doll with another woman is a betrayal of the human-doll family she has with Nora. Rather than simply symbolizing the unnatural sterility of lesbian relationships,[38] the acquisition and circulation of dolls (uncanny, not-growing, inanimate copies of children who are themselves uncanny copies of adults) has a productive effect, generating (and denaturalizing) familial, affective bonds. The confusion of living and not, and the intermingling of familial and material, is similarly evident in Nora recounting that she would find Robin, drunk, "standing in the middle of the room in boy's clothes, rocking from foot to foot, holding the doll she had given us – 'our child' – high above her head, as if she would cast it down" (133). It repeats a scene Felix observes earlier in the novel where Robin is holding her biological son, Guido the second; Felix, "having come in unheard, found her standing in the centre of the floor holding the child high in her hand as if she were about to dash it down" (43). Robin is equally prepared to "cast

[38] Daniela Caselli suggests, for example, that the doll "personifies a poetics of the inorganic that is also an attack against the hopeful belief in the generative power of the future" (Caselli 187).

down" fleshly and manufactured progeny, suggesting that they are equivalent in meaning and that there is no hierarchy that privileges the biological. Both moments are also additional instances of the novel's tableaux of perpetually suspended motion, and represent a negation of reproduction as a progressive, forward-looking narrative; these children do not grow up, but are suspended in the infanticidal act of being cast down. In the novel's peculiar family network, Robin is thus mother both to a child-like doll and a doll-like child (Guido the younger is a mute presence in the novel who, as a baby, makes "few voluntary movements" [43], and, as Felix tells the doctor, "does not grow up" [108]).[39] Child, doll, and Robin are suspended, delayed, and repeated, moving downwards or backwards, manifesting reproduction not as a sequential lineal descent, but a series of halting repetitions- and substitutions-with-a-difference.

As Robin holds the doll above her head she is wearing "boy's clothes," a detail that further queers family in the rue du Cherche-Midi. The cross-dressed Robin mirrors Matthew O'Connor's drag, providing another version of the figure of the male mother that permeates Barnes's text, joining Hedvig and Guido Volkbein, as well as O'Connor. But Robin is cross-dressed both as male and a *child*, wearing specifically "boy's" clothes, and thus is concurrently a child playing with a toy, a gender-ambiguous mother to a doll, and a child parenting a child, in a simultaneous confusion of generational relations, gender, and the biological and inanimate. These confusions proliferate around Robin. Nora describes her as sitting "at home all day, looking out of the window or playing with her toys, trains, and animals and cars to wind up, and

[39] As well as being a doll herself, of course. Matthew O'Connor compares the female invert to a "dummy" (84) and a doll (134), but multiple characters in the novel are evoked as dolls or puppets, including Hedvig Volkbein, Frau Mann, and Jenny Petherbridge. Barnes posits the illegible freaks who populate *Nightwood* not simply as inhuman, but as a means of examining how the human is constructed, and how meaning is produced in relation to the material world.

dolls and marbles and soldiers" (133), tells Matthew that "I saw her always like a tall child who had grown up the length of the infant's gown" (131), and describes her as "my lover and my child" (141); Matthew himself invokes Nora as "You, who should have had a thousand children and Robin, who should have been every one of them" (90). As Kathryn Bond Stockton has noted, in figuring Robin and Nora as mother and child Barnes is invoking a trope "well worn by Freud" of lesbian relationships as parental relationships (Stockton 93). This generational and familial disjuncture is reinforced by Nora's declaration that "Robin is incest too," and "like a relative found in another generation" (141). As such Robin also seems a queer reproduction of the grandmother Nora dreams of "dressed as a man," with "her arms spread saying with a leer of love, 'My little sweetheart!'" (57), paradoxically forebear and offspring, once again temporally suspended in a deviant lineage. Nora and Robin's queer temporality challenges the normalizing Oedipal structure of the Freudian family; here family is generated at odd angles, through incestuous identifications and uncanny replications that denaturalize kinship and decouple domestic intimacy from future-oriented reproduction.

The disruptive nature of Robin and Nora's generationally-askew domesticity, and the queerness of their toy-strewn and circus-decorated home, is exemplified by a putatively heterosexual encounter Nora pursues. After Robin has left Nora, Nora self-flagellatingly seeks traces of her lover in the places she has visited and the people she has slept with. Seeking, she tells Matthew, to "do something that [Robin] will never be able to forgive" in order that they "can begin again as strangers," Nora picks up a sailor, but he "got no further than the hall. He said: '*Mon dieu, il y a deux chevaux de bois dans la chambre à coucher*'" (141). The illicit seediness of a hook-up with a sailor is trumped by the disturbing presence of wooden horses in

Nora's bedroom. The narrative does not make clear whether these are the merry-go-round horses listed in Barnes's catalogue of the contents of the home, or perhaps rocking horses or toys with which Robin played, but their perverse out-of-placeness is sufficient, Barnes suggests, to perturb even a sailor in search of casual sex. Sarah Ahmed suggests that perversion is diversion, "that which 'turns astray' or moves off the straight line. The straight line would be that which moves *without any deviation* toward the 'point' of heterosexual union or sexual coupling" (Ahmed 78). The wooden horses' invocation of the circus or fair and of childhood in the context of the bedroom disturbs the distinctions of time and place (between generations and developmental stages of life, between public spectacle and private sex, between nursery and adult bedroom) that structure heteronormativity, quite literally thwarting a straight sexual narrative. Nora's queer décor, whose juxtapositions reconfigure the meaning of their domestic context, manifest home as an uncanny, disquieting space where normative narratives and relations are suspended and diverted.

The Wish for Children and Knitting: Matthew O'Connor's Motherhood

The critique of the naturalization of hetero-reproductive family evident in the Volkbein's lineage of second-hand portraits and borrowed heraldry, and Robin and Nora's temporally-deviant and uncanny scrambling of generations, is only sharpened in Barnes's representation of Dr. Matthew O'Connor. In his work as a medical practitioner Matthew participates at a tangent in the rituals of procreative domesticity. Felix Volkbein passes on to the doctor the rumor that he is "seen nearly every day in a certain nunnery, where you bow and pray and get free meals and attend cases which are, well, illegal" (102). As unlicensed obstetrician and implied back street

abortionist, Matthew operates on the margins of the reproductive economy, his practice upholding the fiction of maritally-sanctioned and desired procreativity even as it exposes its constructedness.

The medical and domestic coincide in the contents of Matthew's cramped and sordid dwelling, which similarly undermine the gendered hetero-reproductive order embedded in medical discourse. In Matthew's room, Nora notes a dresser bearing a "rusty pair of forceps, a broken scalpel, half a dozen odd instruments she could not place, a catheter, some twenty perfume bottles, almost empty, pomades, creams, rouges, powder boxes and puffs"; a "pile of medical books, and volumes of a miscellaneous order, reached almost to the ceiling, water-stained and covered with dust" (70). The intermingled collection of cosmetics and decrepit medical instruments apparently provides interlocking and contradictory accounts of the production of domesticity, gender, and family, highlighting both the biologism of birth and drag performativity. However, this denuded inventory, like Matthew's unlicensed practice, suggests the incoherence of the medicalized logic that produces categories of belonging and deviance, heredity and degeneration. Matthew exclaims to Felix on their first meeting "May my dilator burst and my speculum rust, may panic seize my index finger before I point out my man" (29), and the "rusty," "broken," and unidentifiable medical props he has at home, along with the dusty and stained tomes of medical knowledge, bear out not just Matthew's professional failure, but also the inadequacy of medical discourse to point out its "man." The seemingly exhaustive catalogue of the contents of Matthew's dresser seems to perform precisely the diagnostic classification to be found in the "pile of medical books," but in fact produces only a taxonomy of disorder (a "miscellaneous order"), full of "odd" objects that Nora "could not place," where

forceps are filed alongside “feminine finery,” obscuring standard gender narratives and making it hard to point out the man in the room. In this encounter of the medical and the domestic, home is not a location of biologically reproductive legitimacy, nor a case study in deviance, produced by and subject to medicalized scrutiny. Rather, Matthew's room defies the discursive constraints of the profession he fraudulently claims.

The detritus of Matthew's room makes a material spectacle of his transvestite quackery that decouples home from the discursive regimes that produce the heteronormative family. *Nightwood*’s disconnect between domesticity and hetero-reproductivity is manifest in Nora’s first glimpse of O’Connor at home, a sight that deviates from straight life trajectories. Nora, opening the doctor's door, “hesitated, so incredible was the disorder that met her eyes. The room was so small that it was just possible to walk sideways up to the bed; it was as if being condemned to the grave the doctor had decided to occupy it with the utmost abandon” (70). The “it” that Matthew occupies is both “grave” and “room,” Barnes syntactically aligning domestic space with the very antithesis of (re)production and futurity. The invocation of the grave of course conjures the invariable connection of gay men with negation, sterility, and death, a connection that recent queer theorists participating in the “anti-social” or “anti-relational” turn (most prominently Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman) have embraced, by means of providing a queer challenge to the hegemony of what Edelman terms “reproductive futurism” (Edelman 2). The fact that Matthew occupies his room/grave with abandon might suggest a similar avowal of the homosexual's anti-productive (indeed, degenerate) relation to both family and future. However, Matthew is far from disavowing the joys of domesticity, and the spatial contradiction in “occupy” and “abandon,” of staying and leaving, presence and absence, suggests a more complex relation to

domesticity than mere rejection. Matthew both occupies domestic space and challenges the structures of gendered and sexual meaning produced in and through it, suggesting not that home is a gay man's grave, but queering the temporal and spatial narratives by which the journey from cradle to grave is imagined.

That reimagining of normative life narratives also occurs in Barnes's invocation of a familiar folktale in the tableau Nora encounters in the doctor's room, Barnes, like Stein recycling popular literary forms to queer home and family. Nora associates the rouged and bewigged Matthew with the story of Red Riding Hood: "It flashed into Nora's head: 'God, children know something they can't tell, they like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed!'" (71). This association emphasizes domestic space in *Nightwood* as a location where boundaries are dissolved or reconfigured, and as a location where queer alliances and identifications proliferate. The wolf's occupation of Red Riding Hood's grandmother's home and bed locates danger and predation not in the woods but in the apparent safety of the familial home. Versions of the Red Riding Hood tale differ in the degree to which domestic normalcy is reinstated at the conclusion, but Nora's formulation suggests a queer take on the narrative (and on narrative itself) that underscores rather than resolves its disruption of domestic and familial norms.[40] The idea that "children know something they can't tell" belies a knowingness contrary to a presumption of childhood innocence that contributes to the novel's invocations of innocence as always already tainted.[41]

---

[40] Michael Davidson notes that in *Nightwood* "there is no redemptive, atavistic survival or folkloric tradition waiting to redeem the shards of fragmented culture" (Davidson, "Pregnant" 223), and Barnes's reference to Red Riding Hood bears out that assertion. Rather than a nostalgic citation of a more cohesive traditional narrative, *Nightwood*'s presentation of the tale in fact undermines any stable social meaning with which it might be invested.

[41] As in the previously discussed slide from "innocent" to "accomplice" that occurs in the context of Matthew's room. Kathryn Bond Stockton lists the "child queered by innocence" as one version of "the queer child" that she explores in her book of the same name, suggesting that the very normativity of innocence renders children strange to adults who necessarily no longer possess that innocence, as we saw in the Stein chapter – in their innocence children

Furthermore, the second half of the sentence, what exactly children "know," is fraught with ambiguity. Do children "like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed"? Is Red Riding Hood standing separate from "the wolf in bed," or are "Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed" together? The syntactical uncertainty places children, Red Riding Hood, and the wolf in uncertain relation to one another, generating deviant domestic scenarios.

The encounter – with Nora as child and Red Riding Hood to Matthew's wolf and grandmother[42] – produces a queer narrative of supplement and substitution, whereby the lines of familial affiliation, insider and interloper, threat, lover, and animal other, are syntactically and spatially crossed within the intimate domestic setting of the bedroom and nursery tale.[43] Matthew-as-wolf thus cannot be read simply as a figure for an absurdly, and threateningly, hirsute attempt at femininity. The children's story of Red Riding Hood as envisioned by Nora in the context of Matthew's room produces deviant narratives and familial genealogies; the domestic in this moment becomes a space for, and contributes to, queer desires and identifications. The narrative progress of the sentence, and the emergence of its meaning, is held up in ambiguities and unclear referents that manifest diverse and perverse recombinations of relations and desires.

Matthew does repeatedly express his desire to participate as a woman in normative,

---

are "seen as normative but also not like us, at the same time" (Stockton 31). Nora's comment, however – that "children know something they can't tell" – suggests childhood as askance in a slightly different manner, where children's knowingness is at odds with proscriptions against their speech (disciplinarily maintaining the adult fiction of their innocence) and/or their capacity to articulate their knowledge.

[42] Another version of Nora's cross-dressed grandmother, like Robin, proliferating the novel's queer family ties.

[43] Matthew claims to have helped bring Nora into the world (16), and Nora and Matthew will characterize her relationship with Robin as a parental one, and so queer familial and generational relationships proliferate around this momentary narrative elaboration on the spectacle of Matthew at home in bed. The perverse hint of bestiality in the idea of Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed together also coincides with the novel's fascination with beasts turning human, and foreshadows Robin's final, disturbing grappling with Nora's dog.

reproductive versions of domesticity: “no matter what I may be doing, in my heart is the wish for children and knitting. God, I never asked better than to boil some good man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months by the calendar” (82); he wants “a womb as big as the king's kettle” (81). His fraudulent obstetric career might seem in this light his closest, tenuous connection to (re)productivity; as he notes, “I'm the last of my line, the fine hair-line of least resistance” (126). However, Matthew queerly births narrative and familial lines that deviate from the linear progression of the family tree; rather than being a dead end, Matthew's lines of resistance and inheritance, like those of the Volkbeins, move in obscure directions and at oblique angles. Matthew provides complex accounts of family that suggest something other than his queer body as biological terminal point. He asks, “What manner of man is it that has to adopt his brother's children to make a mother of himself, and sleeps with his brother's wife to get him a future” (66). Later in the novel, asked if he has really ever been married, Matthew responds “I've *said* I was married and I gave the girl a name and had children by her, then, presto! I killed her off as lightly as the death of swans” (144). But this apparent confession of his family as merely a story is then complicated by his reiteration of the earlier narrative:

> What if the girl *was* the wife of my brother and the children my brother's children? […] Who says she may not have been mine, and the children also? Who for that matter […] says they are not mine? Is not a brother his brother also, the one blood cut up in lengths, one called Michael and the other Matthew? […] Who's to say that I'm not my brother's wife's husband and that his children were not fathered in my lap? (144)

Matthew's questioning account leaves it determinedly unclear as to whether he has invented a

familial narrative from scratch, claimed a brother's family narrative, or slept with his sister-in-law. In this account, Matthew both "make[s] a mother of himself" and "fathers" children, seeking to "get him[self] a future" through someone else's family, replicating the narrative (re)production of the Volkbein family (and featuring the same language of "adoption"). The confusion of narrative production and biological reproduction, of blood doubles and imaginative adoption, between stories and bodies that can be "killed off" and generate "a future," suggests family as queerly inorganic, a pliable fiction rather than biological bond.

Though Matthew invokes a normative sense of biological futurity, the means by which he envisions that future is anything but linear and progressive – he undermines the future-directed linearity of family even as he attempts to occupy that narrative. Whilst Matthew might wish to be "an animal […] going only forward" (122), his line moves sideways, as in the invocation of Red Riding Hood, through substitutions, repetitions, and indistinct bodily and syntactical positions. The fact that this familial narrative, in both tellings, is couched in the form of rhetorical questions refuses insight rather than asserting clarity; Matthew's line ends, or does not end, in hypothetical uncertainty and a question mark. Matthew, then, is not the sterile "last of [his] line" – he is indeed (re)productive, but in a cross-wise fashion, generating obscure histories and untraceable family trees; as he tells Nora, "I have a narrative, but you will be hard put to find it" (87). Michael Davidson suggests that "O'Connor's 'child' is the text his logorrhea continually produces," and that if he is "*un*-reproductive as mother or doctor, he is *pro*-ductive as raconteur and storyteller" (Davidson, "Pregnant" 215). However, Matthew's stories, and Barnes's text, also indicate the narrative nature of familial (re)production; queer families are produced in *Nightwood* through material and narrative means, generating illegitimate genealogies.

2. The Spectacle of Queer Domesticity: Home as Public Space

The Volkbein House and the Modern Museum

The contents of *Nightwood*'s domestic spaces, from Guido Volkbein's furnishings, through Robin Vote's toys, to Matthew O'Connor's make-up and medical texts, delineate a material domesticity productive of temporally deviant and non-biological families. However, Barnes, like Richardson, also posits home as enmeshed with public sites which disturb both the boundary of the domestic interior and the spatial logic of gender and sexual deviance as either a closeted secret or freakish spectacle. Barnes connects homes to museums, circuses, and public bathrooms, mapping a public but obscure domestic landscape that resists taxonomizing.

Whilst critics such as Robin Blyn have emphasized the theatricality of the Volkbein house, and its relation to public sites of spectacle such as the freak show, Barnes specifically labels it "a fantastic museum" of Guido and Hedvig's encounter, explicitly invoking a different location of display and visual consumption. Carrie Rohman suggests that the "'museums' in Barnes's text are often private residences arranged so that their furnishings and displayed objects represent a love relationship" (Rohman 60), but the Volkbein collection does more than advertise Guido's love for Hedvig. Barnes's invocation of the museum suggests both the ways in which identity narratives are produced through objects, and the ways which the home is implicated in disciplinary regimes of knowledge. Andreas Huyssen writes that the museum provides "the master maps for the construction of cultural legitimacy in both a national and universalist sense." The museum has served as "a catalyst for the articulation of tradition and nation, heritage and canon," and, in "its disciplinary archives and collections, it helped define the identity of Western

civilization by drawing external and internal boundaries that relied as much on exclusions and marginalizations as it did on positive codifications" (Huyssen 13). The museum, then, is instrumental in constructing the narratives that marginalize Guido, and he subsequently creates a home that seeks to claim a place in "tradition and nation" for himself and his family.[44] The Volkbein collection of Roman antiquities and European furnishings thus participates in a museal logic of identity and belonging as produced through objects on display, emphasizing the material constitution of what and who is a legible and legitimate subject.

Guido's home, however, fails to replicate what Ruth Hoberman, in her analysis of earlier Edwardian fiction, identifies as the desired connections between "the nation, the museum, and the disciplined, effectual male body" (Hoberman 2). Barnes's description of the house as a "fantastic museum" signals both its deviation from institutionalized history (veering into freak show fantasy), and the imagined nature of the communities and identities museums produce. The house – "eccentric, quaint, or grotesque in design, conception, construction, or adornment" ("Fantastic," *OED*) – in its collection of found portraits and invented heraldic devices, emphasizes artifice, discontinuity, anachronism, bad art, and worse history. Guido intends his home to do the ideological work of the museum, using objects on display to stake a claim for inclusion in dominant cultural and historical narratives. However, Barnes's description of the contents of the Vienna house refuses the institutional authenticity the label "museum" confers, joining house and museum as sites across the public-private divide where identity narratives are both produced and rendered incoherent. As Barbara Black notes in her study of Victorian

[44] Marianna Torgovnick notes the way in which Freud's possessions worked to undermine anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as primitive. Very much like Guido, "Freud arranged the objects in his study and consulting room to suggest an alliance between himself and civilization" (Torgovnick 199).

exhibits, the museum “purports to be the site of origins, continuities, and traditions yet is equally the site of ruptures, fractures, and conflicts” (Black 9); the opaque histories that the objects in Guido's collection bring with them, and the queer meanings generated by their placement in his home, neither create nor reveal Guido's “exact history” (7) – they defeat rather than enable any linear, progressive story of origins.

As such, the Volkbein museum and Barnes's novel exist in queer relation to the genealogies of both curatorial practice and modernism. Catherine E. Paul notes that, in the early twentieth century, “Curators became less interested in the display of copia – putting all their collections in their galleries for the public to see – and more interested in using selected objects to teach visitors about science, artistic taste, or the history of cultures” (Paul 15). To that end, science museums, for example, “shifted from the Victorian cabinet museums, which organized specimens of animals and plants taxonomically, to more modern methods of display such as dioramas and habitat groups emphasizing organisms' ways of life, the ecosystems in which they live, and the stages of their development” (Paul 24). Guido's late-nineteenth-century home, with its cosmopolitan clutter, is at odds both with any Victorian inclination to classification or taxonomy and with pared down twentieth-century exhibition spaces. It does, however, present the reader with a perverse diorama of Guido and Hedvig's habitat (a different, but related, way of thinking of *Nightwood*'s domestic stage-sets or tableaux). Putting the Volkbeins in a temporal lag, a museal present, their domestic diorama does not produce a narrative of teleological evolution or development, or holistically replicate a “natural” ecosystem, but, in Barnes's evasive prose, testifies to incoherent histories and slantwise lineages. Huyssen notes that the “battle against the museum has been an enduring trope of modernist culture” (Huyssen 13). That trope is perhaps

exemplified by F.T. Marinetti's Futurist manifesto, where he asserts the intention to destroy museums, which he considers “cemeteries,” “Truly identical in their sinister juxtaposition of bodies that do not know each other. Public dormitories where you sleep side by side for ever with beings you hate or do not know” (Marinetti 28). Marinetti's confusion of public and private, human and art object, in the idea of a “public dormitory” which houses the indecent spectacle of strangers sleeping with one another, is both replicated and inverted in Barnes's portrayal of private homes as galleries for the display of objects that materialize indecent relationships and queer families. In positing the Volkbein home as a museum, Barnes points to the material means by which narratives of identity and belonging are constructed, and troubles their stability and logic. Guido's domestic interior, turned inside out as museum diorama, neither reveals the Volkbeins as classifiable specimens in an evolutionary taxonomy, nor suggests a cohesive, progressive account of history.

The Volkbeins’ house-museum makes them collectors and exhibit, museum curators and museum curios, thoroughly entangled with a commodification of history that gives Meryl Altman pause. Altman points out that, in describing Felix Volkbein's fascination with “the odd,” Barnes writes, “It takes a Christian, standing eternally in the Jew's salvation, to blame himself and to bring up from that depth charming and fantastic superstitions through which the slowly and tirelessly milling Jew once more becomes the 'collector' of his own past.” Indeed, the “Christian traffic in retribution has made the Jew's history a commodity” (9). The passage troubles Altman, as she reads it as indicating that “Felix will never be able to write his own story or even remember his own history, that Jewish culture is doomed to be sold and resold, and that assimilation – which will never really work – is nonetheless the best the Jew can hope for.”

Altman is “not sure whether Barnes disapproves” of this situation (Altman 167). However, whilst Guido is a collector of the past, it is only his “own” past to the extent that he owns it – as Barnes writes of Jenny Petherbridge, Guido in fact collects “someone else's past” (88). And he does so not by dealing in Jewish history (though he does trade it in for another version of history), but by dealing in the commodities of Western civilization (“old masters and first editions”). *Nightwood* does not in practice posit its Jewish characters as exceptional in being alienated from a fixed, stable, traceable linear history, overshadowed and beholden to “a Christian”; the novel serves to commoditize history in general. Barnes's exposure of Guido's attempts at assimilation and of the incoherence and instability of his chosen identity narrative is part of the novel's larger pattern of failures, which serves not to reinscribe an essentialist typology, but to question what it means to succeed, and does so in the context of the home, where succession and being successful are so intertwined.

In figuring the Volkbein house as a museum, Barnes turns inside out the spatialized separations on which bourgeois subjectivity is ostensibly predicated (public/private, interior/exterior), and which map onto and produce hierarchical gender, sexual, and racial identity categories. Barnes's domestic interiors do not provide access to the interior truths of her characters' identities, dislocating home from classificatory knowledge based on exclusions that separate the domestic from the foreign or other. When Barnes, discussing Felix's fascination with nobility, writes that he “hunted down his own disqualification” (8), she invokes a term Michel Foucault would use some forty years later. Foucault, in a description of his genealogical approach to history, insists on its emphasis on “local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges,” as against discourses that claim to be able to hierarchically

organize such knowledges into a unitary "true body of knowledge" (Foucault, *Society* 9). *Nightwood*, in its excavation of material histories and queer lineages, and its interrogation of home-as-museum, both traces disqualified knowledges (non-developmental networks of people and things that ordinarily fall outside the purview of the museum), and subsequently questions the grounds of Felix and Guido's social disqualification.[45] Home in *Nightwood* is a site of inexact history, where disqualified and subjugated knowledges, produced in and through space and objects, defy the linear logic of hetero-reproductive success.

Damned and Carefully Public: Matthew O'Connor's Parisian Pissoir

Near the end of Barnes's novel, in his final, drunken appearance at the Café de la Mairie du VI^{e}, Dr. Matthew O'Connor declares that "I'm damned, and carefully public!" (147). The loquacious doctor is indeed, in his inebriated and fantastic storytelling, providing a public spectacle, but the majority of the narrative performances he delivers in *Nightwood* are staged not in the public locales of a seedy European nightlife, with which he is invariably associated, but in domestic settings. Matthew's claim to be both "damned" and "carefully public" seems, by what Scott Herring has termed the "logic of the closet" (Herring 23), to be oxymoronic: as an unlicensed physician, and transvestite gay man, Matthew should take care to protect his privacy. However, Matthew's domestic geography, the Parisian locations he occupies and identifies as home, transgress the private/public dichotomy, reconfiguring value-laden spatial distinctions that align the domestic with both privacy and interiority. Like the Volkbein museum, the spectacle of

[45] Tyrus Miller points out that disqualification "has a social meaning, referring to the exclusion or estrangement of the characters from sexual, racial, and occupational norms," but also that if the term is taken literally "it yields a further, still more radical meaning: the progressive loss of *qualities* as such" (Miller 149). Such a loss of qualities, or distinctions, resonates with the anti-revelatory illegibility of homes and identities in *Nightwood*.

Matthew's domesticity, narratively created both through Matthew's speech and by the novel's narrator, suggests home as a site where the breakdown of distinctions between inside and out both demonstrates the mutually constitutive nature of gender, sexuality, and space, and deflects the interrogatory gaze and discriminatory taxonomizing. Though *Nightwood* and Matthew open up his queer interiors, his domesticity remains "carefully public," generating queer meanings but confounding the disciplinary knowledge that marginalizes him as "damned."

Barnes's description of Matthew O'Connor's domicile aligns it with a series of public and semi-public spaces that might be considered the very antithesis of bourgeois domesticity. *Nightwood* subsequently challenges the sexual and gender norms constituted with and through hierarchical spatial distinctions, positing home as a queer space in tension with rather than transparent to categorical knowledge. Whilst acknowledging the gendered discourses that shape, and are shaped by, the domestic interior, Barnes's evocation of Matthew's cramped living quarters demonstrate a mutual queering of room and inhabitant that severs domesticity from privacy and subsequently produces alternate gender and sexual meanings. Thus, Barnes writes of Matthew's dwelling, "There was something appallingly degraded about the room, like the rooms in brothels, which give even the most innocent a sensation of having been accomplice; yet this room was also muscular, a cross between a *chambre à coucher* and a boxer's training camp" (71). Barnes's description posits Matthew's home as a hybrid of the illusory privacy of a prostitute's bed and the masculine environs of the gym. Both that hybridization ("a cross between") and Barnes's simile ("like the rooms in brothels") produce inexactitude and uncertainty, invoking spaces that are unconventionally proximate but not identical. Whilst Barnes's choice of comparisons (brothel and boxer's training camp) question domestic space as the location of

private repose and maritally sanctioned reproductive heterosexuality (his room is "appallingly degraded"), the act of comparison itself suspends Matthew's room between these like and not-like locations, unmaking the map of private and public.[46] The resonant image of the cross resurfaces here, invoking the same deviation and grafting of unlike things as it does in Guido's story, and implicating Matthew's gender and sexuality in the space in which he dwells. Matthew is of course a *cross*-dresser, but is also figured as Christ, both by himself and others. He declares, for example, that "I'm a fisher of men" (87), and Nora thinks that he is "in a room that giving back evidence of his occupancy, is as mauled as the last agony" (72). Nora's observation puts room and occupant in a reciprocal relationship, producing a mirror-doubled image of a profanely martyred and utterly quotidian "last agony." After all, Matthew as a fisher of men is concerned with what can be caught cruising public bathrooms rather than with saving souls. The hybrid space where Matthew resides, then, does not merely suggest the cross to bear of sexual and gender non-conformity, but gestures to the emergence of those categories in and through space, and places home in an alternate network of locations that disrupt normative correspondences between spatial and identity categories.

A paradoxical suggestion of similarity between apparently incommensurate opposites in fact patterns *Nightwood*'s evocation of Matthew's living space, rendering it both locationally and linguistically indefinite. The room features a dresser from whose "half-open drawers […] hung laces, ribands, stockings, ladies' underclothing and an abdominal brace, which gave the

[46] Kathryn Bond Stockton notes that metaphoric comparison is itself an "act of domesticating meaning – making something more familiar and accessible" that "often use[s] a strangeness" (92). Barnes's comparison of Matthew's home with a brothel and boxing camp actually defamiliarizes the domestic, is an act of un-domesticating the meaning attached to home that emphasizes its strangeness. Putting brothel, gym, and home in relation to one another also, of course, does not just change the meaning of home; Matthew's residence is not merely a dialectical product of the gendered antithesis of gym and brothel, but queers their gender meanings too.

impression that the feminine finery had suffered venery" (71). The off-rhyme of "finery" and "venery" (attached to the physical closeness of brace and stockings) suggests their proximity; Matthew's home mingles the material trappings of conventional femininity with the "practice or pursuit of sexual pleasure; indulgence of sexual desire" ("Venery," *OED*), challenging repressive accounts of both home and femininity. Although Matthew desires to knit, cook, and bear children, his home is neither a sanctuary of normatively gendered domesticity, nor a space apart from pleasurable sexual indulgence or commercial sex.[47] The boundary-blurring slippage from "finery" to "venery" is repeated in Barnes's comparison of Matthew's dwelling to brothel rooms that "give even the most innocent a sensation of having been accomplice" (71). Barnes's invocation of innocence is undermined from the outset by her location of it in a brothel, but Matthew's room then becomes "like" a brothel where "innocent" is transmuted to "accomplice" – his domestic space is placed next to a space of commercial sex where opposites (innocent/accomplice) overlap. This rhetorical and spatial slide between ostensibly distinct, if not antithetical, locations and states of knowledge – *Nightwood*'s insistence on their adjacency – produces an alternately-valued account of domesticity that shifts how sexuality is mapped in the city.

The hotel room in which Matthew resides, however, is not the place that Matthew refers to as home. His room, which Scott Herring (in a gesture to the confusion of public and private in *Nightwood*'s domestic spaces) refers to as "a vice district in miniature" (Herring 179), and which Dianne Chisholm labels a "*boudoir-urinoir*" (Chisholm 190), is supplanted by more public

[47] That "venery" is extrapolated here from an "abdominal brace," both medical accessory and means of body modification, suggests the perverse potential of everyday objects and the material production of sexual pleasure (as well as invoking the medicalization of sexual and gender alterity, and Matthew's position astride the doctor-patient dichotomy). The mixing of brace and stockings underscores the prosthetic nature of gender performance.

spaces. Matthew claims that, "so God made me, my house is the pissing port" (81), and that his "only fireside is the outhouse" (82). Whilst Herring identifies Matthew's home as a public place of commercial sex – a "vice district" – Matthew identifies public places of (sometimes commercial) sex as his home. In this, the home that he claims and the home that he occupies overlap in Barnes's description of the latter as like a brothel; both his room and the public bathrooms are houses of prostitution. Locating domestic space in a public site of queer sex – making the "cottages" that house a queer community of anonymous sex equivalent to the normative vision of hearth and home conjured by "fireside" – not only passes comment on the home as a site of sexual labor, and in doing so troubles the bourgeois notion of home as separate from the public realm of work,[48] but also identifies home as part of a constellation of deviant, queer spaces that render classificatory categories of meaning untenable.

Barnes in fact parodies the classificatory practices of collecting and cataloging through Matthew's cottaging, depicting him as a taxonomist of casual gay sex.[49] Barnes identifies Guido Volkbein as a "gourmet" on the opening page of the novel (1), and Matthew claims the label for himself in terms of his ability to categorize the men with whom he has sex on the basis of their genitals: "though your normal fellow will say all are alike in the dark, negro or white, I say you can tell them, and where they come from, and what quarter they frequent, by the size and excellence" (84). Matthew, like Guido and Jenny Petherbridge, is a "collector" (82), as is evident

[48] Like Pierson's improper house in *Pilgrimage*.

[49] A note on "cottage" as noun and verb: The *OED* dates the use of "cottage" as slang for "public lavatory or urinal" back to 1909, and as specifically gay slang from the 1960s; "to cottage" as to "use or frequent public toilets for homosexual sex" is dated to the 1970s. Matthew's references to "cottages" in *Nightwood*, however, clearly refer to public urinals where he has sex with other men, suggesting an evolving etymology in the first half of the twentieth century. Neil Bartlett claims that "Gay men have been cottaging and being entrapped by the police since at least the eighteenth century" (Bartlett 88).

in both his “homes.” However, unlike the material goods in his room, in his “outhouse” Matthew collects and categorizes bodies. In a perverse performance of sexological classification, Matthew doesn't provide a taxonomy of deviance, but rather a deviant taxonomy,[50] failing to produce disciplined subjects of quasi-scientific knowledge, and instead producing a catalogue of pleasure in the connoisseur-ship of casual gay sex. Matthew's homes then generate a queer geography that, in Michael Davidson's words, “domesticates the underworld of Paris” (Davidson, “Pregnant” 215), but doesn't suggest queer pleasures as confined to city streets. Public bathroom and private bedroom are part of a network of related spaces in which queer pleasures and connections proliferate; cottages are queer homes, and cottagers go home to queer spaces. Their lines of connection, and the indeterminacy of their distinction, fail, as Herring suggests, to map a revelatory guide to a queer underworld, and similarly fail to map the disciplinary certainties about gender and sexuality with which the domestic is interarticulated.

Matthew's domestic spaces and narratives refute an equation between domesticity, interiority, normativity, and (re)productivity; such domestic disruptions are similarly evident in the connections Barnes makes between Matthew's home and circuses and fairs (connections that also shape Barnes's evocation of Nora Flood and Robin Vote's apartment). Matthew, a self-described “Old Woman who lives in the closet” (124), recounts that “I furnished my closet with phenomenal luck at the fair, what with shooting a row of chamber pots and whirling a dozen wheels to the good.” For “less than five francs” he takes home “a fine frying pan that could coddle six eggs, and a raft of minor objects one needs in the kitchen” (93). Five francs is a

[50] Or perhaps what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick might call a “nonce taxonomy”: “the making and unmaking and *re*making and redissolution of hundreds of old and new categorical imaginings concerning all the kinds it may take to make up a world” (*Closet* 23).

resonant figure in *Nightwood* as it is repeatedly identified as the cost of street sex: Matthew recalls being glad he "didn't want a thing in the world but what could be had for five francs" (93), and an encounter with "Kabyle, a better sort of Arab" who "was the only one I ever knew who offered me five francs before I could reach for my own. I had it framed in orange blossoms and hung it over the whatnot" (99). The pleasures of the fairground, the pleasures of the pissoir, and the practical necessities of home can all be purchased for five francs; the fairground furnishings, and Matthew's framing of the five franc note paid to him for sex, economically and materially bind fairground, commercialized queer sex, and home. The currency of sex in public bathrooms becomes a decorative object in the private domicile, manifesting a material, spatial relation that alters the gender and sexual meanings of "public" and "private." Matthew's queer domesticity is generated through this network that constantly turns away from the interior, suggesting that home, in the material and spatial connections between frying pans and fairs, enables queer sex and deviant gender identifications.

Matthew repeatedly identifies himself as living in and furnishing a "closet," an apt description of what Nora discovers to be a very small space, and which resonates with the definition of a closet as a "private repository of valuables or (especially in later use) curiosities; a cabinet" ("Closet," *OED*). Matthew's home is certainly a cabinet of curiosities (a form of museum of course), in which he is one of the principal exhibits. The closet also brings with it its definitional associations with the toilet, which are repeated in the fact that Matthew shoots at "a row of chamber pots" at the fair, and hangs his framed five franc note "over the whatnot"; in the "swill-pail stood at the head of the bed, brimming with abominations" (71), and in his predilection for "those circular cottages" where "I can never hang my muffler, mittens and

Bannybrook umbrella on anything other than a bit of tin boarding as high as my eyes" (82). This cloacal architecture of abjection, wherein Matthew's domesticity is inextricable from the site of bodily functions that disturb the boundaries of interior and exterior, self and other, again evokes home as a location where meaning is interrupted, delayed, or denied.[51] Matthew's home as closet – as cupboard, curio collection, place of private devotion, toilet – mitigates against what Scott Herring has labeled the "logic of the closet," a revelatory outing "as a reverse discourse for any spectacular body" (Herring 23). In *Nightwood*, homes and queerness are mutually constitutive neither because, as private spaces, homes are shielded from disciplinary surveillance (indeed, in connecting Matthew's home with brothels, boxing camps, and fairs, Barnes suggests the extent to which the home is enmeshed in exploitative economies of bodily surveillance and spectacle), nor because the novel's exposé succeeds in bringing queer households out of the closet. Rather, the interconnectedness of fairground goods and furnished closet, the circulation of sex, shit, money, and stuff, queerly reconfigures relations between interior and exterior, public and private. That reconfiguration renders sexuality as a secret, or gender as an interior identity, impossible.

Robin and Nora's Domestic Circus

Robin Vote and Nora Flood's apartment on the rue du Cherche-Midi echoes both Matthew's fairground-furnished home and Guido's museum, and is similarly shaped through connections with exterior locations that generate spatial suspensions alongside the queering of family time. The apartment is, like the novel's other homes, filled with a cosmopolitan clutter that Barnes catalogues in detail; it features "circus chairs, wooden horses bought from a ring of

[51] It also resonates with Matthew's diatribe against American puritanism, advocating for the French "detour of filthiness" against Nora's "too eagerly washing people" (75).

an old merry-go-round, venetian chandeliers from the Flea Fair, stage drops from Munich, cherubim from Vienna, ecclesiastical hangings from Rome, a spinet from England, and a miscellaneous collection of music boxes from many countries" (50). This domestic inventory juxtaposes objects appropriate to the museum and church with objects from fairs, theaters, and circuses: "cherubim from Vienna" and "ecclesiastical hangings from Rome" share space with stage-drops, merry-go-round horses, and "circus chairs." Robin and Nora's promiscuous collection domesticates the foreign and the exotic (as Guido's museum attempts to), rendering them items of domestic consumption and absorbing them into a decontextualized decorative economy. At the same time, however, it also puts both the objects and Robin and Nora's home in a new context, making material connections between their queer household and diverse geographical locations and sites of spectacle. Robin and Nora's domestic setting is constituted by objects that are antithetical to the domestic in both their foreignness and their provenance as props in various kinds of performance, religious and secular. Their domestication constitutes both the means by which Robin and Nora's relationship is performed (indeed, produced as a domestic spectacle), and a challenge to the marginalization of such relationships, in a hierarchy whereby the domestic is the familiar and familial as opposed to an external, foreign, queer other.

This home, then, "the museum of [Robin and Nora's] encounter, as Felix's hearsay house had been testimony of the age when his father lived with his mother" (50), in its indecorous disregard for the distinctions between interior décor, "stage drops," and "ecclesiastical hangings," suggests the incoherence of spatial distinctions that uphold gender and sexual norms. In connecting the couple's home with locations of public display, Barnes's inventory of its contents traces sideways spatial and material relations, whose deviation from progressive

hierarchies is similarly evident in its mix of high and low art, sacred and profane.[52] Prior to meeting Nora (at the circus, of course), Robin and her husband-to-be, Felix, "spent many hours in museums, and while this pleased Felix immeasurably, he was surprised that often her taste, turning from an appreciation of the most beautiful, would also include the cheaper and the debased, with an emotion as real" (37). This undiscriminating "turning from" established hierarchies of taste is materialized in Robin and Nora's own museum (and Barnes's text), making the domestic a location for the reconfiguring of the very practice of discrimination – of constituting and perceiving difference.

3. The Absence of an Interior: Domesticity and Resisting Definition

Matthew O'Connor's Failed Disclosure

The spatial juxtapositions and paradoxes of *Nightwood*'s homes contribute to domestic spaces that are evoked in baroque detail but locationally indefinite; Barnes disrupts, expands, and re-orders the type of family stories home might tell, and yet veers away from reinforcing home as materializing stable identities or knowable histories. As a result, *Nightwood*, like *Tender Buttons* and *Pilgrimage*, does not just insist on the possibility of queer homes, but suspends the spatialized categories that underpin the distinction between normative and deviant. Barnes's interconnection of self and home resists a mappable, definable interiority. As much is evident in her evocation of Matthew O'Connor in his room, which consistently refuses a stable gender truth. Seeking Matthew out at home, Nora Flood finds him waiting for a lover and wearing "a

[52] A mix Jane Marcus suggests also characterizes Barnes's text itself, which she identifies as a hybrid text, full of "mixed metaphors, mixed genres, mixed levels of discourse from the lofty to the low, mixed 'languages' from medical practice, circus argot, church dogma, and homosexual slang" (J. Marcus 223).

woman's flannel nightgown"; his "full gunmetal cheeks and chin" are "framed in the golden semi-circle of a wig with long pendant curls that touched his shoulders, and falling back against the pillow, turned up the shadowy interior of their cylinders. He was heavily rouged and his lashes painted" (71).[53] The gunmetal masculinity of cheeks and chin echoes the room's "boxer's training camp" muscularity, and Barnes's observation that "There is a certain belligerence in a room in which a woman has never set foot; every object seems to be battling its own compression – and there is a metallic odour, as of beaten irony in a smithy" (71). Barnes's replacement of "iron" with "irony" self-reflexively undermines the aphoristic certitude of "There is a certain belligerence in a room in which a woman has never set foot," particularly given Matthew's identification of himself as "the other woman that God forgot" (129). This aggressive masculinity, materially manifest in Matthew's room and on his body, does not, however, point either to an undisguisable and essential maleness, or a simple collision of gender binaries. Barnes draws attention to the "shadowy interior" of the "cylinders" of Matthew's wig; "cylinders" suggest this object of "feminine finery" as something that might be forged in a smithy, or as the barrel of a gun.[54] Matthew's gunmetal cheeks and chin and the gun barrel cylinders of his wig only gesture at a "shadowy interior" that, like the interior of the room, stymies rather than

[53] Sarah Henstra has identified how Matthew's attire accords with a Butlerian understanding of gender performativity, writing that "Matthew's adoption of the trappings of the feminine […] reenacts the performative mechanism by which gender signifiers work to reiterate one's 'sex.' His failure to pass as a woman creates a gap in the performative circle, between the sexed body and the gender that pretends automatically to express it" (Henstra 131).

[54] Earlier in the novel Nora's eyes are described as having "that mirrorless look of polished metals which report not so much the object as the movement of the object. As the surface of a gun's barrel, reflecting a scene, will add to the image the portent of its construction, so her eyes contracted and fortified the play before her" (47). Far from a window on the soul, Nora's eyes here are less than mirrors, imprecisely reflecting traces of objects, but not the objects themselves. A gun's barrel is inverted from portent of destruction to construction, making Nora's eyes a weapon by which what she sees is made and shaped. The image demonstrates *Nightwood*'s complex economy of sight, responding to the weapon of the gaze by providing spectacle without legibility. It also, like Matthew's metallic room and body, refuses precision and transparency, replacing interiority with not-fully-reflective surface.

produces categorical understanding. The metallic trace through room, face, and wig both connects domestic space, bodies, and objects, and obstructs reductive correlations between them.

The confusion of bodies and objects, and the absence of interiority it suggests, is also evident in Barnes's portrayal of the literal interior of Matthew's body as a cosmopolitan assemblage of objects that replicates the contents of *Nightwood*'s museum-like homes. Matthew, in typically fantastic fashion, suggests that an autopsy of his body would reveal a "kidney and a shoe cast of the Roman races; a liver and a long-spent whisper, a gall and a wrack of scolds from Milano, and my heart that will be weeping still when they find my eyes cold, not to mention a thought of Cellini in my crib of bones" (90). The "shoe cast of the Roman races" replicates the "runner's leg" to be found amongst the "Roman fragments" in Guido's Viennese house, as Matthew's cold eyes resonate with the "blind bold sockets" of another of Guido's fragments – that of a "matron stricken at the bosom" (5). Robin Blyn writes that "Each body described in *Nightwood* is a freak body, a spectacle made all the more mysterious by the narrative spiel that accompanies its display" (Blyn, "Stage" 146). In this instance, Matthew narrates the spectacle of himself, turning his physical interior inside out and putting it on display. That interior is revealed as a collection of freakish anatomical specimens and museal artifacts that render the body itself a public space, a location aligned both with the freak show and Guido's impenetrable house. That Matthew's bones contain "a thought of Cellini" connects him to the novel's other statue-humans,[55] and contributes to his body appearing as another version of Guido's disorderly museum, defying biological classification and standard history. Matthew's spiel, then, points to the conflation of the domestic interior with the interior of the self, but in opening himself up he

[55] The "living statues" at Count Altamonte's house, for example (12), or Robin Vote, who seems "a figurehead in a museum" (34) and "an old statue in a garden" (37).

invokes only other sites of hyperbolic display, his revelatory gesture mystifying rather than illuminating. Thus neither domestic nor bodily interiors, though intertwined, provide access to stable identities or biological certitude.

Nightwood's consistently unrevealing gestures of revelation, manifest in Matthew's failure to be either in or out of his closet, are also on display in the figuration of the doctor not just as a frequenter of entertainments such as the fair, but as a performer himself. As he is attending to Robin Vote at the Hôtel Récamier, Felix Volkbein watches the doctor "make the movements common to the 'dumbfounder', or man of magic; the gestures of one who, in preparing the audience for a miracle, must pretend that there is nothing to hide; the whole purpose that of making the back and elbows move in a series of 'honesties,' while in reality the most flagrant part of the hoax is being prepared." Matthew conducts this performance for the sake of being able to purloin some perfume on Robin's nightstand; as he also proceeds to steal a hundred franc note, Felix follows him with "a tension in his stomach, such as one suffers when watching an acrobat leaving the virtuosity of his safety in a mad unravelling whirl into probable death" (32). Matthew, as unlicensed medical practitioner and purveyor of dubious counseling, is a con-man, but Barnes's characterization of him here as a circus entertainer, a magician and acrobat, aligns him with the tension of revelation and concealment that characterizes the interconnection of domestic and public spaces in the novel (Matthew is notably performing this routine in another of the novel's bedrooms, in this instance in the tenuous domesticity of a hotel room). As in her tracing of the provenance of the Volkbein family heirlooms, Barnes appears to relentlessly reveal the nature of Matthew's "trick." Whilst Matthew pretends there is nothing to hide, the narrative hides nothing; the reader and Felix witness both Matthew's attempt at deceit

and his theft. There is no magic in the routine of this "man of magic"; indeed, it is "as if the whole fabric of magic had begun to decompose, as if the mechanics of machination were indeed out of control and were simplifying themselves back to their origin" (32). Matthew performs a degenerate undoing of illusion; his deceit, like Guido's aristocracy, is not an unqualified success.

Both Judith Halberstam and José Esteban Muñoz have recently invoked the disruptive potential of queer failure. Halberstam suggests that "we might read *failure* […] as a refusal of mastery, a critique of profit, and as a counterhegemonic discourse of losing" (Halberstam 11); Muñoz suggests that "Within failure we can locate a kernel of potentiality" and aligns "queer failure with a certain mode of virtuosity" (Muñoz 173). Matthew's "leaving the virtuosity of his safety" produces an "unravelling" that undoes magic but does not result in either Matthew's exposure or Felix's disillusionment. As Hedvig suspects Guido is not a baron but accepts his proofs and marries him anyway, so Felix, recognizing Matthew as a thief and imposter, "knew that he would continue to like the doctor" (33).[56] Guido's and Matthew's absence of mastery, their failure to maintain the illusion their performances strive for, does not result in either exposure or condemnation; rather, the spatial and temporal progress embedded in "to succeed" is diverted in queer alliances and relations that do not depend on success. Halberstam's "counterhegemonic discourse of losing" is manifest in *Nightwood*'s failed revelations, that, like Matthew, gesture towards a transparency and honesty that they fall short of delivering. Matthew tells Nora that "I tuck myself in at night, well content because I am my own charlatan" (86), exemplifying the novel's absence of both depth and transparency, and its relation to domesticity.

[56] Similarly, the doctor himself, having declared of Jenny Petherbridge that "I wouldn't piss on her if she were on fire!" follows up with "And then I thought: Oh, the poor bitch, if she were dying, face down in a long pair of black gloves, would I forgive her? And I knew I would forgive her, or anyone making a picture" (94). *Nightwood* consistently values surface over depth, queer performance over consistency.

Here, Matthew both reveals and acknowledges his own charlatanism, and yet remains charlatan to himself; in the space where he "evacuate[s] custom" (71), he nevertheless performs his charlatanism for and as himself. In this domestic image, Matthew is uncannily doubled and exterior to himself, tucking himself in in parental fashion; he is both transparent and not transparent to himself, putting on a performance for which he is the only audience. As Mary Wilson notes, "Home is where Barnes's characters become less knowable to themselves and to each other" (M. Wilson 438). In his public display of this private moment, Matthew both continues to queer family, and to perform the dissolution of interior and exterior, in a homey insistence on charlatanism that domesticates failure and manifests a queerly failed domesticity.

Robin Vote's Unreadable Surface

As Matthew O'Connor's detailed but indefinite interiors suggest, *Nightwood*'s queer and circuitous connections posit domestic space as opaque and depthless, the locus not of stable and knowable identities, but of sideways shifts that obscure visibility and legibility. Barnes's confusion of people, objects, and space, and its implications for the concept of interiority, is particularly evident in the tableau in which Robin Vote enters the narrative as an object barely discernible amongst a profusion of others, an image that is later repeated in Nora's discovery of the doctor at home in bed. Barnes writes,

> On a bed, surrounded by a confusion of potted plants, exotic palms and cut flowers, faintly oversung by the notes of unseen birds, which seemed to have been forgotten – left without the usual silencing cover, which, like cloaks on funeral urns, are cast over their cages at night by good housewives – half flung off the

> support of the cushions from which, in a moment of threatened consciousness she had turned her head, lay the young woman, heavy and disheveled. (30-31)

As both Scott Herring and Kathryn Bond Stockton have noted, Robin makes the most belated of appearances at the end of this heavily parenthetical, digressive sentence.[57] Barnes's wandering non-sequence of objects (a catalogue worthy of *Tender Buttons*) – bed, plants, birds, covers, cloaks, funeral urns, cages, cushions, Robin – joined through simile and spatial proximity, render cluttered space in equally impenetrable prose. The sentence makes Robin barely syntactically and materially visible beneath the accumulation of clauses and stuff; its subject, the revelation of who or what is "on the bed," is repeatedly deferred. The main verb of the sentence, "lay," is not an active one, and its delay contributes to the stasis of the image, which moves sideways through analogy, modification, extension, and addition, but makes no forward progress, starting and ending in situ on the bed. Robin thus enters the narrative as an object of thwarted scrutiny; placed in an interior tableau as something to be gazed at both by Matthew and Felix and the reader, she is in fact almost impossible to see amongst the cluttered décor of the room (of which she seems part, another of its decorative objects) and the deviations of Barnes's prose. This interior scene, in the partial domesticity and compromised privacy of Robin's hotel room, both renders Robin an object to be gazed at and impenetrable and indistinct to that gaze, not just challenging the idea of interior subjectivity, but refuting surface legibility too.

Robin's status as something to be looked at – freak show act or museum exhibit – is emphasized by Barnes's observation that,

---

[57] Stockton observes that "the sentence base is promised but suspended until the last line" (Stockton 108), and Herring writes that the "torturous paragraph, like Robin's torturous body, is antirevelatory. In lieu of a knowable character, then, readers butt against several grammatical obstacles" (Herring 184).

> Like a painting by the *douanier* Rousseau, she seemed to lie in a jungle trapped in a drawing room (in the apprehension of which the walls have made their escape), thrown in among the carnivorous flowers as their ration; the set, the property of an unseen *dompteur*, half lord, half promoter, over which one expects to hear the strains of an orchestra of wood-wind render a serenade which will popularize the wilderness. (31)

Barnes's sentence opens out into a series of inset interiors – painting, drawing room, stage set – that both enclose Robin and exhibit her as spectacle. That the drawing room's "walls have made their escape" emphasizes the dismantling of a stable interior as the sentence shifts between spaces and scales, unfolding each interior into a new site of display and performance. Robin is again invoked as a curiosity and art object, and again clearly visible as neither, indistinguishable from the spaces and objects she is "like." Those objects and spaces also invoke a domestication of the apparently foreign and exotic – Rousseau's paintings trapping a jungle in a drawing room, an orchestra popularizing the wilderness – that further contributes to Barnes's reconfiguration of the interior and domestic. These faux evocations of otherness add to Robin's association with primitivism but, as works of art that, famously in Rousseau's case, replicate only already domesticated objects (taxidermied animals) and locations (botanical gardens), suggest otherness as inevitably folded into the familiar and domestic, and certainly not visible or knowable through the spectacle of Robin or the spectacles with which Barnes associates her. José Esteban Muñoz has identified queerness as a "stage" both in the sense that, within the dominant culture, queers "are cast as people who are developmentally stalled, forsaken, who do not have the complete life promised by heterosexual temporality" (Muñoz 98), thus stuck in a phase they should just be

going through, and in the sense of being a site of performance. In Barnes's Rousseauian tableau, Robin's primitivism, the backward stage she is suspended in, is performed as an illegible spectacle that disrupts the spatial categories which structure how dominant culture views queer bodies and desires. Barnes, Brian Glavey suggests, invokes "a way of seeing that doesn't transform the visible world into an object to be classified and controlled," a "vision that attends to non-normative subjectivities without classifying or mastering them" (Glavey 752). That vision or way of seeing in *Nightwood* is specifically domestic, Barnes using the space of the home to refute the heteronormative classifications it ostensibly manifests.

Robin's illegibility has been critically characterized as the absent, empty or impenetrable center of Barnes's novel, narratively anchoring the absence of depth or accessibility that permeates *Nightwood* as a whole. I would suggest, however, that Robin, rather than an exemplary or exceptional figure in the novel, is one indefinite point in *Nightwood*'s network of repetitions, reworkings, and interconnections. The geography of Barnes's novel, like the domestic spaces it describes, confounds discrimination of center and periphery, reinforcing a spatial indistinction that cuts across the space of the text and the spaces in the text. Felix sums up Robin's illegibility when he tells Matthew that "I find that I never did have a really clear idea of her at any time. I had an image of her, but that is not the same thing. An image is a stop the mind makes between uncertainties" (100). The temporal and spatial suspension Felix attributes to Robin here, her being out of time and place, is not unique to Robin, however, failing to make her even a particular cipher of the novel's politics and poetics of unclarity. Her sartorial untimeliness, for example, is shared by Jenny Petherbridge. Robin both dresses in cross-gender and cross-generational boy's attire, and "heavy silks that made her seem newly ancient." Felix finds her

"clothes were of a period he could not place," and discovers the "secret" to be that she refashions antique clothes (65). This belatedness is matched by Jenny; Robin tells Matthew that, in a moment of panic, Jenny "will dress up now […] Dress up in something old" (64), and Matthew himself suggests that Jenny favors clothes that "had been out of style three mothers behind her" (88).[58] Robin and Jenny are thus both clothed in imprecision, in a manner that permeates the novel – one might also think, for example, of the portrait of Guido's claim to a father whose "dress was a baffling mixture of the Romantic and the Religious" (6), or of Frau Mann's costume that is indistinguishable from her body and renders her "as unsexed as a doll" (12). Robin's appearance, then, posits her both as a curiosity and as indistinct from other characters in the novel – Barnes's repetitions structure her novel not as a typological catalogue of perversity, but as interrogation of the distinctions that enable discriminatory taxonomizing.

It is not only Robin's sartorial confusion that is replicated across *Nightwood*'s other characters. Her oft-mentioned muteness obviously finds a mirror in the feeble younger Guido, but also again in Jenny, who, "had she been forced to invent a vocabulary for herself, it would have been a vocabulary of two words, 'ah' and 'oh'" (60). Jenny borrows other people's words, and Robin is in fact described as having the voice of an "actor who, in the soft usury of his speech, withholds a vocabulary until the profitable moment when he shall be facing his audience" (34); whilst few of Robin's words are recorded, this description of her voice also aligns her with the voluble performance of Matthew O'Connor. Even Robin's primitivism and

[58] There is irony in using mothers as a measure of time in *Nightwood* (as Felix also does when he suggests that Robin "wore feathers of the kind his mother had worn" [65]), given that mothers, reproduction, and familial generation/s provide no index of familial or temporal stability or linearity in the novel. Judith Halberstam suggests that the "deployment of the concept of *family*, whether in homo or hetero contexts, almost always introduces normative understandings of time and transmission" (Halberstam, *Queer Art* 71), but it certainly does not in this instance.

animality are not hers alone. Whilst she is often invoked as an evolutionary misstep or throwback, her “flesh the texture of plant life” (31) or “beast turning human” (33), even Nora is located in similarly vegetal discourses of untimeliness: “there could be seen coming, early in her life, the design that was to be the weather-beaten grain of her face, that wood in the work; the tree coming forward in her, an undocumented record of time” (45). Robin’s impenetrable animality, the performance of which so memorably concludes the novel, is prefigured in the image of Matthew as carrying his hands “like a dog who is walking on his hind legs” (29), and his labeling himself “an angel on all fours” (85). *Nightwood* is not just absent a center because of Robin's mute impenetrability, but because Barnes's replications and reiterations suspend centrality as they refute interiority. These decentering repetitions suggest neither the accessibility of interior truths about the novel's array of freaks and outcasts, nor the novel as having a stable interior that provides access to any revelatory truths about the lives it describes. Indeed, the logic by which these characters can be labeled outcasts is questioned by a geography of shifting identifications that undermine interiority.

Conclusion: A Stop Between Uncertainties

Matthew O’Connor’s final description of Jenny Petherbridge, who encapsulates so many of *Nightwood*’s temporal suspensions and spatial paradoxes, has her running back and forth between a picture of her mother and her collection of eighty-two plaster virgins, standing “there between two tortures – the past she can’t share, and the present she can’t copy” (112-3). This oscillating limbo is one of *Nightwood*’s many moments of static movement, which provide embodied, spatialized images of the text’s own contradictions, its “irreducible tension between

failing to disclose and promising; procrastination and repetition" (Caselli 34).[59] Jenny, squirrel in a wheel, moves "with the broken arc of two instincts, recoil and advance" (59), as Hedvig Volkbein responds to Guido "by moving toward him in recoil" (3). Whilst Nora, stalking Paris for traces of Robin, is "beside herself" (53), she observes of Matthew that he "dresses to lie beside himself" (72). And although Nora notes that Robin "can't 'put herself in another's place'" – that "she herself is the only 'position'" (132) – that position is not visible within the text, to its other characters, or to Robin herself; Robin is only the "stop the mind makes between uncertainties" (100). *Nightwood*'s inhabitants thus move uncertainly through its spaces, positioned oddly in relation both to one another and themselves. They are in fact out of position, out of their "proper, appropriate, or correct place" ("Position," *OED*), on trajectories that don't line up, are oriented elsewhere, are deflected, diverted, and doubled. As Kathryn Bond Stockton notes, Freud theorizes "'perversion' as not just inversion but diversion. Perverts are 'diverts,' one could say" (Stockton 25), and Barnes's characters manifest their perversion as a directional aberration, a misplacedness. That locational and directional suspension is not resolved by the homes they occupy, and the failed, transient, and fantastic domesticities they perform. Indeed, these oblique trajectories are mediated by and produced through the novel's domestic interiors.

Nightwood is an unlocatable novel. As Scott Herring suggests, it fails to reveal the geography it ostensibly describes. Its cartographic opacity extends to the domestic interiors which house much of the novel's (in)action, but that opacity does not offer Barnes's characters a sheltering privacy for their marginal lives that would maintain the social, sexual, and spatial separation of what happens behind closed doors. *Nightwood*'s homes instead queer the spatial

[59] As Tyrus Miller notes, "Essential to Barnes's whole literary corpus is a certain 'positionless' quality, its generic and categorical uncertainty" (Miller 124).

matrix in which domesticity is produced, dislodging the interior as the stable location of identity, subjectivity, and belonging. The novel's unhomely homes, turned inside out, are a locus of relations between people, objects, and spaces that productively disable distinction, rendering the domestic unfamiliar. Barnes's novel can neither be claimed for an identitarian politics that argues that gay men and lesbians should have the right to rooms and children of their own, nor be cited as a case study of the exilic queer/modern subject's alienation from home. Barnes instead disarticulates the interior from disciplinary identity categories to posit home not, as Mary Wilson suggests, as an evacuated no-place, but as a site where domesticity is detached from hetero-reproductivity and queer connections are formed. Merrill Cole writes that history is "not as straight as it so often has been taken to be, neither in the sense of being resolutely heterosexual nor in terms of traveling in a straight line" (Cole 403), and *Nightwood* suggests that the same is true of home, repository of so much family history.

The other characteristic movement of *Nightwood*'s inhabitants, besides their unprogressing and indistinct suspension, is their going or bowing down. This abject and recurring gesture encompasses degenerative regression, misguided and profane genuflection, and queer sexual practice. *Nightwood*'s domestic landscape repeatedly produces narratives and desires that go down rather than grow up, making backwardness not a mark of condemnation but a reconfiguration of the trajectory of family and home. As Judith Halberstam writes, "failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods" (Halberstam, *Queer Art* 3), and *Nightwood*'s narrative and domestic architecture of abjection displays failures (and fails to display) in ways that refute the straight logic of

productive and reproductive adulthood and family.

Conclusion: The Normal is So Much More Simply Complicated

These three texts demonstrate a female modernist revision rather than renunciation of the tenets of nineteenth-century domesticity that persists across time and genre. Stein, Richardson, and Barnes demonstrate home as productive of queer relationships and identities that deviate far from the Angel of the House Virginia Woolf urges women writers to kill. Their contribution to killing the conception of gender that Woolf sees exemplified by Coventry Patmore's Angel, however, is not to dismiss the importance of the house, but to show how the relationships and identities the house produces are multiple and varied – to indeed suggest that the acts of dwelling and homemaking are not inherently imbricated in binary gender and heterosexuality, but generative and protective of a queer array of alternate life trajectories. In her recent *Neodomestic American Fiction*, Kristin J. Jacobson argues that it is not until the 1980s, in the wake of second wave feminism, that fiction "interrogates and expands on the nineteenth-century domestic novel's legacies," identifying a strain of "neodomestic fiction" which "represents and promotes a politics of instability and heterogeneity" (Jacobson 4). With only a passing reference to Stein's crafting of "new modes of representing domesticity," Jacobson dismisses any modernist revision of domesticity, broadly claiming that "the impetus to stabilize the domestic environment – to produce a stable home or to escape a domestic trap – spans the literature through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Jacobson 6). I argue that, on the contrary, Stein, Richardson, and Barnes precisely insist on domestic space as relational, characterized by material and sensory connections within and across the semi-permeable boundaries of the home, revising the legacy of nineteenth-century domesticity long before the postmodern moment of the 1980s.

Despite the repetitions and echoes that align *Tender Buttons*, *Pilgrimage*, and *Nightwood* with a persistent modernist queering of domesticity, however, each of these texts offer a differing account of how home might be queerly conceived. Paradoxically, for instance, the most formally experimental text, Stein's *Tender Buttons*, is also the earliest and most consistent with a conservatively assimilative queer politics. In *Intimate Friends*, Martha Vicinus claims that through the nineteenth century, women who were erotically attracted to women "reworked family roles" – "Even for those who deeply distrusted or disliked the nuclear family, it remained an important source for imagining and constructing same-sex intimacy." By the 1920s, however, she argues that "the family metaphor had worn thin" (Vicinus 229). Writing before the First World War, Stein certainly interrogates the operation of family *as* metaphor, and through her wordplay and syntax rescripts what marriage and family might look like, but nevertheless highlights the performative and commercial nature of those institutions in order to advocate for widened access to the legitimacy they confer. As much is evident in her invocation of marriage vows and deployment of the language of kinship and family; it is made yet more explicit in "Sacred Emily" (1913), where Stein plaintively insists "I love honor and obey I do love honor and obey I do" (178). The assertive performative vow "I do" here becomes a beseeching insistence on the legitimacy of Stein and Toklas's relationship in the language of state-sanctioned marriage.

The more generically-identifiable (though by no means generically-conformist) *Nightwood* provides no such assimilative traction, and cannot be co-opted for a politics of LGBT equality and inclusion. Barnes does not reconfigure the marriage plot; her characters attempt to follow Stein's lead in exploiting the consumerist and material performativity of family and

marriage in order to achieve a normative stability, but, without exception, fail to achieve that stability. The failure of the marriage plots of Guido and Felix Volkbein, Jenny Petherbridge, Nora Flood, and Matthew O'Connor derive, *Nightwood* suggests, not from their inherently unassimilable otherness, but from the very queerness and instability of the institutions they are seeking to replicate and occupy. Indeed, Herring argues that "Barnes does not ask that perverts be assimilated into the communal order; she instead dismisses sociality in toto" (Herring 182). *Nightwood*'s characteristic gestures of hesitant suspension, stalled action, and revelations that fail to be revelatory, posit the domestic not as a site for an inclusive rearticulation of home and family, but as a site where home and family are made utterly strange. Barnes, even in this later modernist moment, does not abandon family as a way of thinking queer relations, but the abject, incestuous, cross-generational, and gender-misaligned ways in which marriage is configured in *Nightwood*, and the uncanny ways in which reproduction is imagined, are a far cry from the playful but earnest vows of *Tender Buttons* and "Sacred Emily." The climax of Barnes's marriage plot, its ultimate act of conjoining, is a disturbing though vague implication of bestiality, a resolute renunciation of any assimilative turn. Thus, whilst *Nightwood* is ostensibly more explicit than *Tender Buttons* in its depiction of queer lives and homes, it provides no grounds on which to make an argument for their social recognition and inclusion.

Whilst *Tender Buttons* and *Nightwood* depict queer domesticities that make difficult any straightforward correlation between sexual politics and textual experimentalism, the dirty corners of Bloomsbury detailed in *Pilgrimage* demonstrate how the evocations of home in these female-authored texts diverge from depictions of domesticity in the work of canonical male modernists. Certainly a fixation on the idea of home, and the portrayal of homes that elude the orderly ideals

of good household management and heteronormative propriety, are not confined to modernist women writers. Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), for example, is structured by an arc that bends toward home, the final third of the book labeled "Nostos," as the unheroic Bloom in Joyce's quotidian ironizing of Homeric epic returns to Eccles Street and Molly. In contrast to Richardson, and Barnes, however, the majority of Joyce's novel takes place on city streets and in public spaces, which Bloom and Stephen Dedalus navigate whilst Molly remains at home. Joyce's narrative of wandering and homecoming, concluding with a marital reconciliation absent in both *Nightwood* and *Pilgrimage*, thus continues to emphasize male public mobility against a static female domesticity. Joyce's conception of domestic space remains oppositional, with home a feminized space of nostalgia (derived, of course, from "nostos"), endpoint of the male protagonist's exilic journeying rather than a site productive of differently-gendered narratives. The Bloom household, like the rooms of the rue de Fleurus and of Flaxman's Court and Tansley Street, is characterized by a dirt that is both sexual and material, encapsulated in Bloom's discovery in his bed of "the imprint of a human form, male, not his, some crumbs, some flakes of potted meat, recooked, which he removed" (601). Despite this deviance, however, home is ultimately reinforced as a female space associated with the temporal, syntactical "flow" of Molly's monologue, her profanity and adultery not shifting the gendered geography of Joyce's Dublin.

In contrast, Richardson's similarly stream-of-consciousness approach to the psychic and material interiors of women frames Miriam's urban perambulations in terms of a *series* of homes, none offering a stable or singular endpoint to her journey, which is as much "a *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*" (*Dawn's Left Hand* 167) as an exploration of city streets. Indeed, I argue that Richardson depicts a domestic form of flânerie which both connects city and home

and insists on the sensory and experiential richness of the latter; Miriam's sequence of homes do not provide the culmination of her ongoing pilgrimage, but rather one of its principal, if shifting, locations. As such, the domestic is a central mode for Richardson's revision of the gendered cityscape still firmly in place in *Ulysses*, *Pilgrimage*'s structure positing domesticity not as the point of nostalgic return, but as a contingent site of transient relations and unstable gender roles. These three authors do not constitute a progressive trajectory, charting the linear history of a modernist queering of domesticity (as their repetitions and recurring preoccupations illustrate). Richardson does, however, provide a bridge between Stein's formally innovative reconfiguration of domestic institutions, and Barnes's refusal of the very possibility of conformity, *Pilgrimage*, the most obvious successor of nineteenth-century novel form, thoroughly destabilizing the connection between home and identity.

Works Cited

Abraham, Julie. *Metropolitan Lovers: The Homosexuality of Cities*. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 2009. Print.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2006. Print.

Altman, Meryl. "A Book of Repulsive Jews? Rereading *Nightwood*." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 13.3 (1993): 160-171. Print.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. Print.

Barnes, Djuna. *Nightwood*. 1936. London: Faber and Faber, 1996. Print.

Bartlett, Neil. *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1988. Print.

Bell, David and Gill Valentine, eds. *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1999. Print.

Berry, Ellen E. *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992. Print.

Bérubé, Allan. *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two*. New York: Free Press, 1990. Print.

Black, Barbara J. *On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums*. Charlottesville and London: UP of

Virginia, 2000. Print.

Blair, Sara. "Gertrude Stein, 27 Rue de Fleurus, and the Place of the Avant-Garde." *American Literary History* 12.3 (2000): 417-437. Print.

Bluemel, Kristin. *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's* Pilgrimage. Athens and London: U of Georgia P, 1997. Print.

Blyn, Robin. "From Stage to Page: Franz Kafka, Djuna Barnes, and Modernism's Freak Fictions." *Narrative* 8.2 (2000): 134-160. Print.

---. "*Nightwood*'s Freak Dandies: Decadence in the 1930s." *Modernism/Modernity* 15.3 (2008): 503-526. Print.

Boyd, Nan Alamilla. *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. Print.

Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Dorothy Richardson's Art of Memory: Space, Identity, Text*. Trans. Victoria Appelbe. New York: Manchester UP, 1999. Print.

Brown, Julia Prewitt. *The Bourgeois Interior*. Charlottesville and London: U of Virginia P, 2008. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York and London: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Caselli, Daniela. *Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes's Bewildering Corpus*. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. Print.

Chessman, Harriet Scott. *The Public is Invited to Dance: Representation, the Body, and*

Dialogue in Gertrude Stein. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989. Print.

Chisholm, Dianne. "Obscene Modernism: Eros Noir and the Profane Illumination of Djuna Barnes." *American Literature* 69.1 (1997): 167-206. Print.

Cole, Merrill. "Backwards Ventriloquy: The Historical Uncanny in Barnes's *Nightwood*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 52.4 (2006): 391-412. Print.

Colomina, Beatriz. "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism." *Sexuality & Space*. Ed. Colomina New York: Princeton Architectural P, 1992. 73-128. Print.

Copeland, Carolyn Faunce. *Language and Time in Gertrude Stein*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1975. Print.

Cvetkovich, Anne. *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2012. Print.

Davidoff, Leonore. "The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century England." *Fit Work for Women*. Ed. Sandra Burman. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979. 64-97. Print.

Davidson, Michael. *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. Print.

---. "Pregnant Men: Modernism, Disability, and Biofuturity in Djuna Barnes." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 43.2 (2010): 207-226. Print.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1984. Print.

Dettmar, Kevin J.H. and Stephen Watt, eds. *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, Rereading*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996. Print.

Dickie, Margaret. "Recovering the Repression in Stein's Erotic Poetry." *Gendered Modernisms:*

American Women Poets and Their Readers. Ed. Margaret Dickie and Thomas Travisano Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996. 3-25. Print.

Doan, Laura and Chris Waters. "Homosexualities: Introduction." *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*. Ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. 41-44. Print.

Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon P, 2003. Print.

Dydo, Ulla E. *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises, 1923-1934*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 2003. Print.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke UP, 2004. Print.

Edmunds, Susan. *Modernist Domestic Fiction and the U.S. Welfare State*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Eng, David L. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*. Trans. Robert Hurley. 1976. London: Penguin, 1998. Print.

---. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. Ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. Trans. David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003. Print.

Fuss, Diana. *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms That Shaped Them*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Fest, Kerstin. *And All Women Mere Players? Performance and Identity in Dorothy Richardson,*

Jean Rhys and Radclyffe Hall. Wien: Braumüller, 2009. Print.

Foster, Thomas. *Transformations of Domesticity in Modern Women's Writing: Homelessness at Home*. Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave, 2002. Print.

Freeman, Elizabeth. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Frost, Elisabeth A. *The Feminist Avant-Garde in American Poetry*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2003. Print.

Galow, Timothy W. *Writing Celebrity: Stein, Fitzgerald, and the Modern(ist) Art of Self-Fashioning*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Garrity, Jane. *Step-Daughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2003. Print.

Glavey, Brian. "Dazzling Estrangement: Modernism, Queer Ekphrasis, and the Spatial Form of *Nightwood*." *PMLA* 124.3 (2009): 749-763. Print.

Gold, Michael. "Gertrude Stein: A Literary Idiot." *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein*. Ed. Kirk Curnutt. Westport, CT and London: Greenwood P, 2000. Print.

Goldman, Jonathan. *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2011. Print.

Goody, Alex. *Modernist Articulations: A Cultural Study of Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy and Gertrude Stein*. Basingstoke, England, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York and London: NYU P, 2005. Print.

---. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2011. Print.

Hanrahan, Mairéad. "Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*: The Cruci-Fiction of the Jew." *Paragraph: A*

Journal of Modern Critical Theory. 24.1 (2001): 32-49. Print.

Harding, Desmond. *Writing the City: Urban Visions and Literary Modernism*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Harvey, Melinda. "Dwelling, Poaching, Dreaming: Housebreaking and Homemaking in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*." *Inside Out: Women Negotiating, Subverting, Appropriating Public and Private Space*. Ed. Teresa Gómez Reus and Aránzazu Isandizaga. Amsterdam and New York: Rodolpi, 2008. 167-188. Print.

Heise, Thomas. "Degenerate Sex and the City: Djuna Barnes's Urban Underworld." *Twentieth Century Literature* 55.3 (2009): 287-321. Print.

Henstra, Sarah. "Looking the Part: Performative Narration in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* and Katherine Mansfield's 'Je Ne Parle Pas Français.'" *Twentieth Century Literature* 46.2 (2000): 125-149. Print.

Herring, Scott. *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism*. New York: New York UP, 2010. Print.

---. *Queering the Underworld: Slumming, Literature, and the Undoing of Lesbian and Gay History*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2007. Print.

Hilder, Jamie. "'After all one must know more than one sees and one does not see a cube in its entirety': Gertrude Stein and Picasso and Cubism." *Critical Survey* 17.3 (2005): 66-84. Print.

Hoberman, Ruth. *Museum Trouble: Edwardian Fiction and the Emergence of Modernism* Charlottesville and London: U of Virginia P, 2011. Print.

Houlbrook, Matt. *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005. Print.

Howard, John. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999. Print.

Huyssen, Andreas. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Jacobson, Kristin J. *Neodomestic American Fiction*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2010. Print.

Johnston, Lynda and Robyn Longhurst. *Space, Place, and Sex: Geographies of Sexualities*. Lanham, MD and Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010. Print.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*. Ed. Hans Walter Gabler. 1922. New York: Random House, 1986. Print.

Kaplan, Amy. "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature* 70.3 (1998): 581-606. Print.

Katz, Tamar. *Impressionist Subjects: Gender, Interiority, and Modernist Fiction in England*. Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2000. Print.

Karl, Alissa G. *Modernism and the Marketplace: Literary Culture and Consumer Capitalism in Rhys, Woolf, Stein, and Nella Larsen*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky and Madeline D. Davis. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Kent, Kathryn R. *Making Girls into Women: American Women's Writing and the Rise of Lesbian Identity*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2003. Print.

Klimasmith, Betsy. *At Home in the City: Urban Domesticity in American Literature and Culture, 1850-1930*. Durham: U of New Hampshire P, 2005. Print.

Le Corbusier. *Towards a New Architecture*. 1931. New York: Dover, 1986. Print.

Lewis, Wyndham. *Time and Western Man*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928. Print.

Marcus, Jane. "Laughing at Leviticus: *Nightwood* as Woman's Circus Epic." *Silence and Power:*

A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes. Ed. Mary Lynn Broe Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1991. 221-25. Print.

Marcus, Sharon. *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. Print.

Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. "The Futurist Manifesto." *Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and the Resistance in Italy: 1919 to the Present*. Ed. Stanislao G. Pugliese. 1909. Lanham: Rowland and Littlefield, 2004. 25-29. Print.

Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994. Print.

Mellow, James R. *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company*. New York and Washington: Praeger, 1974. Print.

Miller, Tyrus. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: U of California P, 1999. Print.

Mix, Deborah M. *A Vocabulary of Thinking: Gertrude Stein and Contemporary North American Women's Writing*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2007. Print.

Moi, Toril, ed. *The Kristeva Reader*. New York: Columbia UP, 1986. Print.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York and London: New York UP, 2009. Print.

Murphy, Margueritte S. "'Familiar Strangers': The Household Words of Gertrude Stein's 'Tender Buttons.'" *Contemporary Literature* 32.3 (1991): 383-402. Print.

Nelson, Cary. *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory, 1919-1945*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989. Print.

Nyman, Micki. "Sexuality and Subjectivity in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*." *M/MLA:*

Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association 44.1 (2011): 105-117. Print.

O'Connor, Mary. "The Objects of Modernism: Everyday Life in Women's Magazines, Gertrude Stein, and Margaret Watkins." *American Modernism Across the Arts*. Ed. Jay Bochner and Justin B. Edwards. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. 97-123. Print.

Parry, Amie. "Modernism and Domesticity: from Conrad's Eastern Road to Stein's Empty Spaces in the Home." *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity*. Ed. Rosemary Marangoly George. Boulder: Westview P, 1998. 75-101. Print.

Parsons, Deborah L. *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

Paul, Catherine E. *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002. Print.

Perloff, Marjorie. "Of Objects and Readymades: Gertrude Stein and Marcel Duchamp." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 32.2 (1996): 137-154. Print.

Pitchford, Nicola. "Unlikely Modernism, Unlikely Postmodernism: Stein's *Tender Buttons*." *American Literary History* 11.4 (1999): 642-667. Print.

Radford, Jean. *Dorothy Richardson*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1991. Print.

Randall, Bryony. *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

Reed, Christopher. *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004. Print.

---. *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996. Print.

Richardson, Dorothy. *Pilgrimage 1: Pointed Roofs, Backwater, Honeycomb*. 1915-1917. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967. Print.

---. *Pilgrimage 2: The Tunnel, Interim*. 1919. London: Virago, 1979. Print.

---. *Pilgrimage 3: Deadlock, Revolving Lights, The Trap*. 1921-1925. London: Virago, 1979. Print.

---. *Pilgrimage 4: Oberland, Dawn's Left Hand, Clear Horizon, Dimple Hill, March Moonlight*. 1927-1967. New York: Popular Library, 1976. Print.

Rohman, Carrie. "Revising the Human: Silence, Being, and the Question of the Animal in *Nightwood*." *American Literature* 79.1 (2007): 57-84. Print.

Rosner, Victoria. *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. Print.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*. New York and London: Penguin, 1986. Print.

Scherr, Rebecca. "Tactile Erotics: Gertrude Stein and the Aesthetics of Touch." *Lit: Literature, Interpretation, Theory* 18.3 (2007): 193-212. Print.

Schulman, Sarah. *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 2012. Print.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1990. Print.

Sibalis, Michael D. "Paris." *Queer Sites: Gay Urban Histories since 1600*. Ed. David Higgs. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. 10-37. Print.

Simmel, Georg. “Bridge and Door” and “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. Neil Leach. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 66-79. Print.

Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*. 1933. Ed. Carl Van Vechten. 1962. New York: Vintage, 1990. 1-237. Print.

---. “Composition as Explanation.” 1926. *Selected Writings*. 511-523. Print.

---. “Sacred Emily.” Stein, *Geography and Plays*. Ed. Cyrena N. Pondrom. 1922. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. 178-188. Print.

---. *Tender Buttons*. 1914. *Selected Writings*. 459-509. Print.

Stockton, Kathryn Bond. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2009. Print.

Taylor, Kathryn Rose. “Exhibiting Domesticity: The Home, the Museum, and Queer Space in American Literature, 1914-1937.” Diss. U of California, Los Angeles, 2006. Print.

Thompson, Brock. *The Un-Natural State: Arkansas and the Queer South*. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 2010. Print.

Thomson, George H. *A Reader’s Guide to Dorothy Richardson’s* Pilgrimage. Greensboro: ELT Press, U of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1996. Print.

Tischler, Alyson. “A Rose Is a Pose: Steinian Modernism and Mass Culture.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 26.3-4 (2003): 12-27. Print.

Tongson, Karen. *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries*. New York: New York UP, 2011. Print.

Torgovnick, Marianna. *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*. Chicago and London:

U of Chicago P, 1990. Print.

Vicinus, Martha. *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2004. Print.

Will, Barbara. *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of "Genius."* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000. Print.

Wilson, Elizabeth. "The Invisible Flâneur." *The Contradictions of Culture: Cities, Culture, Women*. London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2001. 72-89. Print.

Wilson, Mary. "No Place Like Home: *Nightwood*'s Unhoused Fictions." *Studies in the Novel* 43.4 (2011): 428-448. Print.

Winning, Joanne. *The Pilgrimage of Dorothy Richardson*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2000. Print.