

1-1-2016

After The Clinic: Gendered Pathology In Modernist Literature

Alisa Allkins
Wayne State University,

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_dissertations

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Allkins, Alisa, "After The Clinic: Gendered Pathology In Modernist Literature" (2016). *Wayne State University Dissertations*. 1619.
https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_dissertations/1619

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wayne State University Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

AFTER THE CLINIC: GENDERED PATHOLOGY IN MODERNIST LITERATURE

by

ALISA ALLKINS

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2016

MAJOR: ENGLISH LITERATURE

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

© COPYRIGHT BY

ALISA ALLKINS

2016

All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

To Kyle, Elsa, and our little boy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Professors Barrett Watten, renée hoogland, Jonathan Flatley, and Ben Lee, for their productive feedback toward the completion of this project. I would especially like to thank Barrett for his support of my research: his encouragement and wealth of knowledge have been invaluable for situating myself in the discourse of academia. Much appreciation to the English Department, particularly Caroline Maun and the Graduate Committee, for the Rumble Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Thank you to my peer cohort at Wayne State who have offered their intellectual and emotional support in innumerable ways, particularly Tara Forbes, Peter Marra, Jon Plumb, Melanie Zynel, Judith Lakamper, Erin Bell, and many others.

I have received a lot of constructive feedback on these chapters as they have been in process. Thank you to the wonderful junior academics and graduate students who offered me comments and critiques at the Bavarian American Academy through the years. Thank you to my fellow Williams scholars, particularly Daniel Burke, Ian Copestake, Kate Schnur, and others, who heard my work on the Baroness for the first time and have offered feedback on my topic as well as insights concerning Williams's medical works.

Finally, I would like to thank my support system beyond my academic circle who have gotten me over the finish line. Thank you to Andrea Knutson, whose encouragement has helped me through some rough waters during the dissertation composition process. Thank you to my extended family members who have offered me enthusiastic support through the years. And finally, to my little family. Thank you, Elsa, for giving my schedule a structure and purpose that I'm not sure I would have had without you, and a space to step away from the process and gain perspective. And Kyle, for all of the mornings, and evenings, and late night talks, and long read-aloud sessions of my chapter drafts: thank you is not enough, but it's what I have.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 “Modernist Pathology in <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i> ”	29
Chapter 2 “Feminist Dispersions in <i>Palimpsest</i> ”	69
Chapter 3 “Critical Madness in Williams and the Baroness.....	107
Chapter 4 “Dismantling Clinical Authority in <i>Paterson</i> ”	146
Conclusion	179
References.....	184
Abstract.....	194
Autobiographical Statement.....	196

INTRODUCTION

After the Clinic: Gendered Pathology in Modernist Literature demonstrates the ways in which formal innovations of modernism construct a relationship between sexual pathology and modernity. I read a selection of canonical and lesser known modernist works through their investments in overturning hierarchical relationships constructed through the clinical institution, focusing on their depiction of clinical types such as the traumatized male veteran, the hysterical woman, and the often-patriarchal figure of the doctor. Modernist prose and hybrid works by Alfred Döblin, William Carlos Williams, and H.D. depict sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of pathology as gendered products of clinical discourse and the chaotic reality of modern life. These prominent modernist authors draw on their experiences as doctors and patient, respectively, to take sexual pathology out of the limited field of clinical discourse and contextualize it within modern experience.¹ Lesser known or marginal artists Marcia Nardi and the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven confront the hypocrisy of clinical alienation from modern experience through their position as hystericized or “mad” women. Through their works, modernist artists both adopt and challenge the perspectives of Sigmund Freud as well as cultural sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, and Otto Weininger, among others. While Freudian psychoanalysis examines the psychological components of sexual development and its ties to cultural norms perpetuated through family structures, sexology focuses on sexual behaviors through biological development. Although these fields are distinct, they both rely on structures of scientific observation and the genre of the case

¹ My use of “clinical discourse” is in reference to Michel Foucault’s work on discursive constructions in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* in which he writes, “Clinical discourse was just as much a group of hypotheses about life and death, of ethical choices, of therapeutic decisions, of institutional regulations, of teaching models, as a group of descriptions,” and “that this description has constantly been displaced” (33). Rejecting the concept that clinical discourse is a unified set of statements or “corpus of knowledge,” Foucault reads the discipline of medicine as a decentered and ever-unfolding system of theories, observations, and practices.

study to make claims about larger trends in sexual behaviors and explore the parameters of normal and pathological.

Modernist novels such as *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Palimpsest*, and various prose and hybrid works by William Carlos Williams use montage, non-narrative forms, and experimental poetics to challenge how pathology is defined through cultural expectations of normative sexual behaviors and reproduced through medical discourse. They counter the methodology of the clinic, particularly the concentration of power and interpretation in the doctor, and reject the division between the normal and pathological as a framework for representing modern life. Rather than adopt psychoanalytic and sexological perspectives of pathological sexual behaviors, I argue, modernist texts show pathology to be dialectically constructed by medical discourse and the conditions of modernity in which medical discourse is produced. Furthermore, these works draw attention to how the cultural construction of pathology is a gendered one, in which expectations of normative yet divergent sexual functioning in men and women cast aspersions on those whose sexuality lies outside the confines of “normal.” The authors’ reorientation of pathology creates an ethical relationship between doctor and patient, creating space for madness to “speak” out of a clinical context.

My project takes two approaches to demonstrating the ways in which works by Döblin, Williams, and H.D. challenge clinical definitions of sexual pathology. My first two chapters examine opposing perspectives of clinical discourse, from Döblin’s experience as a practicing male physician and H.D.’s experience as a female patient. In Chapter 1, “Modernist Pathology in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*,” I argue that Franz Biberkopf’s pathology is not only shaped by the predatory conditions of modernity, but is simultaneously constructed by a sexological discourse that attempts (and fails) to serve a diagnostic function. In Chapter 2, “Feminist Dispersions in *Palimpsest*,” I read H.D.’s use of the mirror image along with her fractured, non-narrative style as strategies of destabilizing clinical perspectives of female narcissism and maternal identification. In each novel, the authors draw from their experiences in clinical settings and their knowledge of pathological conditions

to reframe sexual “dysfunctions” as products of modernity, including the modern institution of the clinic.

My last two chapters read Williams’s prose and hybrid works in conversation with the women artists the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Marcia Nardi in order to demonstrate how their so-called “pathological” behaviors are the driving force of Williams’s depiction of modern femininity and artistic production. In Chapter 3, “Critical Madness in Williams and the Baroness,” I demonstrate how the Baroness’s “madness” was ultimately highly influential in the production of Williams’s approach to modernist form, particularly his critique of the criminalization of female sexuality in *In the American Grain* and his depiction of feminine creativity in his hybrid work *Spring and All*. In Chapter 4, “Dismantling Clinical Authority in *Paterson*,” I argue that Williams’s inclusion of Marcia Nardi’s letters in *Paterson* functions as a challenge to the alienating and hierarchical structure of the clinic as well as gendered structures of knowledge. By putting Williams’s works in conversation with lesser-known female authors, I draw out the importance of female pathology in the formation of Williams’s modernist aesthetic at two different moments in his career. By offering a voice to madness through multivocal modernist forms, the authors in my study reframe clinical pathologies as integral to their depiction of modern masculinity and femininity.

Pathology, in the context of clinical discourse, is that which is contrasted to the normal. In a series of lectures on general pathology in London in 1852, practicing physician John Simon defines pathology as “The Science of Disease.”² Simon writes,

It [the study of Pathology] professes to interpret and systematize the phenomena furnished by the body in disease—phenomena, the primary recognition of which has arisen in the auxiliary and anterior labours of the morbid anatomist, the morbid chemist, and the clinical observer; it constitutes, in fact, the rational element (as distinguished from the mere exercise of eyesight, hearing, touch, &c.) in the science of medical observation. (11)

² *General Pathology, As Conducive To The Establishment of Rational Principles for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease* (1852).

This approach to the scientific study of diseases, arising out of observable phenomena in the physical sciences and medicine, was taken up by sexology in order to describe and categorize physical and psychological presentations of sexual pathology. Through the study of sexual behaviors and development, Krafft-Ebing, Ellis, and others worked to delineate normal and pathological presentations of sexuality. During the same period, Freud's psychoanalytic studies worked toward an understanding of sexual development through an examination of the psyche.

The results of their studies became inscribed in the cultural psyche of the early twentieth century and reflected in its artistic productions, most prominently through the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis on modernist and avant-garde movements such as surrealism. Concerns about pathological conditions and their effect on culture became particularly important after World War I, when men returned from the front afflicted with psychological and physical disturbances created by the trauma of trench warfare. Simultaneous to World War I was the rise of the New Woman and the movement for women's suffrage, which instigated questions about female sexuality and identity. At the beginning of the twentieth century these events contributed to a cultural upheaval in gender roles and prompted the rise of sexology and psychoanalysis, which explored non-normative sexuality while attempting to create regulatory categories of masculinity and femininity. Modernist art and texts reflect the tension between scientific advances in understanding human behavior and the social revolution that was challenging long-held assumptions about gender differences.

The field of sexology, inaugurated in the late nineteenth century with studies such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1886 and Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, beginning with *Sexual Inversion* in 1897, was established in order to take a scientific view of sexual behaviors. In *Sexuality* (2011), Joseph Bristow writes, "Sexology initially

designated a science that developed an elaborate descriptive system to classify a striking range of sexual types of person (bisexual, heterosexual, homosexual and their variants) and forms of sexual desire (fetishism, masochism, sadism, among them)” (13). While Krafft-Ebing and Ellis worked to categorize and examine sexuality in all of its diverse manifestations using scientific methods of observation, categorization, and interpretation, many influential sexological texts also reveal and reproduce how cultural assumptions about normative sexual behaviors were drawn along gender lines.

Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* uses the scientific genre of the case study to represent a broad spectrum of sexual pathologies. In his introduction Krafft-Ebing argues, “Sexual feeling is really the root of all ethics,” emphasizing the significance of his study for medicine and humanism (2). However, this sexual feeling is immediately separated into appropriate behaviors of men and women. He writes, “Undoubtedly man has a much more intense sexual appetite than woman.... In accordance with the nature of this powerful impulse, he is aggressive and violent in his wooing” (13). Krafft-Ebing contrasts this view of masculinity as active, and even violent, to the perception of appropriate femininity as passive: “If she is normally developed mentally, and well bred, her sexual desire is small. If this were not so the whole world would become a brothel and marriage and a family impossible. It is certain that the man that avoids women and the woman that seeks men are abnormal” (13). Although *Psychopathia Sexualis* advanced cultural understandings of a wide variety of sexual types, its foundational principles reflect and reinforce cultural views of appropriate sexual behaviors based on gender. This vision of gender differences carries over in Otto Weininger’s popular sexology book *Sex and Character* (1903), in which his argument that femininity is passive and unproductive while masculinity is active and the root of “genius” drew on commonly held cultural assumptions about sexual difference. *Sex and Character*

is grounded in the philosophical beliefs of its author rather than clinical practice, contrasting with the more scientific approaches of Kraft-Ebbing and Ellis who endeavored to study sexual behaviors with medical data and the case study. Although it was an outlier in sexology in terms of its methodology, *Sex and Character* was nonetheless a widely circulated and popular text among modernist authors and scholars.³

In contrast to the more radically binary views of sexual behaviors, Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* (1897) examines "sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality toward persons of the same sex" in both men and women, delineating differences while hesitating to draw ultimate conclusions about their implications (1). This work, along with the other volumes of *Studies of the Psychology of Sex* published thereafter, became a touchstone for sexological study because of its comprehensive catalogue of case studies. His preceding study *Man and Woman: A Study of Secondary and Tertiary Sexual Characteristics* (1894) initiated his scientific examination of gendered notions of sexual behaviors. While he begins by noting the evolution of men and women's social relationships, he argues that "so long as women are unlike [men] in the primary sexual characteristics and in reproductive function they can never be absolutely alike even in the highest psychic processes" (17). However, he concludes, "By showing us that under varying conditions men and women are, within knowledge limits, indefinitely modifiable, a precise knowledge of the actual facts of the life of men and women forbids us to dogmatise rigidly concerning the respective spheres of men and women" (386). Ellis also argues against the idea that woman is underdeveloped man, writing that this "is only true in the same sense as it is to state that

³ According to John Edward Toews in "Refashioning the Masculine Subject in Early Modernism" (1996), those influenced by Weininger's text included "Austrian modernists Arnold Schoenberg, Adolf Loos, Karl Kraus, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Oskar Kokoschka, Sigmund Freud, Georg Trakl, Franz Kafka, Heimito Von Doderer, Hermann Broch, and Robert Musil, as well as modernists outside of Austria and Germany, like August Strindberg, D.H. Lawrence, and the Italian Futurists" (Abstract).

man is undeveloped woman” (390). Although Ellis’s later studies examine differing manifestations of abnormal sexual functions in man and woman, he hesitates to offer a conclusion about the superiority or inferiority between men and women. His work toward demystifying “sexual inversion” and reducing the absolute gender binaries that were popular in sexological study was influential in advancing modern conversations around sexual behaviors.

Sexology’s influence on modernist literature, particularly in relationship to homosexuality, has been examined in works by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Joseph Boone, and others.⁴ Recent contributions to the field include the collection *Modernist Sexualities* (2000), which addresses Havelock Ellis by way of his wife Edith Ellis’s social advocacy, as well as Paul Peppis’s *Sciences of Modernism: Ethnography, Sexology, and Psychology* (2014), which studies Ellis alongside a literary text. The modernist authors in my dissertation all engage with sexological discourse in diverse ways. Döblin’s novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* reproduces segments of sexological texts in the course of narrating the story of Franz Biberkopf, a practice that I argue is essential in shaping his representation of modernity. H.D.’s professional and personal relationship with sexologist Havelock Ellis was formative in the development of her modernist aesthetic, and her novel *Palimpsest* confronts the pathologization of female sexuality throughout. Finally, Williams’s ambivalent position in relation to Weininger’s ideas about women is reflected in his intellectual engagement with the Baroness and Nardi, as well as his focus on vitality and reproduction as the source of creativity in *Spring and All*, *In the American Grain*, and *Paterson*. For each author, sexology was influential to their depiction of clinical pathologies and their reframing of these dysfunctions in modernist forms.

⁴ Studies include Sedgwick’s *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) and Boone’s *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (1998).

The study of sexual development and their underlying assumptions about gender were complicated by Freud's studies, which were arguably more popularly influential than sexology in terms of affecting cultural debates at the turn of the twentieth century. One of Freud's most famous case studies, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905) is a central point of reference for feminist theorists in understanding Freud's position on female sexual development. Freud's theories of the psyche were not only influential on the formal innovations and major movements of modernism such as surrealism, but his fractured narrative presentation of the Dora case is considered a work of modernism in itself. Some of his later essays and lectures such as "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes" (1925), "Female Sexuality" (1931), and "Femininity" (1933) focus on divisions between the sexes and advance a theorization of female sexuality, creating a foundation for twentieth century debates about women's psychosexual development and behaviors. In *Freud on Women*, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl outlines the major critiques of Freud in feminist and psychoanalytic circles, identifying the perception that Freud "viewed femininity as a failed masculinity" as the core objection to his study of women (41). However, Freud's theorization of femininity and the Dora case brought to prominence the centrality of sexuality in the development of the psyche as well as how femininity was (mis)understood in a clinical context.

In addition to the practical application of Freud's theories in a clinical context, psychoanalysis has often been used in literary studies as a tool for analyzing characters and narrative forms. In *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (1994), Peter Brooks elucidates the usefulness of understanding literature and psychoanalysis in relationship to one another, arguing, "Psychoanalysis matters to us as literary critics because it stands as a constant reminder that the attention to form, properly conceived, is not a sterile formalism, but rather one more attempt to

draw the symbolic and fictional map of our place in existence” (44). Brooks’s arguments, coming from a literary critical perspective, show the ways in which psychoanalytic concepts are useful for understanding literary discourse, particularly the structural elements of literature that mimic the processes of human thought. This approach to reading literature is exemplified in Louis Sass’s *Madness and Modernism* (1992), in which Sass examines the affinities between the clinically-defined condition of schizophrenia and the features of modernist literature that reflect the schizophrenic’s fractured mind. Although reading psychoanalytic concepts through their expression in literature can be productive for drawing out some important thematic features of a text, my readings resist the diagnosis of characters, narrators, and authors in favor of analyzing modernist form through its use of clinical concepts and practices.

In *Psychoanalysis Outside the Clinic* (2010), Stephen Frosh uses a psychological and clinical perspective to understanding psychoanalysis in literary study, arguing, “Literature is opened up by psychoanalytic querying of the way linguistic and affective traces appear and repeat; and questions such as why narrative should be such a ‘draw’ are exposed to psychological as well as literary examination” (96). Frosh’s observation about how psychoanalytic theory can offer literary readings a more dynamic understanding of its formal structures and underlying psychological themes bears out in many forms of literary criticism and theory, particularly feminist theory.⁵ Frosh argues that psychoanalysis becomes even more culturally significant when understood as participating in modernist discourse: “Psychoanalysis itself is a cultural construction, a modernist project, and hence that whenever it seeks to establish its expertise, its

⁵ Seminal gender and sexuality theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Shoshana Felman, Teresa de Lauretis, and Kaja Silverman, to name just a small few, use psychoanalytic theory to interrogate literary tropes and structures. For a more comprehensive account of how feminism and psychoanalysis were mutually influential, see Mari Jo Buhle’s historical account in *Feminism and its Discontents: A Century of Struggle with Psychoanalysis* (1998).

master in other areas, it is exposed to a querying process in which its own conditions and assumptions are placed under scrutiny” (21). While psychoanalysis and modernism are often understood in conversation because of their structural similarities (such as Freud’s case study “Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria”) and its concern with understanding psychological phenomena, there are ways in which modernist literature offers a critique of psychoanalytic discourse’s authoritative construction of pathology.⁶

Rather than performing a psychoanalytic reading of characters’ symptoms in order to arrive at a “diagnostic” conclusion about their sexuality or thematic significance, I demonstrate how a selection of modernist works resist a psychoanalytic reading through the use of modernist forms. In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Döblin uses montage juxtaposition and a multivocal narrator to construct a disjointed “case study” of Biberkopf’s pathology while demonstrating the impossibility of comprehending his illness in psychoanalytic terms alone. In *Palimpsest*, H.D. uses repetition and textual mirroring or doubling to frame feminine subjectivity through dispersion rather than clinical analysis. In *Spring and All*, Williams channels the Baroness’s fragmented Dadaist style in order to reposition feminine pathology as a driving force of his modernist aesthetic. Finally, Williams’s juxtaposition of Nardi’s critical letters with his poetry in *Paterson* functions as a challenge to the hierarchical structure of doctor-patient relations. While Freudian concepts such as the unconscious, female sexual development, repression, and the death drive (to name a few) are integral to many of these works, I argue that the modernist authors in this study also confront the limitations of psychoanalytic theories and practices through experimental literary forms.

⁶ While Freudian psychoanalysis was (and remains) a significant movement for medical and literary study, its status in these respective fields is still debated. Stephen Frosh’s *For and Against Psychoanalysis* (2006) outlines numerous debates about psychoanalysis in the field of psychology as well as its application to social issues around gender, race, and sexual orientation. Specifically, Frosh points to the problematic structure of psychoanalytic study as based on the authority of the analyst, writing, “[there are some] feminists who see psychoanalysts as misogynistic and oppressive representatives of a patriarchal order committed to keeping women ‘in their place’” (200).

Although Döblin and Williams use their clinical experiences in their works, their perspectives do not reinforce the dichotomies between normal and pathological or doctor and patient. By using the modernist forms of montage and hybrid construction to highlight the relationship between pathological subjectivity and the modern world, works by Döblin and Williams challenge clinical structures on the level of discourse. On the other end of the spectrum, women writers such as H.D., the Baroness, and Nardi are often positioned as patients or “mad” women, but their works confront patriarchal or clinical definitions of normative sexual expression through experimental poetic forms such as repetition, juxtaposition, and non-linear narration. Through an examination of these authors’ discursive interventions in clinical discourses, I demonstrate that their works overturn the hierarchical structure of medical practice.

In order to highlight the relationship between clinical discourse and modern culture in modernist works from a discursive perspective, I borrow terminology and critiques from a wide range of works by Michel Foucault, beginning with his earliest study on medical discourse in *Mental Illness and Psychology* (1962), through his later work on discursive constructions in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).⁷ Although scholarship on Foucault has debated the continuity of his ideas through his oeuvre, I read a consistency concerning the construction of pathology or madness through discourse, particularly that of the medical institution.⁸ In *Mental Illness and*

⁷ It is particularly valuable to understand Foucault in the context of modernist literature because of his investment in not only the historical developments of modernity, but the ways in which literary works are to be understood discursively. In addition to his substantial work on Raymond Roussel and Antonin Artaud, many of his writings on madness and discourse are begun or concluded with thoughts on literary figures. For example, *Madness and Civilization* concludes with readings of works by the Marquis de Sade, and he begins *The Archaeology of Knowledge* with a discussion of the concept of the literary oeuvre and its relationship to a field of discourse. I would argue that many of Foucault’s ideas can be productively read in relationship to modernist literature in order to highlight their contributions to the discourse of modernity.

⁸ Lynne Huffer’s *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory* (2010) makes a related claim about the relationship between his earlier works, particularly *History of Madness* and *History of Sexuality*, although her perspective is that of a queer ethics. However, her analysis is similarly invested in the relationship between sexuality and madness.

Psychology, Foucault inaugurates his decades-long interrogation of pathology by arguing that the integration of mental pathology with organic pathology is problematic because medical comprehension of an individual's illness becomes alienated from its cultural causes. He argues,

The illness concerns the overall situation of the individual in the world; instead of being a physiological *or* psychological essence, the illness is a general reaction of the individual taken in his psychological *and* physiological totality. In all these recent forms of medical analysis, therefore, one can read a single meaning: the more one regards the unity of the human being as a whole, the more the reality of an illness as a specific unity disappears and the more the description of the individual reacting to his situation in a pathological way replaces the analysis of the natural forms of the illness. (9)

Following Foucault's insistence on understanding pathological conditions in relation to their social contexts, he argues that the alienation of the individual from the process by which his illness is understood can dictate and exacerbate the nature of the pathological condition. Foucault writes, "When man remains alienated from what takes place in his language, when he cannot recognize any human, living signification in the productions of his activity, when economic and social determinations place constraints upon him and he is unable to feel at home in this world, he lives in a culture that makes a pathological form like schizophrenia possible" (84). As with Freud, rather than framing psychological pathologies as arising purely from biological dysfunctions, Foucault argues that the interrelationship between social expectations of normative behaviors, social conditions of alienation in modernity, and the individual's reaction to these conditions all play a role in the formation of pathology. Countering the medical tendency to isolate the individual's symptoms from the totality of their psychological, biological, and cultural conditions, Foucault argues that pathology must be understood as a cultural production, both as a discourse *and* a set of symptoms.

His focus on the individual, or the patient, in *Mental Illness and Psychology* can be contrasted to his later works that focus on systemic evolutions in the treatment and

conceptualization of madness. However, Foucault also highlights the relationship between the treatment of the individual in clinical practices and the cultural attitudes that arise from this treatment. He asks, “How did our culture come to give mental illness the meaning of deviancy and to the patient a status that excludes him? And how, despite that fact, does our society express itself in those morbid forms in which it refuses to recognize itself?” (63). His claim is not only that the equation of mental illness and deviancy is problematic, but that the alienation of mental illness from its cultural causes allows society to perceive pathological conditions as something outside of modern experience rather than integral to it.

The relationship Foucault perceives between the discourse of pathology and culture, which is intimately related to how the individual is treated in clinical settings, is constructed in works by Döblin, Williams, and H.D. through their depiction of pathological subjects and the cultural discourses that shape their pathology. In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, for example, Franz Biberkopf’s violent sexual behavior is positively reinforced by the multivocal narrator whose authority is simultaneously established through sexological discourse and undermined by his taunting encouragement of Biberkopf’s actions. H.D. challenges the clinical concept of narcissism in *Palimpsest* through her depiction of the mirror as a tool of self-analysis rather than intrinsic illness, allowing the characters’ psyches to be revealed in their individual particularity. In *In the American Grain*, Williams critiques the cultural expectation of passive femininity by using the Baroness as exemplary of liberated female sexuality, which for Williams runs counter to the repressive sexuality of the Puritans that continues to damage women’s creativity in modern times. Rather than present pathology as a set of symptoms arising from the protagonists’ biological or psychological drives, these authors show how pathological behaviors are constituted by cultural expectations of normative sexuality which are partially shaped by clinical discourse.

Foucault's arguments through *The History of Madness* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), and his later writing in *The Order of Things* (1966) and *Archaeology of Knowledge* all contain a similar critique of the cultural construction of pathological behaviors from historical and philosophical perspectives. While he transitioned from a focus on the individual in *Mental Illness and Psychology* to a historical examination of how the concept and treatment of madness evolved through institutional structures in *The History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, his work in *Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things* shifted the conversation to a philosophical perspective on how structures of knowledge are produced through discursive formations. Throughout his oeuvre, Foucault develops a theory of how knowledge production is intimately tied to structures of power, whether through the medical institution or other social constructions. By examining Foucauldian concepts of discursive constructions in relationship to medical discourse in modernist literature, I demonstrate how experimental modernist forms reorganize the discursive construction of pathology in modernity.

Foucault's seminal work *The History of Madness* is one of the most comprehensive accounts of pathological production in his works because it draws together observations about how sexuality, madness, and discourse are all interrelated in their alienation through the clinical practice of confinement. He writes,

These experiences can be summed up by saying that they all touch either on sexuality and its relation with the organization of the bourgeois family, or on profanation in relation to the new conception of the sacred and of religious rituals, or on *libertinage*, i.e. the new relations that were beginning to emerge between free thinking and the system of the passions. Together with madness, these three domains of experience form a homogeneous world in the space of confinement where the meaning of mental alienation as we know it today was born. (82)

More than any other work by Foucault, *The History of Madness* demonstrates how cultural and economic forces shaped clinical definitions of pathology. Although his writings often elide

discussions of gender, *The History of Madness* offers a brief acknowledgement of how gender shapes perceptions of pathology: Foucault notes that “a large proportion [of the confined at Salpêtrière] were female paupers, vagabonds, and beggars,” including “‘decrepit’ women, sick women, ‘girlish old women,’ women simply labeled ‘mad’” (81). His observation of the way in which class, sexuality, and overall cultural expectations of normative behaviors (including gender to a minor degree) played a role in diagnosis and treatment of pathology can be read throughout his theoretical texts and lectures, but in *The History of Madness* he demonstrates how these elements are interrelated.⁹

In addition to Foucault’s overarching theories concerning mental illness and the institution of the clinic, it is important to account for the nuanced way that Foucault’s writing about the clinic addresses Freudian psychoanalysis specifically. In *Mental Illness and Psychology*, he writes extensively on psychoanalytic theory and the case study, detailing the way in which Freud’s theories open the possibility of a dialogue between reason and unreason. In later works such as *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault addresses Freud’s radical method, writing, “Freud went back to madness at the level of its *language*, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism.... He restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason” (198). Foucault argues that Freud’s method of understanding patients at the level of discourse opens up the field of medical discourse beyond its understanding of mental illness as an organic dysfunction.

⁹ While Foucault’s early work on mental illness and sexuality guides some of my readings, Foucault’s later texts such as *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Madness and Civilization* are similarly instructive because of their in-depth historical examination of clinical structures, as are his more philosophical writings on discursive constructions in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things*. For the purposes of my introduction, I will focus on those texts that accomplish the most in terms of positioning my argument in relation to Foucault.

At the same time, Foucault's critique of the clinical institution necessarily includes Freudian psychoanalysis because it perpetuates the structures of institutional power. Foucault writes at the end of *Madness and Civilization*,

He did deliver the patient from the existence of the asylum within which his 'liberators' had alienated him; [but] he did not deliver him from what was essential in this existence; he regrouped its powers, extended them to the maximum by uniting them in the doctor's hands; he created the psychoanalytical situation where, by an inspired short-circuit, alienation becomes disalienating because, in the doctor, it becomes a subject.... It is perhaps because it did not suppress this ultimate structure, and because it referred all the others to it, that psychoanalysis has not been able, will not be able, to hear the voices of unreason, nor to decipher in themselves the signs of the madman. (278)

Although Foucault notes that Freud brought madness out of silence and into discourse through the process of eliciting language from patients through psychoanalysis, he also argues that the structure of Freud's clinic reinforced the same institutional structures that alienates madness from culture, preventing any true understanding of unreason.

In *The History of Madness*, Foucault also notes the damaging implication of Freud's perspective on sexuality:

In the light of its own naivety, psychoanalysis understood that all forms of madness have roots in troubled sexuality; but to say that is to do little more than note that our culture, by a choice typical of its own form of classicism, placed sexuality on the dividing line of unreason. Since time immemorial, and probably in all cultures, sexuality has been governed by systems of constraint; but it is a comparatively recent particularity of our own culture to have divided it so rigorously into Reason and Unreason. As a consequence and degradation of that, it was not long before it was also classified into healthy or sick, normal or abnormal. (89).

Foucault's perspective of how sexuality became a dividing line of reason and unreason is a critique of sexological and psychoanalytic theories, because while those disciplines were attempting to demystify the physical and psychological development of human sexuality, they were also creating and perpetuating cultural assumptions about normal and pathological sexual function.

Foucault's ideas about sexuality become more fully developed in *The History of Sexuality*.¹⁰ Its most significant interventions include the ways in which the organizing structures of the heteronormative family create and reinforce social structures of power, and how the move to silence the discourse of sexuality became, paradoxically, the moment in which discourses of sexuality exploded (Bristow 157-8). As with his earlier texts, Foucault critiques the clinical perspective of understanding human behavior and contextualizes it within the larger cultural structures of power.

The works in my dissertation, following Foucault's critique of psychoanalysis, emphasize the relationship between gender, clinical pathology, and perceptions of sexuality. While my chapter on *Berlin Alexanderplatz* focuses on cultural expectations of masculine virility and the ways in which Biberkopf's pathological behaviors can be understood as developing directly from those expectations, my following chapters take up the problem of female sexuality and the pathologization of femininity. The term "female sexuality" is particularly problematic because of its vague, all-encompassing nature, which fails to account for the multiple sexualities women express. It is nonetheless important to attend to the ways in which psychoanalytic and sexological perceptions of female sexuality (as frigid, or hysterical, or narcissistic, or any number of diagnoses coming out of the clinical studies of Freud, Ellis, and others) are countered by woman characters and authors. H.D.'s Hipparchia and Raymonde in *Palimpsest* reclaim narcissism as an act of self-actualization rather than pathological condition, while the Baroness and Nardi are granted a critical voice in shaping Williams's modernist aesthetic despite their status as "mad." My readings push beyond Foucault's understated conclusions about the importance of gender in discussions of sexual

¹⁰ In *Sexuality*, Bristow writes, "If *The History of Sexuality* has been instrumental in shaping any field of inquiry, then its presence is assuredly most visible in queer theory, a field of study that has flourished since the early 1990s, and which takes Foucault's lead in resisting the naturalizing assumptions that undergird normative sexual behaviors (153).

pathology in order to demonstrate how modernist works use formal innovations to overturn clinical definitions of gendered pathologies.

In addition to his historical critique of the clinic, Foucault's work in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* enables a reading of the modernist texts in my dissertation at the level of discourse. Foucault builds on the principles of institutional power he established in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* to create a philosophical understanding of knowledge production in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault's exploration of the organization of knowledge is key to understanding the relationship between formal and thematic relationships in modernist texts and offers a connection between medical and literary discourses. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* offers a foundation for theorizing the functioning and importance of understanding language at the level of discourse. Following Foucault's theories of discursive formation, the works in my dissertation work to overturn conceptions of gendered pathology through their use of experimental modernist forms. Döblin's use of montage in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* integrates sexological texts and clinical perceptions of pathology into his depiction of modernity to show the ways in which those perceptions and conditions are shaped by modern life. In *Palimpsest*, H.D. challenges conceptions of female pathology through the use of repetition, juxtaposition, and non-narrative forms to offer an account of the protagonists' subjectivity from an internalized perspective. Finally, Williams uses the Baroness and Nardi's critique of his authority as a physician in order to situate their pathology as productive for a new modernist aesthetic.

My readings of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Palimpsest*, and the works by Williams strike a balance between clinical discourse and Foucauldian concepts in order to examine the relationship between formal innovations of modernism and the discursive construction of pathology through

the medical institution. Key to my argument, which is hinted at by Foucault but not taken to its logical conclusion, is how the structure of the clinic is implicitly a gendered one, in which the male doctor collects information about the female body or psyche, synthesizes that information through their professionalized perspectives, and creates an interpretive framework through that synthesis. Pathology, these texts demonstrate, cannot be comprehended through the observation, diagnosis, and cure of symptoms through clinical practices and the case study, but through the examination of the individual in their modern situation.

The scope of my study cultivates points of contact between diverse fields in modernist studies and further highlights the intersection between literary studies and the medical field. Through its focus on gendered constructions of pathology, it addresses issues of the “gender of modernity” and contributes to the process of recuperating women writers and artists begun by modernist studies in the 1970s and 80s. The structure of my dissertation, which juxtaposes male- and female-authored texts as well as demonstrates the interrelationship between them, provides an alternative view of understanding gendered authorship in the modernist context. I endeavor to show how psychoanalytic and sexological discourse was taken up differently across gender and national lines. Finally, each of my readings performs a critical intervention in the author studies of its subjects, demonstrating the critical importance of these works in the discourse of modernity.

Debates around the “gender of modernity,” arising out of the reorganization of the modernist canon to include women artists and authors, is most cogently addressed in Rita Felski’s *The Gender of Modernity* (1995). Felski seeks to define modernity in relationship to femininity, a perspective which had historically been elided in favor of the dominant discourse of the modern which took a masculine perspective as paradigmatic. In her first chapter she writes, “If women’s interests cannot be unproblematically aligned with dominant conceptions of the modern, neither

can they simply be placed outside of them” (16). Her foundational study focuses on cultural perspectives of modernity reflected in popular culture and works of the fin de siècle, creating a multidimensional account of women in modernity. My study of gendered pathology in modernist literature contributes to the discourse of gender and modernity through its focus on modernist practices by men and women authors whose experiences as doctors and patients informed their works’ critique of normative sexual behaviors and cultural expectations of gender norms.

My study also takes a balanced perspective of gender studies by accounting for feminist masculinity studies, a growing field of scholarly inquiry in modernist studies. Rachel Blau du Plessis’s *Purple Passages* (2012) investigates masculinity and male modernists’ relationship to patriarchal poetry as another particularly gendered perspective, not taking for granted the idea of a “neutral” masculinity. She writes, “The gynocritical imperative of studying only female writers from the perspective of gender reinforces the assumption that women are the sole repositories of gender materials and the only spokespersons for everyone’s gender problems” (15). By considering the ways in which masculinity should also be understood as a constructed gender with its own particular issues, du Plessis opens the field of modernist studies to consider how male modernists operated within patriarchal poetry. A critical approach to the construction of masculinity is important to understanding both Döblin’s critical intervention in clinical discourse in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as well as Williams’s position as “doctor” in relation to the Baroness and Nardi. Döblin’s Franz Biberkopf is depicted as a victim not only of the modern city after World War I, but the discourse of sexology which dictates that he occupies a social role of dominance and virility. Williams’s social position as middle-class doctor, while in contrast to the lower-class positionality of the Baroness and Nardi, is also important to understanding how his reframing of

these women's art can be read as a critique of masculine authority in a medical and authorial context.

In addition to its intervention in the field of gender and modernism studies, my project also contributes to the growing field of medical modernism. Mark Micale's collection *The Mind of Modernism* (2004) examines the parallel development of modernist aesthetics and medical discourse, and the ways in which modernist forms shaped clinical narratives. In his introduction, Micale writes,

Both psychological medicine and the literary-artistic avant-garde centered, but then destabilized, the self, and both fields were responsive to the subjectivity of individual consciousness and its relations to the external world. Both fields also demonstrated a greatly heightened interest in the psychology of sexuality, in all of its permutations, and a fascination with psychopathological states, including the 'dark' realms of unreason. Both areas of human effort were vitally connected with the nature and structure of the individual personality, and both pioneered new techniques of narration to capture the inner workings of the human mind and the moment-by-moment experience of individual consciousness. (2)

Essays in *The Mind of Modernism* focus on the discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis, taking a cultural historical approach to examining the relationship between clinical writing and the literary avant-garde. The collection endeavors to show how the scientific advancements in psychoanalysis and sexology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century shared a project with the modernists through taking an interdisciplinary approach to reading modernist and medical texts.

Modernist Sexualities, another significant collection of essays edited by Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howelett, seeks to reorganize understandings of modernity through so-called "marginal" subjects, particularly queer texts and figures as well as feminist perspectives. In doing so, the essays included represent a more diverse understanding of modernism: the editors write, "That body of writing we call 'modernism' interrogates the notion of fixed gendered and sexual identities, and explores ethical and political questions related to the explosion of discourses of sex from the late nineteenth century onward" (9). In *Sciences of Modernism*, Paul Peppis also reads

the parallel developments of clinical fields and modernist literature, pairing scientific texts with literary ones to illuminate how concepts from modernism and medical fields were mutually influential. He writes,

Sciences of Modernism demonstrate(s) that early modernist texts, in literature and science, pursue related linguistic and rhetorical projects, often drawing on the same literary techniques, lexicons, and conceptions in their efforts to understand and represent modernity through language. Together, the following chapters articulate neglected ways in which modernist 'experiments' with literary form derive from and modify particular scientific efforts to define and justify modern sciences through writing adopt and adapt particular literary techniques, tropes, and genres. (11)

While the recent interventions in the increasingly interdisciplinary fields of modernism and medicine have established a narrative of modernism as influenced by and influential to the scientific fields of psychoanalysis and sexology, my readings focus on the duality of modernist authors as participants in medical discourse as practitioners and patients moves beyond the acknowledgment of these affinities. By reading modernist texts through their deployment of clinical discourses, my project demonstrates how modernist literature can be understood as a critical intervention into the discourses of sexual pathology in the early twentieth century, rather than merely a reflection or adoption of these ideas.

More recent studies on modernism and medicine concentrate on specific medical phenomena which are understood to arise from the conditions of modernity and often manifest along gendered lines. David Trotter's *Paranoid Modernism* (2001) examines paranoia within the professional classes as a particularly hypermasculine phenomena, while Allison Pease's *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom* (2012) investigates boredom as a state understood as pathological and often diagnosed as hysteria, arguing that "literary representations of boredom demonstrate the tremendous difficulty women experienced in realizing and pursuing their dreams, and thus in realizing themselves as anything other than bored" (x). While not invested

in a gendered view of modernist pathology, Sanja Bahun's *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (2013) examines modernist literature through the pathology of melancholia, attending to its representation in modernist aesthetics and philosophies. My project develops along parallel lines in order to examine how the respective authors' understanding of the clinical institution, as practitioners on the part of Döblin and Williams and as patients on the part of H.D., Marcia Nardi, and the Baroness, becomes intimately tied to their framing of sexual pathology.

In addition to my study's contributions to the field of modernist studies, each chapter represents an intervention in the studies of their respective authors. Because of Döblin's involvement in medical institutions of Berlin before World War II, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is often read in a medical context, particularly for Döblin's philosophical position on the relationship between writing and medical practice. Many essays in *A Companion to the Works of Alfred Döblin* (2004) also address the gender issues that arise in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, arguing that Döblin's medical perspective offers a multidimensional depiction of female characters. The collection *Alfred Döblin: Paradigms of Modernism* (2009) contains theoretically grounded readings of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, drawing on Foucault to highlight how the structure of the novel constructs a complex modernism. Finally, Veronika Fuechtner's *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic* (2011) analyzes *Berlin Alexanderplatz* in the historical context of the Weimar Republic in order to demonstrate the influence of psychoanalytic and sexological discourses on the literature produced through that period. While criticism abounds on Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, it often neglects to attend to the interactions between its main character, the narration, and the instances of sexological discourse scattered throughout.

My chapter on *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, "Modernist Pathology in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*," demonstrates how the juxtaposition of sexological language to Biberkopf's experience after his

imprisonment demonstrates the mismatch between sexological prescriptions of normative masculinity and the traumatized masculine psyche after World War I. Reading Biberkopf's situation in Weimar culture in relationship to Klaus Theweleit's study on Weimar masculinity in *Male Fantasies* (1987) as well as to the narrator's encouragement of "normative" virile masculinity, I show how Biberkopf's failed sexual exploits at the beginning of the novel and his violent sexual encounters with his ex-girlfriend, her sister, and others do not reinforce an image of Biberkopf as a pathological sexual deviant. Rather, the work suggests through its use of a montage technique which seamlessly shifts between Biberkopf's manic thoughts, a sexology expert, and a predatory narrator who encourages Biberkopf's criminal proclivities—that his behavior is consistent with and encouraged by cultural expectations of borderline violent masculinity. The novel also shifts its focus on femininity from an object of medical interest (as in the case of Biberkopf's first victim Ida, whose body is presented as evidence of his crime) to a subject position, encouraging the reader to inhabit the position of Biberkopf's victims and understand their internal experiences. Through its engagement with a Foucauldian critique of the clinic, my chapter demonstrates how Döblin's depiction of Biberkopf and various female characters shifts sexological and psychoanalytic concepts of pathology from marginal to exemplary experiences of modernity.

My second chapter, "Feminist Dispersions in *Palimpsest*," argues that H.D.'s novel uses a fractured, non-narrative style to resist a clinical approach to developing its protagonists. My readings expand on foundational H.D. criticism—such as Rachael Blau du Plessis's *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle* (1986) and Dianne Chisholm's *H.D.'s Freudian Poetics* (1992)—which often reads her personal trauma and life events through plots and characters in her poetry and prose works. As a woman modernist who was unearthed in the surge of second-wave feminism and

resituated as a significant contributor to the modernist movement, H.D. has been the focus of studies such as Susan Stanford Friedman's *Penelope's Web* (1990) which examine how her relationships and the stillbirth of her child are depicted in *Palimpsest* and other works. However, reading H.D.'s *Palimpsest* as a psychoanalytic reflection of events in her life creates a limited account of her engagement with clinical concepts of femininity in the larger context of modernity.

The intention of my chapter on *Palimpsest* is to move away from a reading of her work that draws parallels between her biography and the novel's contents, although I do establish how her experiences as a patient of psychoanalysis and her relationship with Havelock Ellis contributed to the creation of her main characters. Rather than reading H.D.'s approach to psychoanalysis as an uncritical adoption of its perspectives, my readings consider how *Palimpsest* critically engages with clinical conceptualizations of feminine pathology and sexuality. I read H.D.'s use of the mirror image in conjunction with her fractured modernist style as a move to destabilize psychoanalytic and sexological perspectives of female narcissism and maternal identification. The novel uses the structure of the palimpsest to examine traumatic moments in antiquity and modernity simultaneously, while using the mirror to refract the female protagonists' sense of identity and temporality to create a multidimensional sense of narrative.

My readings of *Palimpsest* focus on specific themes that appear throughout the opening two sections, in particular the mirror image as a symbol of pathological narcissism in sexology and psychoanalysis which is transformed into a medium of fracturing and self-confrontation in the novel, as well as the ambivalent status of motherhood for the protagonists. The impact of war also features significantly in the development of the two protagonists: Hipparchia, a woman positioned between the destruction of ancient Greece and the rise of Rome, and a contemporary character named Raymonde living in post-World War I London. The destructive nature of warfare is

reflected in their shattered psyches and sense of instability as they navigate their personal traumas, depicting their pathological conditions as produced through the tumultuous state of their modern worlds. While repetition, fragmentation, and narrative incoherence are features of many modernist prose works, H.D. connects these stylistic innovations to clinical concepts and practices in order to dismantle sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of feminine pathology.

My final chapters focusing on William Carlos Williams and his relationships with two “marginal” female modernists serve a dual purpose: they represent an intervention in Williams studies that often neglect how his medical perspective can be read through his non-explicitly medical prose works, and they highlight the importance of Marcia Nardi and the Baroness in the development of Williams’s modernist aesthetic at two different points in his career. Two major studies of Williams’s modernism and medical discourse, T. Hugh Crawford’s *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams* (1993) and Austin Brian Bremen’s *William Carlos Williams and the Diagnostics of Culture* (1993), examine the influence of Williams’s clinical perspective on his poetics. However, these studies are often limited by their traditionalist readings of William’s works, which fail to account for the multiple and often radical influences that shaped his poetics throughout his career. Although many studies of Williams and medicine are focused on his short stories about his medical practice, the influence of his clinical practice on his major works *Spring and All* and *Paterson* has been unexplored.

My study challenges previous scholarship that frames Williams’s relationship to women artists as ambivalent or hostile by reading *Spring and All*, *In the American Grain*, and *Palimpsest* through the influence of the Baroness and Nardi. My chapters focus on how their status as pathological (in the case of the Baroness) or a patient (in the case of Nardi) is countered by how Williams deploys their aesthetic in his works. Rather than reading Williams’s relationships to the

Baroness and Nardi through a binary lens of major/minor authorship, I demonstrate how these relationships became productive because of their “disruptive” influence on his modernist aesthetic. This influence is intimately tied to the women artists’ perceived statuses as “mad,” which adds a clinical element to Williams’s relationship with them.

In my third chapter, “Critical Madness in Williams and the Baroness,” I read both of their works in conversation to show how they represent an intervention into modernist aesthetics, sexuality, and madness. After establishing the status of the Baroness’s “madness” as read through her contemporaries, modernist critiques, and her own self-fashioning, as well as contextualizing her behaviors in relation to Freud’s theory of sexuality, I demonstrate how her apocalyptic critique of Williams (particularly his social status as bourgeois doctor) in “Thee I Call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring:’ A Critique of *Kora in Hell* and Why...” (1921) materializes as a force of a radical change in Williams’s modernist aesthetic in his prose hybrid work *Spring and All*. The Baroness’s appearance as exemplary of bold female sexuality in his subsequent prose work *In the American Grain*, and Williams’s verbalization of her influence on his work in “The Baroness Elsa Freytag von Loringhoven,” are more concrete examples of the way Williams regarded the Baroness’s pathological modernism as productive in the creation of his modernist aesthetic.

My fourth chapter, “Dismantling Clinical Authority in *Paterson*,” argues that Williams’s use of Marcia Nardi’s letters in his works is a critique of gendered structures of knowledge and poetic authority. Although feminist scholarship on Williams often argues that his use of Nardi’s letters in *Paterson* (in most instances without her express approval) reflects an exertion of his power over her, my readings demonstrate how Nardi’s letters act as a powerful force of disruption and instigation for the evolution of poetry in the text. I read how Nardi’s critique of Williams in *Paterson* is implicitly shaped by their initial relationship as doctor and patient, a dynamic which

was established in their first meeting and sustained through their correspondence in the early 1940s and resuming in the late 40s and early 50s. By reading their letters and the interaction of Williams's poetry and Nardi's prose in *Paterson* through Foucault's theory of the archive in *The Order of Things*, I show that Williams constructs a dialectical tension between masculinity and femininity, as well as doctor and patient, through the hybrid form of *Paterson*.

By reading the intervention of modernist texts in clinical discourse through the lens of gendered conceptions of pathology, my project contributes to multiple fields of literary study. When considered together, texts by Döblin, H.D., and Williams create an account of modernity which not only integrates but challenges medical knowledge and modern attitudes toward sexuality. Additionally, the contributions of lesser known women authors and artists the Baroness and Nardi are important to understanding Williams's work as critical of the patriarchal structure of the clinic. Studies of gender and modernity are often limited by their scope: many choose to focus solely on male or female-authored, and often canonical, texts in order to make larger claims about modernist authorship and cultural responses to gender roles. The texts in my study, authored by experienced physicians and women authors situated as patients on the periphery of so-called "normal" behaviors, are critical for understanding how modernist literature influenced the conversations around sexual pathologies in modernity.

CHAPTER 1: MODERNIST PATHOLOGY IN *BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ*

Alfred Döblin's modernist novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* inaugurates this study of gendered pathology in modernist literature because of its critical deployment of clinical discourses within a narrative of masculine trauma and pathology. While the novel uses montage construction to juxtapose several themes such as the modern city, capitalism, gender violence, sexual impulses, imprisonment, and the trauma of war, to name a few, its depiction of modernity coalesces around the character Franz Biberkopf and his violent trajectory through the seedy underbelly of post-World War I Berlin. Through its depiction of Biberkopf and the female characters who are cast as prostitutes or victims of Biberkopf's sexual violence, the novel demonstrates how pathological behaviors were defined by cultural expectations of virile masculinity and passive femininity in the early twentieth century. While Biberkopf is depicted as a repulsive character, an ex-prisoner who has done time for raping and murdering his ex-girlfriend, he is also shown to be a product of his chaotic and ultimately predatory environment. By simultaneously positioning Biberkopf as a criminal outsider yet relatable subject, Döblin demonstrates how pathological behaviors are produced through social norms and enforced through clinical discourses.

In the novel, Biberkopf becomes a victim not only of his social circumstances and fellow criminals, but the narrator who insinuates himself into Biberkopf's shattered psyche and coaxes Biberkopf into his self-destructive states. By taking on multiple voices and perspectives throughout the novel, the narrator becomes a mouthpiece for the various messages and pressures of modernity. Most significantly, the narrator is positioned as both doctor and co-conspirator in Biberkopf's crimes, dissolving the hierarchical and alienated construction of doctor and patient established

through clinical practice.¹¹ Biberkopf's pathological behaviors are reflected in the narrative voice, implicating the medical institution as another dysfunction of modern life. The narrator also adopts the perspective of female characters, drawing them out of their status as objects of the clinical eye and into the discursive frame that includes Biberkopf's pathology and clinical texts. Biberkopf's characterization as a rapist, murderer, and thief is in tension with the way in which he is situated as an exemplar of the modern psyche in its relation to capitalism and the medical institution.

This negotiation of clinical and modernist discourses through narration reflects what Döblin termed in a short story "Two Souls in One Body," where the role of the doctor and the author meet. In "Artz und Dichter: Döblin's Medical, Psychiatric, and Psychoanalytical Work" (2004), Veronika Fuechtner shows how Döblin imagined his dual background as doctor to underserved populations as well as modernist writer to be related.¹² In his story, Döblin "describes two different modes of processing and representing reality, both of which are intrinsic to his writing: self-effacing analysis, psychological intuition, and shorthand description on the one hand and lively fantasy, quick-witted irony, and an abundance of metaphors on the other" (Dollinger 111). This dual perspective is most evident in the multi-vocal narrator, who works within multiple discourses throughout the text to construct Biberkopf's environment and describe or diagnose his pathology. However, while Döblin saw the role of physician and author as connected and symbiotic, the multiple discourses of the narrator suggest a conflict between the social and clinical discourses that surround Biberkopf.

¹¹ Döblin's clinical experiences as a psychiatrist, doctor of internal medicine, and eventual psychoanalyst for working class people at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute are reflected in his use of clinical discourses and depictions of pathological conditions, particularly war neuroses, in the novel (Fuechtner 111-140)

¹² Roland Dollinger, Wulf Koepke, and Heidi Thomann Tewarson, eds. *A Companion to the Work of Alfred Döblin*. Rochester: Camden House, 2004.

The regulatory categories of masculinity and femininity and the definitions of normative and deviant sexual behaviors were given scientific parameters in the late nineteenth century through sexological texts authored by Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Otto Weininger, and others, as well as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic work. According to Henri Ellenberger's *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1981), the publication of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1899) opened the field of sexual pathology, paving the way for the later interventions of Freud and Weininger (Ellenberger 756).¹³ In order to construct a framework for understanding gender and sexuality, sexologists and psychoanalysts used case studies in their clinical practice. While Krafft-Ebing's work relies heavily on the case study to define the spectrum of pathological sexuality and its many "deviant" forms, Freud works to define the psychological drives and biological developments that guide sexual urges, using case studies to create a narrative for understanding sexual behaviors and guidelines for treatment. Weininger's text, in contrast to both, uses an abstract, philosophical approach to draw distinctions between Man and Woman, or M and W, in order to assert a gendered typology. Elements of these gendered categorizations are scattered throughout *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as a collection of partial case studies, fragments of clinical rhetoric, and descriptions of pathological behaviors. By drawing directly from clinical discourses, Döblin demonstrates the ways in which modern definitions of normative behaviors are culturally constructed.

Closely following the rise of psychoanalytic and sexological discourses was World War I, which proved destructive to traditional conceptions of masculine identities as many men (including Biberkopf) returned from the war broken physically and psychologically. Döblin's career as a

¹³ The field of sexology as a methodological study of human sexuality was established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through texts by Krafft-Ebing (1899), Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles* (1906), and Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1906), among others.

physician in the impoverished sections of Berlin allowed him to see the confluence of new institutional philosophies and ideas clash with the modern reality of large-scale warfare. In *Berlin Psychoanalytic* (2011), Fuechtner details the importance of psychoanalytic discourse to Döblin's clinical practice, writing, "Clearly, Döblin engaged deeply with psychoanalysis in his medical practice. However, he was also interested in psychoanalysis as a theory with ramifications not only for his medical profession but also for his general understanding of the relationship between the individual and society, as well as for his artistic goals and means of expression" (26). Döblin uses both the clinical and philosophical impact of psychoanalytic discourse in his text, through the explanation of Biberkopf's psychological state and attendant symptoms as well as the exploration of the brutal cultural, social, and economic environment of the Alexanderplatz.

Döblin's use of clinical discourse to disclose Biberkopf's pathology in the form of a case study is demonstrated in early moments of the novel, as Biberkopf attempts to reclaim his masculinity through sexual aggression. After his second failed sexual encounter with a prostitute, the narrator provides a medical explanation for "a patient's" failure to perform, in the form of a drug summary for a sexual potency drug:

Testifortan, authorized patent No. 365695, sexual therapeutic agent approved by Sanitary Councillor Dr Magnus Hirschfeld and Dr Bernard Schapiro, Institute of Sexual Science, Berlin. The main causes of impotence are: (a) insufficient charging through functional disorder of the internal secretory glands, (b) too strong resistance through extreme psychic inhibitions, exhaustion of the erectile centre. At what moment the impotent patient will be able to resume his functions can be determined only through the progress of each individual case. A period of abstention is often effective. (Döblin 34)

This abrupt shift to medical language draws the reader out of Biberkopf's story and resituates the narrator as a provider of medical information. The placement of this sexological excerpt among a series of failed sexual encounters invites the reader to use this case study to draw conclusions about Biberkopf's cause of impotence. The utility of this medical information is ironically undermined

by the last sentence which suggests “a period of abstention” from sexual activity, which Biberkopf had recently received in Tegel prison. Rather than provide an explanation of his psychological and physical ailments, sexological discourse is presented as an imprecise account of modern experience as read through Biberkopf. Through its sparing use of sexological excerpts, the novel rejects the case study’s narrow focus, instead offering various discourses to partially constitute Biberkopf’s pathology.

In contrast to its fragmented account of Biberkopf as the object of a case study, the novel uses the language and scenes of clinical practice to describe nameless women who are seemingly unconnected to the main plot. In book 7, the narrator offers several case studies of women’s physical and psychological illnesses. An unnamed “girl” of 26 is "out of work" and writes in her diary on July 10th, "When my periods come, I am equal for nothing": she writes that her periods make her so depressed that she had tried to kill herself: "At that time I had had no sexual intercourse, and so I put my hopes in that, but, alas, in vain. I have only had very moderate intercourse, and of late I haven't wanted to think about it, because I feel so weak physically too" (Döblin 324). The confessional mode of the diary entry as well as the specific description of symptoms aligns with the genre of the case study, as if the girl was presenting this biographical information to a doctor in a clinical context. Unlike the “case study” of Biberkopf, which is assembled through often manic internal narration, fragments of medical texts, and the unreliable external narrator, this short diary entry offers insight into the intimate psychosexual experiences of a woman. The female case study presents sexual pathology as a synecdoche of feminine experience rather than an unusual condition. Its inclusion in Biberkopf’s story invites connections between the suffering of the young girl and Biberkopf’s sexual dysfunction, creating sympathy for his character. It reveals that his violent feelings are not simply the condition of a criminal, but the

crippling conditions of modern life. By drawing these parallels, Döblin connects Biberkopf's narrative to the case study while framing a range of sexual pathologies.

Case studies are used in medical texts to draw larger conclusions about psychology, sexology, and the norms of society through anonymous subjects. This can be seen in Krafft-Ebing's text as well as in a few of Freud studies, which use particular cases (such as the Dora case) to act as tools for understanding sexual dysfunctions. *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is different because it contextualizes these observations about the psyche into the social actions that occur as a result of these psychological conditions, including the integration of psychoanalytic and sexological terms and approaches into popular culture. The narration, in indirect free style, jumps in and out of Biberkopf's psyche as well as other characters' minds, simultaneously describing and controlling Biberkopf's destiny. In *Marxism and Modernism* (1984), Eugene Lunn explains how the use of "limited and fallible" narrators help construct the modernist perspective of reality, which is "necessarily constructed from relative perspectives, while they seek to exploit the aesthetic and ethical richness of ambiguous images, sounds, and authorial points of view" (36). The narrator in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* creates this ambiguity through his multiple positions as doctor and co-conspirator, occasionally providing a clinical view of a pathological subject even as he constructs the environment for that pathology to thrive. Rather than positioning clinical discourse outside of the historical and cultural realities in which these psychological and physical conditions arise, Döblin highlights the importance of examining medical and social conditions together.

Berlin Alexanderplatz frames Freud's psychoanalytic theories of sexuality, the ego, and the death instinct as consequences of trauma and the modern city. Biberkopf is a stand-in for the modern masculine psyche, the traumatized war psyche, and the sociopath, all at once; through combining these cases, Döblin shows that these conditions are interrelated. The novel, in addition

to constructing a narrative montage of Biberkopf's life within the chaotic environment of the Alexanderplatz after World War I, highlights his psychological and physical states as he encounters an antagonistic world of prostitutes, violence, and fellow criminals. Biberkopf's tendency to psychically return, over and over, to the scene of Ida's death, his sexual dysfunction after his stay in Tegel, and his fragmented psyche all depend on psychodynamic concepts which were drawn from Freud's psychoanalytic studies.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud outlines the complex system of drives that includes both sexual instincts and the death drive as well as the "reality principle," and how these drives overlap and overcome one another in the psyche. The initial focus of his study is traumatic neuroses that were present in the European population after World War I—in other words, the world of Franz Biberkopf. A key discussion in this work is the repetition of events in the psyche of the traumatized; as Freud notes in his study concerning patients' repetition of actions and thoughts from their traumatic pasts, Biberkopf's reality is constantly interrupted by images of Ida's death and the red brick walls of Tegel prison. The loss of Biberkopf's arm later in the text becomes a physical repetition of his war wounds, which exacerbates his psychological breakdown.¹⁴ Additionally, Freud writes about the connection between trauma and the sex drive, writing, "On the one hand, the mechanical violence of the trauma would liberate a quantity of sexual excitation which, owing to the lack of preparation for anxiety, would have a traumatic effect; but, on the other hand, the simultaneous physical injury, by calling for a narcissistic hypercathexis of the injured organ, would bind the excess of excitation" (63). This dialectical relationship between violence inflicted on another person and the subsequent experience of sexual excitation and trauma is expressed through Biberkopf's relationship with Ida as well as his initial struggles to arrive at

¹⁴ For further analysis of the loss of Biberkopf's arm, see pg 63.

masculine equilibrium after his release from prison. While the novel continually returns to Biberkopf's stay in Tegel, his sexual violence toward Ida and his struggle for socially sanctioned masculinity becomes the focal point of the narration's development of his psychological trauma.

The first glimpse of the connection between Biberkopf's traumatized response to Tegel prison and his sexuality occurs at the beginning of the novel, in which his failed sexual encounters with prostitutes develops into an obsession with Ida's sister Minna. During one particular seduction by a prostitute, Biberkopf is sent back to Tegel in his mind. The narration becomes choppy: "Sweat on his brow. Again that fear. And suddenly his head slithers off. Boom, the bell rings, get up; five-thirty, six o'clock, cells opened...He groans, he lifts his head, he sees the girl, her chin, her neck. If I only knew how to get out of prison. They won't let me go. I'm not out yet" (33). The prison is the coitus interruptus of this scenario, and the trauma of sexuality recalls the trauma of institutionalization. Biberkopf is as trapped in the past as he is out of sorts in the present. This is a dissociation that both parallels the trauma of war and catches Biberkopf in the past, endlessly returning toward him. The trigger seems to be sex, but instead of being sent back to the scene of violence and rape that landed him in prison, it is prison itself that is evoked. In this case, it isn't a physical injury, but a psychological one which causes the binding of Biberkopf's sexual drive.

In addition to the repetition of his trauma at Tegel and before the war through sexual encounters, Biberkopf also recreates the rape and murder of Ida through his assault on her sister Minna. This time, instead of creating a break in his consciousness, Biberkopf seems to be "liberated" from his traumatic past altogether as he asserts his masculinity through inflicting violence. When Biberkopf is unable to ameliorate the psychic trauma of Ida's death through sexual encounters, he returns to Ida's sister Minna again and again, both physically and mentally, in an

attempt to make himself whole. In the section entitled “Victory all along the line! Franz Biberkopf buys a veal cutlet,” Franz is able to return to his former sexual potency through a sort of reenactment of the sexual assault of Ida. The title of the section suggests both a tie to a war zone, from which Biberkopf emerges triumphant (where “victory” and “the line” are both evoking scenes from a battle) and in which he purchases a “veal cutlet,” which could be read as both a sexual and economic transaction. While Biberkopf has been engaging in economic exchanges through the beginning of the novel, exchanging his money for women’s bodies and the assertion of his masculine virility, the return to his crime through Ida’s sister is actually a psychic economic exchange, in which the reenactment and revision of the assault can become for Biberkopf the moment of fulfillment and a “return” to his equilibrium.

He returns to the house where he lived with Ida, which happened to be her sister’s house. But, as he is on his way, time becomes dissociated. “Prison had never existed, nor the conversation with the Jews in the Dragonerstrasse. Where is the wench, it’s her fault. Seen nothing in the street but found my way. A little twitching of the face, a little twitching in the fingers, here we are, bumbledy, bumbledy, bumbledy, bee, tumbledy, rumbledy, tumbledy, bee, rumbledy, bumbledy” (35). While at first Biberkopf is satisfied that Ida has been put in her place, his brain suddenly skips and he is back in time where/when the “wench” needs to be punished. His thoughts offer a window to the symptoms of his trauma, followed by nonsense words as he attempts to confront Ida’s sister and perhaps fulfill Ida’s punishment over again. These fractured thoughts and skips through time demonstrate the extent to which Franz’s psyche has been pulled apart by his assault of Ida, and perhaps his inability to reconcile his own guilt for his actions.

When Franz sexually assaults Minna, the Freudian principle of the death drive becomes the most explicit: through the repetition of the assault on Ida, Franz seems to be restored to

coherence. “Now she knows; she is Ida’s sister, that’s the way he looked at Ida sometimes. He has Ida in his arms, it’s she, that’s why he has his eyes closed and looks happy now. And there is no longer the terrible fighting and quarrelling, nor any prison!” (Döblin 36). By assaulting Minna, Franz is transferred back to the time before prison, and achieves or enacts what Freud terms “homeostasis.” Through his “successful” assault of Minna, Franz finds himself sexually potent again, and is able to temporarily assert his identity as a liberated man.

Biberkopf’s sexual fulfillment through violence against Minna can be read through Freud’s later study *The Ego and the Id*, which breaks down the aggressive impulses he outlines in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and draws additional connections between love and aggression. Rather than being opposite or separate drives, Freud argues that psychological dysfunction can transform sexual impulses into violence. He writes,

In obsessional neurosis it has become possible, through a regression to the pregenital organization, for the love-impulses to transform themselves into impulses of aggression against the object. Here again the instinct of destruction has been set free and it seeks to destroy the object, or at least it appears to have that intention. These purposes have not been adopted by the ego and it struggles against them with reaction-formations and precautionary measures; they remain in the id. The super-ego, however, behaves as if the ego were responsible for them and shows at the same time by the seriousness with which it chastises these destructive intentions that they are no mere semblance evoked by regression but an actual substitution of hate for love. (*The Ego and the Id* 55)

This process by which hate becomes a consequence of sexual desire, or where both are potentially indistinguishable from one another through the compartmentalized psyche, is reflected in Biberkopf’s treatment of Ida and Minna. However, in the absence of a coherent super-ego on the part of Biberkopf or the narrator, as well as Reinhold’s attendant encouragement of Biberkopf’s dangerous sexual violence, Biberkopf’s “instinct of destruction” is only exacerbated rather than tempered. His sexual attack of Minna, and the “redemption” of his masculinity through this repeated act of aggression, would suggest that Biberkopf expresses an obsessional neurosis which

is encouraged by his social relationships. Through this depiction, Döblin offers Biberkopf as a Freudian subject as well as the product of a violent social pathology.

While Döblin draws from clinical concepts to construct Biberkopf's psyche and behaviors, he also critiques the alienation of the clinic from its social realities through a parody of psychoanalytic treatment in the last chapter of the novel, in which doctors at Buch Asylum announce their "cure" of Biberkopf. The doctors disagree briefly about the precise nature of the ailment, but are nonetheless self-congratulatory for cracking the case:

"But he's inhibited, sir, in our view it is a repression, conditioned by a psychic crisis, a loss of contact with reality, due to disappointment, failure, perhaps infantile and instinctive demands on reality and a fruitless attempt to re-establish contact." "Psychic crisis be damned! In that case he would have other psychic moments. He'd given up those repressions and inhibitions. He's handing them to you as a Christmas present. In a week he'll be up and about with your assistance, no doubt, you're really a master-healer, three cheers for the new therapy, you can send a telegram of congratulation to Freud in Vienna." (Döblin 450)

The doctors use the language of psychoanalysis, such as "repression," "psychic crisis," "infantile," and "instinctive" to connect their diagnosis to the established framework of understanding psychological dysfunctions. The reader, having borne witness to Biberkopf's psychic crisis through flashbacks of his violent actions against his ex-girlfriend Ida and his subsequent internment in Tegel Prison for that crime, might recognize these diagnoses as based on Biberkopf's history. However, this moment mocks the medical profession through its overly simplistic diagnosis of a character whose pathology has been demonstrated to the reader over hundreds of pages. The novel does not depict Biberkopf as simply repressed or responding to a singular psychic crisis, but as responding to oppressive and violent elements in his social, cultural, and economic experience that have culminated in a catatonic state. This mockery of the doctors is especially clear at the end of the paragraph, when one of the "doctors" (although we can suspect that the narrator has something to do with the sardonic tone) congratulates the other for "healing" Biberkopf, even

though the therapy consisted of force-feeding the almost comatose Biberkopf and attempting various superficial fixes for his physical state.

The doctors' treatment is described as a sort of torture and punishment for Biberkopf's psychological escape from the world and his physical refusal to sustain himself while imprisoned. Döblin writes, "And they don't want anybody to get away with it, it's against the rules of the house here for anybody to die, it's against the discipline of the institution" (Döblin 447). By sarcastically referencing "the discipline of the institution," the narrator critiques the alienation of Buch Asylum's institutional philosophies and practices from the realities of Biberkopf's condition. This critique is echoed by Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, in which he argues,

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorizing a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other, the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity. (Foucault x)

This problem with clinical discourse is seen at the conclusion of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, in which the definition and causes of madness are wrongfully contained within the doctors' discourse, as well as Biberkopf's struggle with realizing his identity within the confines of his society's expectations. However, the internal narration of Biberkopf and the use of modernist techniques of fracturing and collage demonstrate that madness can in fact be disclosed through the expression of the "madman's" consciousness, drawing madness away from the limited scope of the clinic and into the discourse of modernity. The use of modernist form in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* to reveal the social, economic, and psychological roots of Biberkopf's pathology deconstructs the authority of clinical discourses to show how medical definitions of the traumatized masculine psyche do not adequately account for external elements that shape pathological conditions.

In addition to the competing drives in Biberkopf's story, the multiplicity of discourses offers a way to see the narrative instability of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* as a critical approach to clinical discourse through modernist form. Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* details the evolution of the clinical structure, arguing that the codification of clinical practice within medical discourse, including diagnosis, symptoms, and treatment, created a distance and hierarchical power differential between the doctor and patient. Foucault writes, "In order to know the truth of the pathological fact, the doctor must abstract the patient.... Paradoxically, in relation to that which he is suffering from, the patient is only an external fact; the medical reading must take him into account only to place him in parentheses" (8). This treatment of the patient as an abstraction is exacerbated by the form of the case study that is used to formulate guidelines for pathologies that are observed in clinical practice. Foucault's work critiques the alienation of the individual from the pathological through clinical practice, and the montage narration of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* ameliorates the disconnect between the clinical and individual through its juxtaposition of social, internal, and clinical discourses to create Biberkopf as a comprehensive modern subject.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault especially emphasizes the discursive nature of the clinic structure and the evolution of that (often oppressive) power structure, contextualizing the medical institution as a series of shared practices, knowledge, and political structures. He writes,

The clinician's gaze and the philosopher's reflexion have similar powers, because they both presuppose a structure of identical objectivity, in which the totality of being is exhausted in manifestations that are its signifier/signified, in which the visible and the manifest come together in at least a virtual identity, in which the perceived and the perceptible may be wholly restored in a language whose rigorous form declares its origin. The doctor's discursive, reflective perception and the philosopher's discursive reflexion on perception come together in a figure of exact superposition, since *the world is for them the analogue of language.* (*The Birth of the Clinic* 96)

Foucault's observation of the dual roles of "clinician" and "philosopher" recalls Döblin's perspective of author and doctor in "Two Souls in One Body." In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the

narrator becomes a bastardized representative of this dual perspective. Although the narrator appears at times to be “clinician” and “philosopher,” it is intermixed with economic, social, and populist discourses that reflect not only dominant discourses but ones which emerge from Biberkopf’s milieu, widely distributing the scope of analysis beyond the clinical. By blending the discourses of Weimar Germany’s hostile social climate with the clinical, Döblin’s narrator reveals the conflicted, violent environment from which Biberkopf emerges and invites the reader to approach these dominant discourses skeptically.

In addition to its thematic development of psychoanalytic conditions, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* explicitly draws from sexology to construct and “diagnose” Biberkopf’s pathology. Although not directly quoted in the novel, Krafft-Ebing’s foundational study *Psychopathia Sexualis* uses clinical discourses and approaches, including the case study, to catalogue the various sexual fetishes and pathologies in order to illuminate the nature of pathological sexuality in his contemporary world. The book begins with a chapter entitled “Fragment of a Psychology of the Sexual Life,” which provides a basic structure of normative expressions of sexuality. In this section, Krafft-Ebing describes the normal functioning of men and women in “love” and establishes a hierarchy of normative heterosexual sexuality in which man is the pursuer and the woman the pursued. Of the healthy man he writes, “In accordance with the nature of this powerful impulse, he is aggressive and violent in his wooing” (Krafft-Ebing 13). Döblin draws from this generalized observation of normative masculinity to create Biberkopf, as Biberkopf exhibits this masculinity taken to extremes through the rape and murder of his ex-girlfriend Ida and his later abuse and rape of Minna. Biberkopf’s actions become a demonstration of how these culturally accepted structures of sexuality are symptoms of pathology on a cultural scale; in a sense, the normal *is* pathological. However, as the novel continues these conventions

of pathological masculinity are brought into question by Biberkopf's resistance to these structures through periodic passivity as well as the parodies of "masculine" aggression and sexuality that many women in the text perform.

Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* takes a similar view of masculine and feminine sexual hierarchies, although his work does not use the case study to advance his philosophical ideas. In addition to viewing masculine sexuality, or "M," as aggressive in contrast to feminine sexuality, or "W," Weininger's work emphasizes masculinity as indestructible. Of man, he writes, "Man, in all eternity, can never be completely dismantled even through the best kind of characterology, let alone through experiments. He contains a core of being which admits no dissection" (185). Although Weininger allows that M, or masculine sexuality, can contain elements of passivity and aggression, it is only the masculine that can be considered complete and fulfilled. This positivistic view of masculinity is shattered through the character of Franz Biberkopf, whose selfhood and masculinity are completely broken down through the prison system and war machine, and later the guilt of his crimes. Therefore, while the novel certainly exists in the same world as that which popularized *Sex and Character*, its challenge to the masculine ideals of domination and aggression rejects the positivistic view of masculinity as virile, dominant, and whole.

The narrator, as a representative of Biberkopf's social milieu as well as a sexology expert, upholds clinical perspectives of ideal masculinity through the encouragement of Biberkopf's violent tendencies. At times, the narrator assumes the clinical distance and expertise of a physician by providing the reader and often Biberkopf himself with clinical, medical knowledge of his psychological and physical symptoms. However, the next passage provides a narrator who encourages Biberkopf to assert his masculinity through sexual or violent means. The narration subtly slips from an outsider perspective to a characters' inner thoughts, threatening the structure

of narrator, character, and audience while at times becoming complicit in Biberkopf's crimes. The contrasting forces of chaotic war imagery and imposed order via clinical institutions situate Biberkopf in a proto-fascist society, one that is moving toward a repressive social and political atmosphere. Peter Jelavich's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (2006) situates the novel both historically and biographically to explore the multivocality of the narrative technique and how it allows a multiplicity of discourses to converge in the novel. Taking this analysis a step further, the narrator has the power to exert its authoritarian influence on Biberkopf, who is himself the product of institutional systems of discursive power through the prison system as well as the war machine. The narrator becomes a driver of Biberkopf's psychosexual violence as well as the medium through which the reader understands both Biberkopf's inner psyche and physical functions as well as the forces and establishments which influence the formation of his psyche. The instability of the narrator reorients the audience's relationship with Biberkopf while demonstrating the ways in which sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of masculinity are damaging to the male psyche.

Biberkopf's initiation into the modern world after Tegel prison at the beginning of the text juxtaposes sexological discourse with a narrator who reinforces ideals of masculine sexual virility. When Biberkopf is unable to sexually perform in his encounter with prostitutes, the narration fractures between Biberkopf's psychological perspective and a critical outsider. Döblin writes, "Let's get out of this. Air. Still raining. What's the matter? I'll have to get myself another gal. First let's get some sleep, Franz, what's the matter with you anyway?" (32). The narrator's voice emerges from within and seemingly outside of Biberkopf's consciousness, reflecting his disconnected thought processes and his internalized disappointment with his inability to perform. The narrator is "with" Biberkopf, by using "let's" repeatedly to refer to the action that Biberkopf

must take next. The narrator asks Biberkopf “What’s the matter?,” to which Biberkopf replies, “I’ll have to get myself another gal.” He has failed in his sexual encounter and must repeat the endeavor in order to regain his manhood. Although at this point the narrator has not explicitly appeared as “doctor,” we can read the narrator’s emotional manipulation as a projection of an outsider’s thoughts and emotions, representing the social and cultural forces that demand these actions as expressions of Biberkopf’s masculinity.

It is after Biberkopf quits the first prostitute that the doctor narrator, an apparent expert in sexuality, first appears to explain the physiology of sexual potency. This begins as a purely physical explanation, as the nervous system and secretory system are cited, and the neural pathways to the genitals are outlined. The explanation ends with this: “Not unimpeded, however, for, before leaving the brain, it has to pass the brakes of the inhibitions, those predominantly psychic inhibitions which play a large role in the form of moral scruples, lack of self-confidence, fear of humiliation, fear of infection and impregnation, anything of this order” (Döblin 32). This segment of sexological text appears amidst the narrator’s mocking questions and commentary, creating a montage effect that was key to modernist practice. The doctor narrator shifts the scientific focus from physiological to psychological, offering the reader an understanding of the psychological issues which could prevent Biberkopf from physically completing his encounter. By ending the paragraph in this way, Döblin is gesturing toward the possibility that Biberkopf’s dysfunction is both physical and psychological, additionally influenced by the social pressure to sexually perform. However, this discourse is separated from Biberkopf’s experience through the clinical, disconnected jargon of the sexological voice, reflecting the “doctor’s” alienation from the sexual experience. The reader is prompted to extrapolate the nature of Biberkopf’s sexual

dysfunction based on the fragment of sexological text that the narrator offers, leaving the “diagnosis” indeterminate.

After his encounter with the prostitute and the appearance of the doctor/narrator’s sexological discourse, the reckless narrator emerges again. Döblin writes, “Don’t be afraid, m’boy, don’t pretend you’re tired” (32). While the narrator still occupies a position of power and authority over Biberkopf, the tone has shifted from clinical physician or psychologist to patriarch or brotherly figure. In this shift, the narrator becomes a participant in Biberkopf’s sexual proclivities instead of an observer. This frequent transformation of the narrator from the voice of social or cultural norms to the sexologist or clinical doctor achieves two things; on the one hand, it undercuts the role of the narrator (and by extension, the doctor) as the arbiter of knowledge in terms of Biberkopf’s physical and psychological state. While clinical discourse is included in the narration to give an insight into Biberkopf, it is disconnected from Biberkopf because it does not perform a diagnostic function. On the other hand, it blends the discourses of the clinical and social discourses which shape Biberkopf’s actions, demonstrating the ways in which social discourses feed into clinical understandings of pathology and vice versa.

Biberkopf’s assault of Minna is framed as a positive affirmation of his masculinity by the narrator, who declares “Franz Biberkopf is back again! Franz is discharged!”, the narrator jubilantly celebrating the rape of Minna and the subsequent return of Biberkopf (37). However, the concluding paragraph of book one draws together Biberkopf’s identity with the traumatic scene that landed him in Tegel prison:

Thus Franz Biberkopf, the concrete-worker, and later furniture-mover, that rough, uncouth man of repulsive aspect, returned to Berlin and to the street, the man at whose head a pretty girl from a locksmith’s family had thrown herself, a girl whom he then made into a whore, and at last mortally injured in a scuffle. He has sworn to all the world and to himself to remain respectable. And as long as he had money, he remained respectable. Later, however,

his money gave out: and that was the moment he had been waiting for, to show everybody, once and for all, what a real man is like. (Döblin 42)

The narrator intercedes again, offering a “narrative” to Biberkopf’s physical reality while eliding the psychological repetition of his traumatic past through his encounters with the prostitutes as well as Minna’s rape. The first book of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* simultaneously indicates a positive change in Biberkopf while bringing back the conditions under which Biberkopf became despicable in the first place: the beating and murder of Ida. It also reaffirms the critique of masculinity that the novel follows throughout—once his money gave out, the narrator says that Biberkopf will show everyone “what a real man is like.” This “real man” refers to the violent, sexually abusive man that Biberkopf revealed himself to be through his repeated sexual assaults. Although sexological and psychoanalytic discourses identify dominant or aggressive sexuality as a normal expression of masculinity, Biberkopf’s criminality pushes his behavior to a violent extreme. Rather than create a further inhibition, however, Biberkopf is able to achieve equilibrium through pathological behaviors that are aligned with normative masculinity.

At the beginning of the novel, the narrator’s status frequently changes between an authority figure and sometimes-medical expert and a voice of Biberkopf’s social conscience. In both personas, the narrator represents both medical and social discourses which surround Biberkopf in post-World War I Germany, and it is these discourses (among many, many others in the text) that shape Biberkopf’s pathology. The narrator upholds the societal ideals of virile masculinity and sexuality through encouraging Biberkopf’s sexual proclivities, and supplements these encouragements with medical knowledge which offer diagnoses and possible curatives for Biberkopf’s physiological dysfunctions. In contrast to the methodical, clinical language of the sexological discourse, Biberkopf’s thoughts are fractured and repetitious, showing the ways that social and cultural pressures act upon the psyche. The unreliability of the narrator calls into

question the authority of the clinical discourses it represents, as it shifts seamlessly from medical knowledge to collusion with Biberkopf's sexual and often violent fantasies.

Döblin's montage approach to depicting Biberkopf's pathology parallels Foucault's critique of clinical structures which began with his early work *Mental Illness and Psychology* (1962).¹⁵ Foucault argues that the study of mental pathology must be divorced from the clinical methodologies of organic medicine and approached through the individual's situation within a social and historical context. Foucault writes,

The illness concerns the overall situation of the individual in the world; instead of being a physiological *or* psychological essence, the illness is a general reaction of the individual taken in his psychological *and* physiological totality. In all these recent forms of medical analysis, therefore, one can read a single meaning: the more one regards the unity of the human being as a whole, the more the reality of an illness as a specific unity disappears and the more the description of the individual reacting to his situation in a pathological way replaces the analysis of the natural forms of the illness. (9)

Foucault's approach to understanding mental illness does not entirely reject psychoanalytic approaches or advocate for a rejection of medical knowledge; rather, he emphasizes reading pathology as an interaction between the individual, society, and the clinic. Döblin's novel takes this multifaceted approach to the depiction of Biberkopf's pathology, contextualizing it in the environment of postwar, proto-fascist Germany to reveal its integral role in defining modern subjectivity, which includes personality traits and actions considered marginal or dysfunctional. Far from being a "case study" of an individual's biographical history, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is an exploration of the fractured totality of influence that was defining and shaping masculine experience in modernity.

¹⁵ Unlike his later works such as *Madness and Civilization* (1964) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) which focus on institutional medicine and discursive constructions, *Mental Illness and Psychology* focuses on the relationship of the individual to the pathological.

Although the subtitle of the text is *The Story of Franz Biberkopf*, it's clear through the use of several case studies, medical texts, and news reports in montage form that the story is not strictly about Franz Biberkopf. Therefore, psychology, sexology, and social conditions are wrapped up in one another and affect one another in a dialectical sense rather than being isolated incidents from which someone can draw a conclusion, as Foucault urged in *Mental Illness and Psychology*. Foucault argues, "When man remains alienated from what takes place in his language, when he cannot recognize any human, living signification in the productions of his activity, when economic and social determinations place constraints upon him and he is unable to feel at home in this world, he lives in a culture that makes a pathological form like schizophrenia possible" (84). Foucault highlights the role of the social and economic forces that give rise to pathology, and argues that while the individual is an important element to the study of pathological dysfunction, the complete story can only be understood through studying the relationship between the individual and his context. Therein lies Döblin's critique of the limitations of medical discourses, and why the narrator is such an ethereal presence: through the use of montage, Döblin strives to show the multifaceted and complex system of psyches and social conditions to illuminate the psychology of modernity, which can't in fact emerge from one person's perspective on case studies but must be contextualized and in dialogue with other parts of modern life.

While it would seem that Freud's and Foucault's approaches to studying pathology would be incommensurable, Theresa de Lauretis's *Freud's Drive* takes up Foucault's critique of Freud. Instead of placing them at opposite ends of the spectrum, in which Freud focuses on the internal drives and Foucault arguing for the power of discourses that dictate sexuality, de Lauretis argues that their approaches are in fact compatible. She acknowledges the different approaches that Foucault and Freud take to the study of sexuality, writing, "If Foucault is concerned with the social

conditions and mechanisms that, by bringing about the knowledge and practices that produce something called sexuality, implant it in the social subject, Freud is concerned with the psychic mechanisms that implant it by articulating the drives to the body through particular representations or fantasies” (45). However, she also argues that Foucault and Freud’s projects can inform one another, writing,

I want to argue that, even in [*The History of Sexuality*] Volume I, where Foucault speaks of sexuality as a nexus (‘a dense transfer point’) of power relations, his conception of sexuality is not antithetical to Freud’s or incommensurable with it, as he would have us believe. It is differently inflected, analysed in its discursive apparatuses, as a social technology, rather than in its subjective effects and psychic apparatus. For this reason I believe that, far from being mutually exclusive, Foucault’s and Freud’s theories are both necessary to articulate the psychosocial phenomenon of sexuality in its complexity; and I would go as far as to say that only together can they outline a materialist theory of the sexual subject. (*Freud’s Drive* 43)

De Lauretis argues that in order to achieve a complete understanding of sexuality, the psychological and social must be understood through their interrelationship. In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Döblin takes this multifaceted approach to the construction of the traumatized male criminal of Weimar Germany. By providing a window into Biberkopf’s psyche as well as the discourses of power which surround him, Döblin is able to express the totality of forces both interior and exterior which guide Biberkopf’s actions.

Additionally, de Lauretis’s writing about the drives can guide an understanding of Biberkopf and the multiple destructive drives which lead him not only to the destruction of female bodies, but to his own destruction as well. De Lauretis writes,

The hypothesis of a primal self-destructive drive that seeks satisfaction beyond the pleasure principle, in the total elimination of tension, reconfigures the dynamic landscape of the psyche in a manner coherent with, or faithful to, Freud’s earlier vision. While the work of binding, preserving and augmenting the cohesion of social as well as individual psychic life is assigned to the ego, with Eros or the life drives as its means of production, so to speak, to the death drive is ascribed a ‘radical tendency to unbind’, that is, the disruptive, disaggregating, undoing—shall we say, *uncivilizing*—force that Freud had first associated with the sexual drive. (78)

This is also evident in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, as these drives are caught up in one another in Biberkopf. While the sex drive appears initially to be the driver of Biberkopf's pathology, it is the death drive which seems to take the lead in Biberkopf's self-destructive (as well as generally destructive) tendencies, and this destruction is reflected in the chaotic narrative style which is "disruptive, disaggregating, undoing." The narrator and Biberkopf, then, reflect in each other the death drive and its effect on the individual and society.

The narrator's encouragement of Biberkopf's violent sexual drives place the traumatic feminine characters as a central symptom of Biberkopf's pathology, showing the ways in which sexual violence against women becomes destructive to the masculine psyche. In *Over Her Dead Body* (1992), Elisabeth Bronfen explains the use of the dead female body in works of art as destructive, writing, "Femininity and death cause a disorder to stability, mark moments of ambivalence, disruption or duplicity and their eradication produces a recuperation of order, a return to stability" (xii). The narrator draws Biberkopf's psyche back to Ida's broken corpse throughout the text, constantly disrupting Biberkopf's ability to achieve equilibrium and sanity. Biberkopf's psyche is able to briefly escape through the middle of the text, but Biberkopf is drawn back to Ida through his girlfriend Mieke's body. Mieke's body becomes both a metaphorical and literal object of destruction and repetition of the death drive as Biberkopf is imprisoned for her murder.

In *Berlin Psychoanalytic*, Fuechtner also draws connections between the violence involving women and psychoanalytic discourse in the novel, writing, "The structural violence in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is linked to masculinity. The women in Biberkopf's life—Ida, Minna, Cilly, and Mieke—are subjected to violence as both victims and accomplices.... The metaphors of victimization that Döblin himself sees as central to this novel are inextricably connected with the psychoanalytic discourse on war neurosis describing the pathology of a capitalist, postwar society"

(42). While my argument builds on Fuechtner's analysis of gendered violence, I see explicit connections between the violence perpetrated by Biberkopf and the cultural influence of clinical discourses and discourses of masculinity that surround Biberkopf and shape his behaviors. I argue that the gendered violence is not only expressed through the social relations of Biberkopf and the women, but are functions of the narrative structure that uses sexological discourse to reinforce these dynamics. The narrator's role is crucial in exacerbating the tension between Biberkopf's violence and the status of women as victims and accomplices, demonstrating the significance of cultural environments in shaping pathology.

De Lauretis's *Technologies of Gender* (1987) creates a bridge between Foucault's work on clinical discourse and sexuality and ways to think about gender as also shaped by social, cultural, and economic discourses. She writes, "A starting point may be to think of gender along the lines of Michel Foucault's theory of sexuality as a 'technology of sex' and to propose that gender, too, both as representation and as self-representation, is the product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalized discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life" (de Lauretis 2). Biberkopf's masculinity, and by extension his identity, as well as the femininity of the various women he encounters, are shown throughout the text to be "product(s) of various social technologies" including sexology, but many others that are represented through the multiple discourses surrounding the characters.

Biberkopf's experience of modernity is significantly shaped by the female characters who play a central role in the production of his trauma. These relations are presented not only as social or discursive, but symptomatic: the traumatic feminine, embodied by the fractured and bloodied corpse of his ex-girlfriend Ida and repeated in the conclusion of the text with the rape and murder of Mieke, reverberates through the entire narrative and haunts Biberkopf's psyche. In *Lustmord*:

Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany (1993), Maria Tatar critiques scholarship of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* that focus on the supposedly unified protagonist of Franz Biberkopf and the fragmented narrative style to the detriment of exploring the mutilated bodies of women that are scattered in the text. She argues that many critics, “rather than acknowledging anxiety and instability as markers of the protagonist’s inner life...are often so eager to see psychic integrity and social integration in the novel’s resolution.... He becomes a figure who has established a new, positive masculine identity in the wake of one assault after another on the female body” (136). Tatar’s book highlights the role of violence, often sexual, in forming the masculine identity and critiques the turning away of focus on the mutilated bodies of the female characters. However, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* repeatedly locates the female body as the important site of Biberkopf’s trauma and component of his “case history,” and the text’s resolution is not one of positive resolution but ambivalence. Rather than reading the novel’s resolution as a triumph of masculinity, I argue that Döblin advances a critique of social and cultural gender norms through the image of the female body as destructive to Biberkopf’s masculinity.

The initial depictions of femininity consist of the sexually aggressive prostitutes of Biberkopf’s release from prison and Biberkopf’s rape victims, showing a polarity between feminine dominance and submission in modern sexual relations. These differences become elided at the conclusion of the novel through the prostitute Mieze, who becomes a stable point in Biberkopf’s life only to be raped and murdered by Reinhold. Women are transformed through the course of the novel, from economic objects exchanged with Reinhold through which Biberkopf asserts his masculinity to narrators of their own experiences. Prostitutes are particularly important figures in Döblin’s account of modernity because of their indeterminate status in the social milieu. In *The Gender of Modernity* (1995), Rita Felski notes, “Positioned on the margins of respectable

society, yet graphically embodying its structuring logic of commodity aesthetics, the prostitute...fascinated nineteenth-century cultural critics preoccupied with the decadent and artificial nature of modern life” (20). The prostitutes of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* initiate Biberkopf’s reentry into the modern world, and become the guides through which Biberkopf can regain the masculine virility that is expected by sexological prescriptions of manhood.

At the same time, sexologists often perceive prostitution to be an outlet for pathological behaviors. For example, Krafft-Ebing’s sexological text *Psychopathia Sexualis* notes a turn to prostitution in case studies in which women and men display pathological behaviors. Krafft-Ebing writes, “In the hysterical the sexual sphere is often abnormally excited. This excitement may be intermittent (menstrual?). Shameless prostitution, even in married women, may result” (375). In Krafft-Ebing, prostitution is associated with excessive or dysfunctional sexuality. By contrast, the sexuality of the prostitutes in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is divorced from sensuality, and instead focuses on sex as an economic exchange. Their sexual expressions are highly performative rather than indicative of a deeper pathology which lead them to the life of a prostitute.

Biberkopf’s interaction with several prostitutes in the beginning of the text draws out both the clinical and social discourses that shape Biberkopf’s pathology, upending the power structures of dominant masculine sexuality and passive femininity defined through sexology. While Biberkopf’s first interaction with a prostitute is characterized by aggression, Döblin writing that “he pressed her, hugged her, he pinched her, rubbed his hands across her coat” and generally acts as a physical and sexual aggressor, she is the one who negotiates the terms of the sexual agreement (30). As Biberkopf attempts to have sex with her, the unnamed prostitute mentally runs through the course of her day, psychologically displaced from the sexual experience. This encounter is a business transaction for them both: the prostitute will fulfill her purpose while receiving money,

while Biberkopf will assert his masculinity through the act itself. The transactional nature of the sexual encounter, and the diverse motivations for the coupling, simultaneously uphold and challenge the gender definitions that comprise sexological perspectives; while Biberkopf is attempting to assert his masculinity through mild sexual aggression with a woman, this masculinity becomes “earned” or proven through an economic exchange. In this sense, the prostitute and Biberkopf become mere participants in modernity’s economy of desire.

During Biberkopf’s second sexual encounter, the prostitute says, “No, hands off, that spoils my business. My act—be nice now, darling—you see, I hold an auction in the place, no plate collection either; who ever gives me something, can kiss me” (Döblin 32). Sex becomes a much more explicit exchange in this episode, as the “cabaret singer” puts a price on her body and her presence, even saying that it is “my business.” This highlighting of the economy of the female body evokes Gayle Rubin’s argument in “The Traffic in Women” (1975) in which she proposes “an analysis of the evolution of sexual exchange along the lines of Marx’s discussion in *Capital* of the evolution of money and commodities. There is an economics and a politics to sex/gender systems which is obscured by the concept of ‘exchange of women’” (204-5). Through its depiction of prostitutes, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* highlights the extent to which not only women’s bodies were commodified in this society, but also the ways in which women were able to harness a modicum of autonomy. Döblin’s novel repositions gendered power structures through not only the instability of Biberkopf’s masculinity but the assertion of femininity as influential on the male experience and psyche.

Even though this becomes an economic exchange, femininity is granted value in a capitalist world and the woman gains control of the way in which her body is monetized. Although her body is still a commodity in the economy of modernity, the “cabaret singer” is much more physically

assertive toward Biberkopf than the previous woman. Döblin writes, “She puts on a man’s top hat, croaks into his face, shakes her hips, her arms akimbo” (33). Here, the woman is seducing Biberkopf through exaggerated displays of feminine flirtation while parodying masculinity. However, this performance is an exaggerated one, highlighting the artificiality of gendered constructions. Döblin writes, “While sitting on his lap, she pulls a cigarette out of his waistcoat, and sticks it into her mouth; she looks yearningly into his eyes, tenderly rubs her ear on his” (33). In this scene, she seems to be using a combination of masculinity and femininity to seduce Biberkopf, imitating fellatio with the cigarette while dominating him with her body. These bold displays of gender performance stand in contrast to Biberkopf’s failure to sexually perform, contributing yet another vision of Biberkopf’s damaged masculinity.

To the woman, he says that he is ““not a human being anymore”” because of his time in Tegel and on the front, to which she says, ““Well, but you’re not going to cry here. Come on, open your beakie, big man’s got to have a drink”” (33). Because of Biberkopf’s traumatized reaction to the seduction, the woman dictates for Biberkopf how he should cope and behave in order to regain his manliness. As the woman seeks Biberkopf’s manliness through sexual play, Biberkopf seems to be seeking his own sanity. This need to construct his masculinity through sexuality is a traumatic moment for Biberkopf, as he is asked to subsume his trauma under a parody of masculinity. It seems clear that Biberkopf is not invested in the mission of finding a prostitute and having sex—he appears outside of it, pressured by the expectations of heteronormative society and goaded on by the narrator. Through the encounters with the prostitutes, both women and the narrator represent the diverse pressures that were exerted upon traumatized masculinity, even as women such as Ida, Minna, and Mieze are victims of the same.

Biberkopf's status as traumatized is briefly subsumed under the clinical description of Ida's broken body. Throughout the text, the narration positions Biberkopf as a victim of sorts, although according to the narrator he is not haunted. "Is he hounded by things in his past, Ida and so on, by conscientious scruples, nightmares, restless sleep, tortures, Furies from the day of our great-grandmothers? Nothing doing" (97). This is a contrast to his traumatic return to Tegel prison during his sexual encounter—here, the narrator denies that Biberkopf is attacked by his conscience and implies that he has moved on from this trauma. However, the narrator's report on Biberkopf's fight with Ida, which takes on the language of a medical exam or coroner's report, is an indictment of Biberkopf's actions. Döblin writes,

Franz killed his fiancée, Ida, the family name does not matter, in the flower of her youth. This happened during an altercation between Franz and Ida, in the home of her sister Minna, where, first of all, the following organs of the woman were slightly damaged: the skin on the end of her nose and in the middle, the bone and the cartilage underneath, a fact, however, which was noticed only after her arrival at the hospital and later played a certain role in the court records, furthermore the right and left shoulder sustained slight bruises, with loss of blood. But then the discussion became lively. The expressions 'son of a bitch' and 'whore-chaser' were extremely upsetting to Franz Biberkopf who, albeit very dissipated and at that time excited for other reasons, was nevertheless very sensitive about his honour. (97-98)

The narrator juxtaposes medical and journalist-style discourses to describe Ida's death, transitioning into a lighter tone as he describes Biberkopf's emotional reaction to the courtroom laymen's accusations. A scientific description of how Biberkopf destroyed Ida's diaphragm with a cream-whipper follows, offering a formula of the domestic tool's force in its use as a destructive weapon. Döblin continues with medical language to describe Ida's state, writing that as she fell to the ground she suffered "respiratory impediment, violent pain, terror, and physiological disturbance of the equilibrium" (99). The conflict between the clinical terminology, Biberkopf's blasé attitude toward his violence, and the strangeness of the kitchen tool turned murder weapon highlights the perversity of Biberkopf's actions and Ida's physical and psychological torture at his

hands. The description of her death turns the reader's perception of Biberkopf as a victim on its head while insisting that Biberkopf *should* be haunted by his violence.

This excerpt breaks down Ida's body into a series of discrete parts, as an object of clinical observation, while also showing the extent to which this incident becomes something that shapes Biberkopf's consciousness. The destruction of Ida becomes a moment in which Biberkopf is also pulled apart psychologically, even as the narrator attempts to create a coherent narrative using scientific rationales for the descriptions that he provides. The reader has already seen the destruction of Biberkopf from this incident through the course of the novel thus far, as his fractured psyche struggles between the impotence of the present and the trauma of the past. It is only now, through the description of Ida's brutal murder, that the reader sees to what extent the narrator is attempting to put the pieces back together through providing a "report" which seems to offer a rational approach to this violent event. Instead of providing cohesion, however, it merely enhances the horror of Biberkopf's past and shows the extent to which this incident has dissolved him psychologically and in the eyes of society. This indictment of Biberkopf's sexual aggression undermines the triumphant recovery of his manhood and identity through his repeated attacks on Minna, demonstrating the extent to which social and medical expectations of masculine aggression are traumatic to the modern psyche.

According to Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (1987), the dissolution of masculinity through the feminine was a pervasive fear in Weimar culture. Theweleit uses autobiographical writings from Freikorps officers, many of them members of the upper middle class and high ranking members of the German army during World War I, along with psychoanalytic perspectives and historical contexts to develop an image and narrative of the traumatized man in Weimar Germany. He argues that sexuality for these men is subsumed under violence, and that these right-

wing men in the Weimar Republic were seeking to suppress their sexual urges and redistribute them toward violence because of their military training and revulsion of the feminine. The project seeks to link these attitudes toward femininity and violence to the rise of fascism in Germany, and is often framed as an overarching critique of modern masculinity. The juxtaposition of Biberkopf's violent comportment toward women with his experiences in war aligns with the connection between masculinity and violence that Theweleit develops in his study. While Biberkopf initially seeks out a way to assert his masculinity through sexual expression, his equilibrium is only achieved after inflicting violence on his murdered girlfriend's sister. However, the novel shows that his experiences of violence in war, in prison, and in his sexual relationships play a central role in the production of his pathological behaviors, and that the violence he inflicts on women becomes destructive rather than reparative to his psyche.

Theweleit's study also explores the extent to which relationships with women shaped masculinity at the dawn of a fascist world. Theweleit writes, "Relationships with women are dissolved and transformed into new male attitudes, into political stances, revelations of the true path, etc. As the woman fades out of sight, the contours of the male sharpen; that is the way in which the fascist mode of writing often proceeds" (35). Döblin, writing in opposition to the rising fascist movement, shows the fading of the women for Biberkopf, particularly toward the beginning in which the proletarian women that Biberkopf encounters blend with one another seamlessly into prostitutes (another feature of fascist literature that Theweleit encounters).

However, Döblin resuscitates the feminine through several female characters, as they are the ones who emerge in their particularity, first through their sexual aggressiveness and later through their broken bodies, while Biberkopf is dissolved by the sexual encounters on both a literal and sexual level. Theweleit writes, "In all of these texts, could it be that the fear of dissolution

through union with a woman actually causes desire to flee from its object, then transform itself into a representation of violence?" (44-45). During the first few sexual failures with prostitutes, Biberkopf dissolves while the woman is left in power. After several unsuccessful attempts at proving his manhood through the sexual act, Biberkopf's violent encounter with Minna allows him to reemerge in his own singularity. After this, he is set free in a sense and is guided toward rehabilitation in society through his relationship with Lina and his attempts at participating in the economy of the Alexanderplatz by selling political papers.

While Theweleit's text does address the broken body of women, Biberkopf's reaction to these images is much different than Theweleit's analysis. Theweleit writes, "The 'red roses' of her sex *only* blossom from the wounds on her dead, deformed, opened-up body. Whatever it is about the sensuous woman that excites these men lies beneath the surface, under her skin" (196). This can be directly correlated to Biberkopf, who is sexually excited by the remembrance of damage to Ida during his encounter with Minna. However, this violent comportment is tempered by his relatively normal relationship with Lina and his later exchange of women with Reinhold, in which Biberkopf becomes an "expert" in the treatment of women. Reinhold's betrayal, in which the loss of Biberkopf's arm transforms his body into an open wound, and Biberkopf's subsequent loving relationship with Mieze, further removes him from violent desire. By the end of the novel, the wounded bodies of Ida and Mieze become images of horror and guilt rather than sexual excitement.

The tension between Biberkopf's violent masculinity and its destruction can be read in a pivotal moment in the text when Biberkopf brings Mieze flowers. The scene shows the extent to which Biberkopf's comportment toward women has changed, but also foreshadows the destruction of both Mieze and Biberkopf. "She sees him at once, he has some flowers in his hand, he has come after all. She flies up to him, her face aglow, it glows a moment, flares up, when she sees the

flowers in his left hand. Then it turns pale, only a few red splotches remain" (275). Her elation, followed by the paleness of her face with "a few red splotches" foreshadows her death, as her skin will turn pale but be punctured with wounds. As Franz contemplates whether or not to give the flowers to Mieke, he thinks of Ida: "Ida, but what's that got to do with Ida, Tegel, how I love the girl" (276). Although this moment is about his romance with Mieke, it sends Biberkopf back to his crime and his time in prison simultaneously. A reminder of Biberkopf's masculinity follows: "He pulls her over to him, can't have his fill of looking at her, hugging her, caressing her. Now I'm a human being again, now I'm a man again" (276). This scene, which evokes Ida's death as well as foreshadows the destruction of Mieke, shows the binding up of both love and masculinity with violence and the extent to which Biberkopf's identity lies in these associations.

Finally, one section of the introduction of *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2 (1989) stands out as particularly helpful in conceptualizing the role of violence in the sexual life of Franz Biberkopf. The author writes "The key to the fantasy of destructive violence and rage against women is the conflict between the longing for fusion and simultaneous terror at the destructive implications for the self that such merger entails. Women represent the splitting of masculine desire into the opposites of fusion/autonomy and erotic merging/armored self" (xix-xx). This tension creates an irony for Biberkopf, as he attempts to use sexual or powerful domination over women to assert his masculinity, through raping Ida and Minna as well as nominal control of Mieke's prostitution through his role as pimp. Ultimately, sexual relationships with women are shown not to be destructive to Biberkopf, but the violence that accompanies them becomes a psychological self-destruction.

A key player in the production of Biberkopf's masculinity is the criminal Reinhold, as his sexuality becomes normalized through the exchange of women between himself and Reinhold. In

this section, female characters become diminished as items of exchange in subordination to Biberkopf's homosocial (and some might say homosexual) relationship with Reinhold.¹⁶ Biberkopf appears at the beginning of his relationship with Reinhold to be the authority on masculinity and how to treat women. During one of their first exchanges, Döblin writes, "Franz laughed till his sides ached, the young man really took women seriously. He wouldn't have suspected that about the fellow" (185). In this case, Biberkopf is positioned as the authority on women, and it is Biberkopf who is able to solve Reinhold's relationship issues by taking up with the women that Reinhold abandons. Through this section, sexual relations reach a sort of equilibrium between Biberkopf, Reinhold, and the women, contrasting with the earlier struggles of Biberkopf to assert his masculinity through strength and sexual potency. Biberkopf's relationship with women is replaced by his relationship with Reinhold—women become items in a "chain business," while Reinhold is referred to by the narrator as "his [Franz's] Reinhold" (Döblin 187-189). As Reinhold usurps women as Biberkopf's object of affection, their relationship more closely approximates Theweleit's observation of the Weimar-era Freikorpsman, in that relationships between men become the focal point of their social associations while women are marginalized as threatening objects.

However, the equilibrium that is reached through Biberkopf and Reinhold's relationship is shattered when Biberkopf settles on Mieke as a lover and no longer needs to participate in Reinhold's exchange. This threat is foreshadowed in a moment which brings back the doctor-narrator to supply the symptoms of Biberkopf's mental illness. "Funny how that girl can sleep

¹⁶ In *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film, and the Death of Weimar Culture* (2006), Jelavich writes, "The theme of same-sex attraction is central to the story inasmuch as it helps explain Biberkopf's counterintuitive attachment to Reinhold. But at the same time, the various allusions to gay and lesbian affairs are not highlighted in the tale: they are treated as if they were natural, not worth extraneous commentary" (17-8). While homosexual relationships are depicted among a few male and female characters in the text, Jelavich argues that Döblin's position on homosexual desires as normal expressions of sexuality is similar to Freud.

through everything. Not me. My toes are frozen, how they tickle and itch. There's something inside him, is it his heart, his lungs, his respiration, or his inner-most feeling, anyway, something inside there is being oppressed and harassed, but by whom? By whom, it doesn't know. It can only say it's sleepless" (196). In this passage, the seamless shift between Biberkopf's voice and the clinical description of his physical and psychological state blends the discourse of the "madman" with that of the clinician, breaking down the barriers that Foucault argues in *The Birth of the Clinic* arrest the ability of clinical institutional structures to comprehend the madman's psyche.

Biberkopf's history of violence not only affects him psychologically, but it becomes projected outward physically through Reinhold and becomes foreshadowing of Biberkopf's breakdown. After Biberkopf has exited from his masculine exchange with Reinhold and settles with Mieze, his manhood is severed through the loss of his arm by Reinhold's betrayal during a heist. While Biberkopf's wound is evocative of his lost social status as well as a perversion of a war wound (as it was lost in the commission of a crime rather than upholding national values in war), it also signals the point at which Biberkopf surrenders violence as his paradigm for his interactions with women. It is then that Reinhold "takes up" the masculine role that Biberkopf abandoned, by raping and murdering Mieze as Biberkopf did to Ida. The narrator indicates that it is Biberkopf's influence which drove Reinhold to this violence which begins with domestic violence and escalates to murder. Döblin writes, "Reinhold, the weakling, who seemed ridiculous to Franz, and who could never say a hard or energetic word to a woman, managed, at 1 p.m., to give Trude a frightful beating, to tear her hair out and break a mirror over her head, he was equal to anything; and what's more, when she yelled, he beat her mouth into such a bleeding pulp that it was hugely swollen when she went to show it to the doctor in the evening" (228). The narrator juxtaposes legal description and clinical details again, recalling the earlier recounting of Ida's

murder. The violence of Biberkopf becomes transferred to Reinhold, and the woman becomes the patient of a nameless doctor.

Reinhold also becomes a subject for the doctor-narrator, who offers a medical explanation of Reinhold's behavior. "All this, as I said, Reinhold was able to do because a couple of glasses of spirits had narcotized his forebrain, whereupon his middle-brain got a free hand--it was on the whole more efficient, anyway" (228). The tone of the narrator suggests both medical knowledge and a sense of cold matter-of-factness about Reinhold's actions. This medical discourse remains complicit with the destruction and domination of women as it appears earlier in the text, claiming that Reinhold's psychological disturbance "was on the whole effective." This complicity becomes even sharper as the narrator bluntly encourages Biberkopf to commit violence: "If you don't do something now, Franz, something real, final, comprehensive, if you don't take a club in your hand, a sabre, and strike about you, if you don't run loose, no matter how, Franz, my little Franz, my little Biberkopf, then it's all up with you for certain, then you can have yourself measured for a coffin" (248). This narration, which emerges from the narrator but also from Biberkopf's head, works to protect Biberkopf through the encouragement of his violence and the assertion of his masculinity.

The loss of Biberkopf's arm echoes the wounds of war amputees and a reminder of the trauma of Ida's death. Döblin writes, "Why does that shoulder hurt me so, my shoulder hurts me so. Where is Mieke gone? She's left me lying here alone" (305). His physical trauma is exacerbated by the psychic trauma of his past crime, and the absence of his arm becomes an indictment of his criminal actions. Döblin writes, "He's somewhere out on the Alex Platz, with the burglars, everything's been taken from him, that's probably connected with the accident, it's his nerves, got to see about it" (311). Biberkopf's status as victim, as perpetrator, and especially as patient is

highlighted here, as the narrator encourages him to “see about” his nerves, presumably by a psychoanalyst who might help him work through his trauma. Through this description, Biberkopf is presented as a victim of his situation, of war, and of the penal system. At the same time, he is a criminal, a murderer, and a woman-beater. Underlying these circumstances, he is a patient: a patient of himself, a patient of the narrator, and a patient of the reader. Through this multifaceted depiction of Biberkopf, the reader is invited to sympathize with a so-called pathological figure, and understand Biberkopf as a product of a modernity simultaneously defined by clinical pathology and a violent sociality.

The end of the text challenges the status of women as objects of clinical interest through Mieke, Biberkopf’s love interest. Mieke is both a prostitute and a victim of Biberkopf’s violence, collapsing the dichotomy of sexually assertive prostitutes and victims of Biberkopf’s sexual crimes with which the novel begins. The scenes in which Biberkopf and Reinhold are assaulting Mieke, and the scene of Mieke’s death, are narrated by Mieke herself rather than maintaining the perspective of the male characters. In the scene where Biberkopf beats Mieke, Döblin writes, “She whimpers, writhes, oh, oh, he’s beating me, he’s beating me” (352). The narrator’s position becomes one of a victim rather than the perpetrator, shifting the experience of violence from that of the dominator to the dominated. This experience is repeated when Mieke is being killed by Reinhold, as Döblin writes, “I can’t breathe. He won’t let go. It’s hot. Let me go. If he does that again, I’m done for” (365). While the experience of Mieke’s death can be read as a repetition or mirror image of Ida’s death, it is treated differently by the narration. While Ida’s death was a moment that was distant from the plot but invoked throughout the text, the death of Mieke is positioned as an intimate experience of the reader. The reader is compelled, perhaps for the first time, to become a woman, and to experience trauma through a female perspective rather than the

guilt of the murderer. This change in perspective allows the reader to finally understand and empathize with the psychological, and not just physical, experience of murder through the eyes of a woman.

Mieze's broken body is also significant to the text. "Her face is smashed, her teeth are smashed, her mouth, lips, tongue, throat, body, limbs, abdomen, all are smashed. I'm yours, you must comfort me" (371). The description of Mieze's body is not limited to a clinical description of her destroyed body, but the narrator addresses the audience directly, accusing them as witnesses to her destruction. The reader, finally, is responsible for her comfort and her murder in the same way that Biberkopf was responsible for Ida's death. Mieze's body haunts the rest of the text in the same way that Ida's body continues to haunt Biberkopf, as the repetition of the injuries to her body reminds the reader of her destruction. The shift in narration, from the thoughts of Biberkopf to the thoughts of Mieze, constitutes a reorientation of the modern subject, as Mieze replaces Biberkopf momentarily as the central point of trauma.

The end of the text draws psychoanalytic discourses to the fore, as Biberkopf is held in Buch Asylum and is "visited" by the bodies of Ida and Mieze. Biberkopf's internal narration demonstrates his shock and despair at witnessing the trauma that he himself had inflicted upon Ida. "But why does she keep on crumpling like that, her side is crumpling up as if she had sciatica, as if somebody was kicking her in the ribs. Don't kick her, you fool, that's inhuman, stop that, oh my, oh my, who's that beating her, she can't stand up again, stand up straight, girlie, turn round, look at me, who's beating you so terribly?" (463). At this point, Biberkopf alienates himself from the ghostly reenactment of Ida's trauma even though he inflicted it upon her. Ida accuses Biberkopf of her murder, which he denies. Her insistent body shows Biberkopf over and over again the fact of his crime. "Ida keeps crumpling up; don't crumple up, Ida, wasn't I in Tegel for it, I got time,

didn't I? Now she stops crumpling up and she sits down; she hangs her head, grows smaller and darker. There she lies—in the coffin, and does not move” (463). Biberkopf's move toward admitting his guilt and atoning for his crime puts Ida's body to rest and opens up Biberkopf's ability to truly confront his crimes. The visions of Mieke and Ida's bodies at the end of the text and the reorientation of the narrative frame suggest that although the war and Tegel prison are scenes of trauma, it is ultimately the traumatic feminine that continues to haunt Biberkopf's psyche during his internment at Buch Asylum.

After his moment of atonement, the doctors appear again, citing “psychic trauma.” “When all's said and done, this quarrel over his diagnosis is all nonsense, the fellow certainly was not a malingeringer, he had had venereal disease sometime, and not from heredity either, and that's all there is to it” (469). The diagnosis has shifted, from catatonia to venereal disease, from psychological to physiological, and the reader is left with “that's all there is to it.” The juxtaposition of Biberkopf's hellish nightmares with the simple clinical approach to his diagnosis highlights the absurdity of the doctors' claims. The reader (and the sarcastic narrator) has borne witness to Biberkopf's purging of his demons, and therefore deeply mistrusts the finality and simplicity of the doctors' diagnosis. This stark simplicity is reflected in the repetition, in the final pages of the text, that Biberkopf is “an assistant door-man” at a factory, reabsorbed seamlessly into a society headed toward war again (477). Biberkopf is dissolved through the conclusion of the text, and the reader is left with the sense that the medical diagnosis of Franz Biberkopf is an institutional formality rather than a reflection of his reality.

The novel, through its use of clinical discourse and montage techniques, is at odds with the simplicity of its conclusion; it repeatedly demonstrates how Biberkopf's psychological state is formed through the confluence of his violent past and antagonistic environment. The book offers

a multifaceted understanding of modernity through not only Biberkopf's psychological state, but through depictions of female experiences of violence. Although the doctor narrator attempts to establish a medical framework for understanding gendered trauma, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* reveals the problematic nature of clinical definitions of sexual pathology. Döblin situates Biberkopf's fractured consciousness and violent impulses as representative rather than marginal experiences of modernity, using clinical discourses to depict pathological behaviors in their totality rather than in the isolated context of medical study.

CHAPTER 2: FEMINIST DISPERSIONS IN *PALIMPSEST*

This analysis of H.D.'s *Palimpsest* shifts the focus of my project from a masculinity-centered perspective to an examination of how female pathology is reshaped through the perspective of a "patient" of psychoanalysis. While Döblin's modernist framing of the case study shows it to be ultimately insufficient for representing modernity in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, H.D.'s project is to discursively construct an image of femininity as dispersion, rejecting the form of the case study which often defines femininity from the perspective of the male analyst. While the title of H.D.'s novel suggests a Freudian examination of the psyche through a layered textual structure,¹⁷ the book's fractured, non-narrative style disallows a cohesive image of its protagonists to take shape. *Palimpsest*'s modernist style works in conjunction with its use of the mirror image as a trope to destabilize psychoanalytic and sexological perspectives of female narcissism and maternal identification. H.D. uses the structure of the palimpsest to examine traumatic moments in antiquity and modernity simultaneously, while using the mirror to refract the female protagonists' sense of identity and temporality to create a multidimensional sense of narrative.

The first two sections of the novel feature women whose experiences are impacted by war: the first features Hipparchia against the background of the destruction of ancient Greece and the rise of Rome, while the second shifts to a contemporary character named Raymonde living in post-World War I London. The novel shows how the destructive nature of warfare is reflected in the protagonists' shattered psyches and sense of instability as they navigate their displacement (from Hipparchia's home, from Raymonde's recognition of herself), depicting their pathological

¹⁷ Deborah Kelly Kloepfer defines the palimpsest as "a parchment that has been written over several times, earlier versions having been imperfectly erased" (553). Its layered structure can also be compared to Freud's concept of the "Mystic Writing Pad," in which he writes about how the celluloid and waxed paper layers of the mystic writing pad perform similarly to "the perceptive apparatus of our mind," the wax slab at the bottom preserving the "unconscious" memories that are repetitively erased in a similar way that the palimpsest retains previous writing.

conditions as produced through the tumultuous state of their modern worlds. The ornate, description-heavy style of the Hipparchia section contrasts with the sparse, fragmented, and chaotic prose of the Raymonde section, while each uses repetition to highlight the characters' struggles with conceptualizing their experiences. The murky overlay of present and past in the Raymonde section allows the character's consciousness to bleed into her character's past experience of war as well as the ancient past, blurring the distinction between ancient and modern experience. While repetition, fragmentation, and narrative incoherence are features of many modernist prose works, H.D. connects these stylistic innovations to clinical concepts and practices in order to dismantle sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of feminine pathology.

H.D.'s friendship with the sexologist Havelock Ellis and her later psychoanalytic treatment by Sigmund Freud, as well as the larger modernist response to these clinical discourses at the turn of the century, had a significant effect on her approach to modernist prose. In *Herself Defined* (2003), Barbara Guest notes that H.D.'s personal experience of psychoanalysis began with her treatment by Havelock Ellis in 1919 (*Palimpsest* was published in 1926). In *H.D. and the Public Sphere of Modernist Women Writers* (2001) Georgina Taylor addresses the use of psychoanalysis in H.D.'s work, writing, "The psychoanalytic encounter, in which many of these women writers participated, forms a model whereby the 'irrational' utterance, symptom, or recollection of dream, becomes part of a discourse rooted in bringing these into rational understanding" (17). While *Palimpsest* draws from psychoanalytic tropes, such as repetition and representations of the "subconscious" or unconscious, I argue that H.D.'s project seeks to draw femininity out of the context of clinical study in order to demonstrate its *incoherence* through modernist form. Through its construction of femininity as dispersion, *Palimpsest* creates a discourse of identification that accounts for the diverse perspectives of women's experiences.

Mari Jo Buhle's study *Feminism and its Discontents* (1998) explores the different ways in which feminism and psychoanalysis, since their inceptions, have used and resisted one another to define gender differences and identities. Buhle argues,

There is no doubt that Freudian theories inspired feminists to refine their categories of analysis. But feminists in turn compelled psychoanalysts to consider the implications of one of Freud's own, most uncompromising propositions: 'that human beings consist of men and women and that this distinction is the most significant one that exists.' Both feminism and psychoanalysis build on this premise. (3)

Buhle particularly identifies the modernist era in which H.D. was writing as an important moment for the development of feminism and the consideration of psychoanalysis as a potential tool for the feminist movement, writing, "All modernist discourse, if only implicitly, concerns the significance of this division [between the sexes]" (18). *Palimpsest* engages in this conversation between feminism and psychoanalysis through the development of Hipparchia and Raymonde as characters whose psyches are shaped through particular feminine perspectives and experiences, such as Hipparchia's struggle to articulate her creativity and Raymonde's loss of her child. Although H.D.'s relationship with Freud would develop a decade after the publication of *Palimpsest*, this early work is influenced by the larger cultural conversation around definitions of femininity and the clinical discourses which shaped that conversation.

Foundational H.D. studies by Rachael Blau du Plessis, Susan Stanford Friedman, Dianne Chisholm, Georgina Taylor, and others frame H.D.'s participation in the discourses of feminism and psychoanalysis in terms of the influence of her biography on her poetics. Friedman's *Penelope's Web* (1990) focuses on the relationship between H.D.'s novels and the events that inspired them, revealing the ways that her prose reflects the process of psychoanalysis and adapts it to her modernist style.¹⁸ She writes, "Its confessional excesses stutter, start, and stop, often

¹⁸ Of the events that inspired *Palimpsest*, Friedman writes, "Her expatriate wanderings across Europe in the 1920s represent a spatialization of a historical impulse. Her trip to Egypt in 1923, for example, enacted the relativity of

caught in the cycles of repetition, hesitation, and incompleteness instead of the developmental pattern of conflict, resolution, and progression” (19). Friedman’s work draws connections between H.D.’s feminism and her writing style, reading fragmentation as key to H.D.’s approach to prose composition, character development, and the publication of her works.

In *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle* (1986), du Plessis reads H.D.’s oeuvre from a critical feminist perspective in order to synthesize formal analysis of H.D.’s work with her biographical and political investments as a woman writer. One important aspect of H.D.’s biography, according to du Plessis, is her relationship to Freud and her response to his positions on femininity. Du Plessis writes, “With Freud, against Freud, through Freud she struggled for gender authority, for nuanced interpretations of her existence and experiences. H.D.’s analysis with Freud was a critical engagement with male discourse about men and women, and with the symbolic meanings of gender in Western religion and myth” (74). This struggle of gender authority can also be read through *Palimpsest*, particularly Hipparchia’s conflicted relationship with her male interlocutors. Du Plessis also provides a critical reading of *Palimpsest*, particularly focusing on the theme of “longing for women” and its conflicted depiction of maternal Otherness, but her final word on the palimpsest focuses on a critical analysis of H.D.’s style. Du Plessis argues,

Palimpsest may suggest the metonymic chain, a series of telling of something with no one ever having final dominance, an evocation of plurality and multiplicity, lack of finality. This suggests the porousness of H.D.’s style, its unauthoritarian, constantly exploratory quality, despite this firm appeal to a final truth [sic], saved from the embarrassments of authority precisely by being perpetually hidden as well as being exactly different from what dominant culture offers. (56)

space and time.... Hipparchia’s exile in Rome after the defeat of her native Corinth recapitulates H.D.’s own dispersion after the war” (235). Friedman argues that H.D.’s hybridization of historical fiction and autobiography creates an affinity between individual and collective experience as well as a temporality that blends past and present.

Du Plessis's analysis draws H.D.'s prose works out of a traditionally author-centered feminist reading of the novel in order to contextualize H.D.'s writing style within a larger conversation about female writing and authority.

In addition to psychoanalysis, H.D.'s writing is bound up in the discourse of sexology arising from her personal and professional relationship with Havelock Ellis. In *Herself Defined*, Guest offers an intimate portrait of H.D.'s relationship with Ellis. In addition to being social acquaintances and travel companions, Ellis was H.D.'s psychoanalyst before Freud. According to Guest, Ellis's methods blur the line between professional and intimate: "Whatever the aberrant nature of the sexual proceedings with Ellis,¹⁹ he possessed an uncommon ability to renew, or restore, a sensual physical life, which driven underground, as it had been with H.D., could cause serious wounds to the psyche. He did not cure those wounds, he only brought them into the open, and repaired them" (122). Guest connects H.D.'s confessional mode of writing to her complicated relationship with Ellis in order to illuminate a source of her inspiration. However, *Palimpsest* can also be read as responding to larger issues of masculine authority in clinical discourse concerning women's subjectivity. H.D.'s ambivalence toward this dynamic is echoed in the beginning of *Palimpsest*, in which Hipparchia's sexual relationship with Marius conflicts and eventually gives way to her own psychological struggles.

While reading H.D.'s works in relation to biographical events and psychoanalytic themes contexts can highlight her intervention in feminist conversations around authorship and authority of the early twentieth century, this approach elides how her modernist prose can also be read against a psychoanalytic framework. Although psychoanalytic and sexological influences are evident throughout *Palimpsest*, H.D.'s prose style challenges clinical definitions of female

¹⁹ This is in reference to Guest's claim that H.D. was "willing to comply with the sexual demands of Ellis, which is to have a woman urinate on him" (121).

pathology. The novel most explicitly confronts these definitions through its depiction of pathological narcissism, symbolized by the mirror, and the examination of women's development through their relationships with their mother and motherhood.

Palimpsest's modernist aesthetics create an alternate mode of representing (or depicting a failure to represent) femininity outside the bounds of a clinical framework. In Freud's works, particularly "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905) and Ellis's research on sexuality *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897), both doctors use case studies to comprehend female sexuality. While Ellis's study works to disclose the variety of sexual expressions in women, Freud famously concludes that he cannot reach an understanding of female sexuality, ending his essay "Femininity" with the claim, "That is all I had to say to you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly" (*Freud on Women* 362). While *Palimpsest* can be productively compared to the fragmented nature of Freud's analysis of Dora, its reliance on the female protagonists to narrate their own experience removes the analyst from a position of power. The novel performs this shift in representation by first taking on the clinical perspective of femininity through Hipparchia's lover Marius, and transitioning to Hipparchia's consciousness which is filled with hesitations and repetitions. In this way, *Palimpsest* uses modernist forms to initiate a position which accounts for clinical discourse, and then takes the expression of female sexuality beyond the narrative context of the case study.

Although narcissism only concerns a small fraction of sexological and psychoanalytic texts, the mirror image (as a touchstone for both myth and medical discourse) draws these elements together in *Palimpsest* in order to challenge perceptions of pathological narcissism in women. H.D's use of the mirror in *Palimpsest* is an allusion to her poetic investment in mythology: the myth of Narcissus staring into a mirrored pool at his reflection until he turned into a flower is a

foundational narrative in Greek myth.²⁰ The myth of Narcissus inspired psychoanalysts and sexologists to define the term “narcissism,” or self-love, as both a normal developmental phase in children (“primary narcissism”) and a pathological condition in adults (“secondary narcissism”).²¹ In both Freud and Ellis’s research, the mirror functions as a symbol of feminine narcissistic pathology, a sign of sexual dysfunction and obsession with autoeroticism in women. In Freud’s essay “On Narcissism” (1914), he claims that although men and women are capable of exhibiting narcissistic personalities, narcissism is particularly significant in women and their sexual development. He notes,

With the onset of puberty the maturing of the female sexual organs, which up till then have been in a condition of latency, seems to bring about an intensification of the original narcissism, and this is unfavourable to the development of a true object-choice with its accompanying sexual overvaluation. Women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed upon them in their choice of object. Strictly speaking, it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of a man’s love for them. (“On Narcissism” 88-89)

In a sense, Freud is claiming that secondary narcissism in women is developmentally typical, although not particularly desirable. Narcissism becomes a problem for women who are misdirected from the “proper” (or socially acceptable) object choice of a man to themselves.

Ellis briefly addresses narcissistic tendencies and their connection to the mirror in volume 4 of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1905). Ellis notes the mirror as a key object in the pathology

²⁰ In *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War*, Ana Carden-Coyne argues that “by contrast to these normalizing techniques [divisions between normal and pathology], classicism offered a holistic account of the mind and body. More flexible than the binaries of normal and pathological, many parts made up the whole” (7). H.D.’s work can be similarly read as a move which reads modernity through the heightened aesthetics of classicism.

²¹ In *The Language of Psycho-analysis* (1973), J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis similarly define narcissism as dysfunctional, as a “damming up of the libido” (255). While Laplanche and Pontalis find the definitions of narcissism, primary, and secondary narcissism to be problematic in the context of Freud’s works, it is of interest to this study they identify “self-analysis” as narcissistic, writing, “Self-analysis is now generally thought to be a particular form of resistance to psycho-analysis which flatters narcissism and bypasses the essential motor force of the treatment—namely the transference” (413).

of several subjects in case studies: “Mirrors are present in profusion in high-class brothels—on the walls and also above the beds. Innocent youths and girls are also often impelled to contemplate themselves in mirrors and sometimes thus, produce the first traces of sexual excitement” (187). Like Freud, Ellis looks at some mirror gazing as a normal function of sexual development in women, and draws connections between the mirror and sexual desire. Additionally, Ellis makes larger claims about the use of the mirror as symbolic of the sexual dysfunction of narcissism. In volume 1 (1897), he writes,

The extreme form of auto-eroticism is the tendency for the sexual emotion to be absorbed and often entirely lost in self-admiration. This Narcissus-like tendency, *of which the normal germ in women is symbolized by the mirror*, is found in a minor degree in some men, and is sometimes well marked in women, usually in association with an attraction for other persons, to which attraction it is, of course, normally subservient. (Ellis 137, emphasis mine)

In this passage, Ellis points to the use of the mirror as an interpretive symbol, and in the case studies he cites which focus on men and women the mirror is used to highlight the tendencies of the subjects to be narcissistic, or even preoccupied with autoeroticism. However, while the use of the mirror seems to be typical, Ellis claims that the actual diagnosis of narcissism indicates a more serious dysfunction, writing, “In the extreme form in which alone the name of Narcissus may properly be invoked, there is a comparative indifference to sexual intercourse or even the admiration of the opposite sex. Such a condition seems to be rare, except, perhaps, in insanity” (137). The use of the mirror and the evocation of narcissism in *Palimpsest* reflect this notion: as Hipparchia’s connection with the mirror, and by extension her past, grows stronger, she becomes more alienated from Marius and Verrus. This disconnect between herself and her lovers often comes with a charge of madness, drawing connections between her “narcissistic” tendencies and her mental state.

The use of the mirror in *Palimpsest* works in relationship to the concept of the palimpsest, although it is not identical to it. Deborah Kelly Kloepfer argues that the structure of the palimpsest “suggests two contradictory impulses—it creates both an augmented or extended text and a reduced or narrowed one; it accommodates multiplicity and yet, in the privacy of its intersections, creates a cryptic and distorted space as well” (553). While the structure of H.D.’s novel mimics the palimpsest with its proliferation of bright and ghostly images as well as its blended temporality within and among its sections, the multidimensionality of the mirror, which is at one substantial (the mirror itself) and insubstantial (as the image mirrors back the negative space of the world it faces) is paralleled with both the characterization of Hipparchia and Raymonde. The effect of “doubling” that happens throughout the text (the lovers Marius and Verrus, Hipparchia the daughter and Hipparchia the mother, Raymonde and her poet persona Ray Bart, and others) creates a layering effect as the divisions between the doubles are blurred through the narration. The mirror creates another dimension of the doubling, as Hipparchia and Raymonde are fractured into their past, future, and other selves through the reflected image. Thus, the mirror becomes a foil to the palimpsest, adding yet another temporal and physical dimension to the layered novel.

H.D. uses the power of the mirror as both reflective and reproductive to construct a multidimensional depiction of feminine perspectives. The mirror is a changeable surface on which the characters of Hipparchia and Raymonde are able to comprehend their past and present selves, allowing the characters to perform a study similar to the one that takes place between analyst and analysand. The mirror image produces a person that both is and is not the character standing before it, allowing the characters to see their “self” as other, in addition to connecting to other women and confronting traumatic moments in their pasts. For Hipparchia, the mirror creates an association with her mother, also named Hipparchia, and the repetition of her image is reflected in the

repetition of “Hipparchia” as a name, fracturing the character into multiple personas. Her interaction with the mirror image also coincides with the break in narration, in which Hipparchia is given reign over her own characterization and analysis. While Marius’s characterization of Hipparchia is often denigrating, and he perceives her as a vanquished captive, Hipparchia’s access to herself through the mirror image allows her to develop a sense of self from both within and outside of the image she projects.

The mirror becomes a time-travel object in Raymonde’s section, drawing the ancient past as well as the personal, traumatic past to the present. The novel also uses the mirror to reveal Hipparchia and Raymonde’s ambivalence toward maternal identification, with Hipparchia’s identification with her mother associated with the fracturing of her identity and Raymonde’s traumatic experience of childbirth tied to the trauma of war. The concept of “the past,” which is key to the construction of case histories and the process of psychoanalytic work, is depicted in conflict with the experiential “present” and its own troublesome status in the psyche. This alternative view of the case study is constructed using inconsistencies, gaps, and non-narrativity, features of both the case study and the process of psychoanalysis, which in the context of the novel blurs distinctions between past and future as well as characters’ identities.²² Rather than emphasizing Hipparchia and Raymonde’s behaviors as evidence of their pathology, however, *Palimpsest* frames the fracturing of their consciousness and identities as consequences of the

²² While the term “non-narrative” is often used in reference to avant-garde cinema of the modernist period, it is also often used in reference to modernist literature that resists linear plot and character development to explore alternate means of literary expression. Carla Harryman’s essay “Non/Narrative” addresses how non-narrative forms challenge normative modes of expression, writing, “They radically break rules of story-telling to stage a necessary disruption of asymmetrical power relations, the limits of knowledge, psychological and social operations of recognition and misrecognition, the complex connections between private experience and larger social forces, and the cooperative construction of meaning” (2). For a feminist perspective on the politics of narrative, see Margaret Homans’s “Feminist Fictions and Feminist Theories of Narrative” (1994).

violent conditions of modernity, which for women include their status as Other as well as the disorienting and destructive nature of war.

H.D.'s weaving of psychoanalytic, sexological, and modernist discourses along with the dispersion of those discourses' conceptions of femininity can be productively read in relation to Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* (1964) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). While in *Madness and Civilization* Foucault offers a historical account of the rise of medical institutions and the physical and conceptual alienation of madness from its cultural contexts, his later work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* shows how discursive structures could be approached: not by tracing the dominant elements of discourse, but by acknowledging and working through its dispersions as well. He argues that dispersions can be found both through the fragments of texts that do not constitute a master narrative and through the gaps and silences that discourse contains.²³ Rather than read Foucault's approach to discursive formation as contrary to Freud's psychoanalytic methodology, however, I will read them in conversation with one another, as psychoanalysis similarly draws from the silences and fragmented dreams of the analysand. *Palimpsest's* modernist structure creates a dispersion of its characters' identities through the fracturing of the mirror image as well as its narrative dispersions and repetitions, maintaining tension between clinical conceptions of feminine pathology and its discursive irregularities.

The section on Hipparchia begins with establishing a masculine perspective in Marius Decius as the lens through which the reader approaches her. The conversations between Hipparchia and Marius mimic the structure of psychoanalytic sessions, as the narration alternates between scrutiny of Hipparchia and Marius's attempt to comprehend her consciousness. From Marius's perspective, Hipparchia is weak because of her history as a Greek, yet still

²³ This project has its foundation in a modernist project, as Foucault's thoughts on "discursive articulation" are developed through the literary works of Rousel and Robbe-Grillet ("Distance, Aspect, Origin" 98).

incomprehensible; from his perspective, H.D. writes, “she had seemed always a creature somewhat withdrawn yet utterly and irrevocably vanquished” (5). The use of “creature” to describe her, as well as the perception of Hipparchia as “withdrawn” and “vanquished,” puts her in a position of both mystery and victim. Marius struggles to connect with Hipparchia outside of their sexual relationship, and it is constantly repeated that Hipparchia is withdrawn, often described as “alabaster” or stone-like, yet an “illusion.”

The novel focuses on their conversations, demonstrating that their intellectual exchanges define their relationship as much as, or perhaps more, than their sexual intimacy. H.D. writes, “He was used to argument in her, to exposition in the Hellenic manner” (8). Their intellectual exchanges are accompanied by Marius’ repeated claims that Hipparchia is unknowable, betraying his position as an outsider to feminine perspectives. The status of femininity as simultaneously knowable and unknowable, something that is evidenced through discussion but must be drawn out of the psyche through psychoanalytic processes, contains an echo of Freud’s analysis with Dora as described in “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” in which her resistance to Freud’s analysis becomes a central problem to the case. Even as the women offer their perspectives to the masculine analysts, the analysts repeatedly fail to disclose the feminine through their analysis.

Marius’s failure to understand Hipparchia results in a negative valuation of her character, revealing more about Marius than Hipparchia. “She was, he regarded her, an idea, an obsession” (25). This perspective is an embodiment of masculine attitudes toward the feminine, particularly as defined as an “object-choice” or a subject of analysis. Hipparchia is something to break down, an enigma, but she also doesn’t exist in and of herself; she is only Marius’s perspective of her at this point in the narrative. “Hipparchia was no woman but a phantom. He reconsidered. No, not a phantom. She wasn’t a phantom any more. She was the daughter simply of a dour old gentleman”

(26). Her identity, in the eyes of Marius, is constantly shifting from substantial (“alabaster”) to insubstantial (“phantom”), and from mythical (“nymph”) to banal (the daughter of a “dour old gentleman”). Even through the eyes of Marius, Hipparchia is a complex character who escapes definition. The reader’s first knowledge of Hipparchia, as read through her lover, is complex but negative.

However, the first scene slowly evolves to reveal Hipparchia’s feelings for Marius. This shift is important for the text, because it foreshadows the later, more radical turn from a masculine to feminine perspective, and from one that is external to the character to Hipparchia’s psyche. Hipparchia mocks Marius for being a “cabbage,” to which Marius replies, “‘you are, are you then, really mad?’ She said, ‘not at all Marius. But when one has slept perhaps on a rough estimate, one hundred and fifty times with one man, it is, can you not see, somewhat of a shock, at the end, to find it has not been a man at all, merely a rather bulbous vegetable’” (11). The charge of madness from Marius is significant—Hipparchia is using poetic as well as humorous language to express her feelings of disappointment toward Marius, and his “diagnosis” or explanation for her critique is that she is “mad.” Her reaction parallels Dora’s reaction to Freud’s conclusion to his analysis when he tells Dora that her hysterical symptoms indicate her love of Herr K: he writes, “When I informed her of this conclusion she did not assent to it” (190). In both of these instances, resistance to a man’s sexual advances is interpreted by a masculine interlocutor as evidence of their pathological state.

Hipparchia’s image as constructed through Marius is often framed as superficial and illusory. Her complexity is a source of frustration for Marius because she is not comprehensible to him. He becomes overpowered by his love for her only if he sees her as a defeated enemy of war: H.D. writes, “He breathed in some relic of a vanished and a vanquished loveliness. A vanished

and a vanquished body of reality. Vanquished. Rome the invincible. He felt, withdrawing from her, in one moment, the overpowering beauty of this conquest” (29). While perceiving Hipparchia as a victim of war while she sleeps, Marius is able to assert a dominance over her image. This tension between Hipparchia as a dominated object and an illusory image is maintained throughout the beginning of her section. The introduction of the mirror image signals a break in which Hipparchia is able to apprehend herself divorced from the context of Marius’s perception of her.

The struggle between the patriarchal analyst and the “hysterical” female analysand that is created in the case study is examined in several essays from the collection *In Dora’s Case* (1985). Because of its unique structure and its unconventional narrative style, “Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” became a window into Freud’s clinical practices as well as his attitudes toward his female patients. In his introduction, Charles Bernheimer writes of Freud,

While admitting that his own text is fragmentary, full of detours, gaps, and omissions, he nevertheless insists on its difference from Dora’s hysterically disjunctive and incoherent narrative. Thus the patient-analyst in attempting to cure himself is also involved in a kind of narrative cure, one intended to establish the dominance of a (male) discourse of scientific mastery (the privileged sphere of Fliess’s expertise in the transference) over a duplicitous (female) tale of guilty fantasies and repressed desires. (18)

Several essays critically analyze Freud’s approach to treating Dora’s hysteria, revealing that Freud’s conclusions have as much to say about Freud and the patriarchal assumptions that drive his analysis as they have to say about Dora’s sexuality. The concept of a male-gendered medical discourse and its attempt to master or “diagnose” the feminine discourse is important for reading Hipparchia’s introduction, whose character is primarily revealed to the audience through masculine perspectives at the beginning of the text. Although Hipparchia is charged with madness by her male lover, she is not depicted as abnormal or pathological; in fact, it is only through Hipparchia’s “narcissism” that the reader is able to access her thoughts in their complexity. These conflicting accounts of women’s “true” feelings, or the charge of madness or dysfunction in

relation to the expression of their feelings, show the dismissal of feminine perspectives as processed through a male interlocutor.

Through Hipparchia's confrontation of Marius, she sees him as through a lens. "Almost as she faced him, it seemed, she was gazing into some enchanter's mirror" (34). An "enchanter's mirror" would allow Hipparchia to see not only her reflection, but to see herself through the gaze of Marius as the reader has been for the duration of the text. After this moment, Hipparchia's world is shown through her eyes, indicating a radical shift in the narrative perspective. This point of view offers a narration with a different rhythm than the earlier text, one which offers insight into Hipparchia's poetic mind. H.D. writes, "Outside a singular subtle recurring rhythm beat singular and hypnotizing antistrophe to the eternal rhythm in her bounded head" (35). Unlike the vague, contradictory characterization of Hipparchia from Marius, Hipparchia's world is ruled through the rhythm of poetry. Still, the narration remains slightly outside of the realm of comprehension, much as Hipparchia remains out of comprehension for Marius, Verrus, and even herself. This shift in narration and its attendant unevenness creates both a dispersed narrative and character, shifting from the masculine perspective of Hipparchia in order to demonstrate the impossibility of articulating Hipparchia's thoughts in a coherent manner.

In contrast to the critical and negative perception of Hipparchia by Marius, the mirror image allows Hipparchia access to multiple versions of herself. Hipparchia is confronted with "Hipparchia," or her mirror image, in a pool, which draws direct relationships between the myth of Narcissus and Hipparchia. However, her interaction with her reflection is not a simple gaze on her mirrored image, but a psychological confrontation that leads to contemplation of her consciousness and her relationships with Marius and Verrus. H.D. writes, "Regarding an image that regarded her from a salt pool, she must make firm decision. She must imprint that image on

her intellect as the tortoise, bird, or olive is stamped frequently on silver. She must stamp this image, this abstract non-human Hipparchia repeatedly on the coinage of her thought” (53). The mutual “regarding” that happens between Hipparchia and the image Hipparchia constitutes an exchange from two entities. The image of Hipparchia in the salt pool is also the “abstract” woman that Marius and Verrus perceive, allowing Hipparchia to understand herself as others see her.

In this scene, the strange substantiality of the mirror image is highlighted—regarding herself in a pool, Hipparchia wishes to take this unstable image and engrave it upon her mind in order to counter the instability of her psyche. This reflected image allows Hipparchia to consider herself as something outside of her consciousness. “So she saw (in that spread length of calm sea-pool beneath her) a mirrored separate entity” (54). This more clearly highlights this separation between the internal perspective of Hipparchia and the one that is presented to others. However, a later passage increases the fracturing of Hipparchia’s image, dispersing her character from the perceived and actual Hipparchia. H.D. writes, “The image remained silver, detached and alone and Hipparchia, gazing at Hipparchia, saw that Hipparchia was some abstraction” (54). The repetition of “Hipparchia” and the emphasis placed on the different Hipparchias that appear in the mirror reflects the dispersion of Hipparchia’s character as it is processed through her lovers as well as herself. Through the mirror image she can understand herself as an abstraction, but her self-awareness creates a more complete image of Hipparchia: not strictly as an abstraction, but as a woman comprehending her image *as* abstraction.

While Hipparchia’s characterization is often constructed through the perception of her image, particularly in the case of Verrus and Marius, the significant “working through” of her self-image occurs psychologically. The image of Hipparchia in the mirror blends seamlessly in the text with the internal experience of Hipparchia, the physical division between these concepts erased by

repetition. Instead of being inaccessible, as she is to her lovers, Hipparchia finds herself able to access her thoughts and emotions through the mirror unlike before. “She saw Hipparchia and she loved Hipparchia” (55). Unlike her emotionally detached relationships with her lovers, Hipparchia’s confrontation with the mirror becomes a significant moment of connection with herself, and a fulfillment which falls short in her relationships with men.

The encounter with her mirror image also elicits specific language of psychoanalysis, alluding to the communion with her image as a clinical engagement with her consciousness. In thinking, Hipparchia says, “Struggle with it? Hadn’t she in her unconscious phrasing found the answer?” (55). Here, Hipparchia is able to analyze her thoughts for herself, acting as both analyst and analysand. The use of “unconscious” and the use of questions in engaging with her consciousness mimics a conversation between doctor and patient, in which Hipparchia is able to arrive at a satisfying conclusion through her own reflection (physical and psychological). In this meditation, she also references an “unacknowledged region of her mind”—an area of thought that she might not have accessed before, but which now resurfaces through her analysis.

The possibility of Hipparchia’s interaction with herself culminating in an “analysis” is confirmed in a passage in which H.D. writes, “Hipparchia seemed to hear her stone self in the depth of ice-green water speak, insistent, tender. The reflected self, a wraith, an image had advised her as a temple oracle” (56). Although the conversation with herself is mediated through the mirror, confronting herself with herself, it is also an active working-through of her emotions toward Verrus and Marius. Her “stone” self, that which is separate from her consciousness and revealed through the interaction with the image in the pool, offers a way for Hipparchia to access herself in a way that her mere consciousness can’t. She is able to perceive herself not only through her subjective lens, but as an object of analysis. In this transition from Verrus and Marius’s valuation of

Hipparchia to her own from within and without her subjectivity, she is able to replace the analyst with herself.

However, she still struggles with comprehending herself from a clinical perspective, as the mirror image is distanced from her. The impossibility of comprehending her own consciousness through a clinical gaze is reinforced by her encounters with men: H.D. writes, “Verrus regarded her with a cold and indifferent whimsical expression. He kept on looking at her, but his look was like the cold and lovely surface of her salt pool. There was nothing in it of humanity” (57). This passage imitates the gaze of Hipparchia from the pool, transferring the objective Hipparchia of the pool back to a man. In both instances, the clinical gaze becomes a moment of alienation and emotional detachment, failing to connect with Hipparchia’s consciousness.

While Hipparchia’s section of the text is initiated by masculine perspectives, her encounter with the mirror image and the narrative shift from a male-oriented perspective of Hipparchia to one that is constructed by her own non-linear consciousness creates an image of the character which is fractured rather than made whole. Hipparchia’s resistance to Marius and Verrus’s characterization of her leads to a narcissistic encounter with herself, which ultimately results in a dispersion of her character rather than apprehension.

The mirror’s power to fracture subjectivity becomes more acute in the second section, as Raymonde accesses her past trauma and herself through the mirror image. The Raymonde section constantly recalls the previous decade, before the collective trauma of warfare and the personal trauma of stillbirth, drawing those emotions to the present. The mirror becomes a time-travel device for Raymonde, as she sees scenes of her life with other women from before the war. While Hipparchia’s mirror instigates a dispersion of her identity, for Raymonde the mirror reveals the evolution of her identity through time. H.D. writes, “She saw Ermentrude standing in the country

house-party bed-room (this was among the details) and Mavis standing by her and Ermentrude, in her young gold and amber, looking with satisfaction in a mirror at another Ermentrude” (108). In this instance, the mirror deflects Raymonde’s identity entirely, instead concentrating on Raymonde’s friend Ermentrude who is part of her past and present. As with Hipparchia, Ermentrude’s image is fractured into mirror image and actual self, but also allows Raymonde to perceive changes in characters through time.

Raymonde’s encounter with her image becomes a moment of alienation from her past self and the struggle for self-consciousness. H.D. writes, “It was only that Ermy’s odd power of conjuring up absent figures had made her face this other not so colourless projection. A Raymonde of long ago, Raymonde facing straight on that past Raymonde now wanted to forget her. Facing Raymonde she wanted to forget her” (118). The mirror in this case (through Ermentrude) is not a physical presence but rather a metaphorical touchstone that indicates Raymonde’s separation from her past experiences, and a modern rupture of subjectivity—Raymonde is not confronted by her mirror image, but nonetheless herself, through Ermentrude, who acts as a mirror. As Raymonde confront Ermy, “Raymonde had an uncanny sensation that she (Raymonde) wasn’t there at all, was somehow disembodied, wandering behind the chair and that Ermy was addressing a ghost, something that never could any more be” (120). Between the first and second sections of the text, the mirror’s function and materiality shifts, indicating a shift in temporal perceptions. For Hipparchia, the mirror offers her access to her consciousness, allowing her to access the multiple versions of herself that exist for Marius, Verrus, and herself. For Raymonde, the mirror acts as a physical symbol of the break in her identity caused by the war.

Additionally, the mirror is a device which contrasts with the “real” experiences of Raymonde, which are altered by the trauma of her past as well as the collective past of London.

H.D. writes, “The background of her past that she looked at through the veil of her self-obliteration, of her loyalties, was soft and dim and she saw things through a veil, distant, remote, removed” (124). The visions of her past, then, are not only mediated by the mirror, but by her altered perceptions that resulted from the violent break created by war and stillbirth, acting as a series of lights and veils which reveal and obscure. Through the mirror, she can apprehend her “self-obliteration,” the trauma and resulting dissolution of her self-image that colors her comprehension of the world. This clash of the layered images of her present form with her past, as well as the perception of the past that she sees through the mirror, creates both a palimpsest and a fracturing of it.

The mirror also serves as a medium of communication for Raymonde and Ermentrude, even though Raymonde is speaking with Ermentrude in the “real” or actual present. This communication is obscured by the fact that the characters are traveling back through time to a moment in which they saw each other through the mirror image. “It was Ermy looking at Ermy and it was Mavis who stood and looked at Mavis in a mirror. It was Ermy facing Ermy and Mavis facing Ermy and Mavis. By some over-subtlety of sympathy, Raymonde seemed to see Ermy with Mavis’ eyes, see Mavis with Ermy’s and see each with her own covertly self-appraising glances” (129). The mirror image is even more fractured in this scene as the names of the women are repeated. However, Raymonde’s image becomes entirely dispersed as she inhabits all of the women at once as well as herself. The disappearance of Raymonde from the mirror image suggests that the mirror has a problematic status in representing women’s access to self; unlike in the case of Hipparchia’s self-analysis, for Raymonde the mirror represents a failed archaeology of her psyche.

Raymonde's subjectivity is revitalized through the use of London as an alternative lens to explore her perception of herself. Although Raymonde is erased from the mirror image in her encounters with Ermentrude and Mavis, her trauma becomes "mirrored" in London's destruction after World War I. H.D. writes, "London blurred her over, permeated her and she (with London) had forgotten—feet—feet—feet—feet—feet—Feet were passing on the way to Victoria Station. Feet were passing on the way to Victoria. Carry on. Carry on. Carry on" (99). London acts like a mirror through which Raymonde's perceptions of herself are mediated, and her identity becomes enmeshed in the scenes and sounds of the city. The busy rhythm of London is a mirrored echo of the march of footsteps during the war. The beat of footsteps creates an urgent rhythm in the text that is contrasted to the repetition of the phrase "feet—feet—feet," an interruption to the flow of the prose which reflects the tension between the march of time and London's inability to recover from its recent past. The repetition of "Carry on" is ironic, as Raymonde's psyche and the city of London are trapped in a circle of repetitions, not being carried forward. This repetition, which carries through the section, is an allusion to Freudian repetition, interspersed with memories that draw up the past.

The novel uses the language of psychoanalysis to describe Raymonde's feeling toward London: H.D. writes, "She loved London with some deep subconsciousness. There was no precision in her feeling for London. It was blurred, nebulous" (101). The use of the term "subconsciousness" is a recall to psychoanalytic practice, in which the unconscious thought of the analysand is key to understanding her affliction. By using "blurred" to describe Raymonde's emotion, H.D. also evokes the reflection of the mirror, which for Raymonde does not bring clarity. Raymonde's "feeling for London" both echoes the characterization of Hipparchia in the first section and Raymonde's fractured and dissolving subjectivity in the mirror scenes with

Ermentrude. Additionally, the duality of London which is constructed by the repeated phrase, “Behind London there was another London,” evokes the idea of the mirror as a potential site to reveal deep historical truths about the state of society post-war (104). London becomes peoples’ perceptions of London, while the “other London” is the one that is buried like a physical unconscious where the trauma of war resides. Raymonde’s perception of the duality of London also becomes the reflection of Raymonde and her poet identity, Ray Bart. H.D. writes, “There was Ray Bart always waiting as here was behind the autumn drift and dream-anodyne of mist, another London” (104). This splitting of her identity between Raymonde and Ray, reflected in the surface of London and the war-traumatized London residing beneath it, creates a palimpsest-like layering while also using the mirror to fracture her identity.

Hipparchia and Raymonde’s encounters with the mirror image prefigure and reflect Jacques Lacan’s account of subjectivity in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I*” (1949), in which he describes how the mirror stage both develops individual’s conception of “I,” while simultaneously alienating this identity from the infant through the reproduction of their image. In the introduction to *Feminine Sexuality* (1982), Jacqueline Rose writes,

For Lacan, however, this [coherent identity through the mirror image] is already a fantasy—the very image which places the child divides its identity into two. Furthermore, that moment only has meaning in relation to the presence and the look of the mother who guarantees its reality for the child....Holding the child is, therefore, to be understood not only as a containing, but as a process of referring, which fractures the unity it seems to offer. The mirror image is central to Lacan’s account of subjectivity, because its apparent smoothness and totality is a myth. (30)

The infant’s encounter with the mirror image as simultaneously a reflection of a coherent identity and the construction of identity as a fantasy projection is reflected in Hipparchia and Raymonde’s communication with their temporally and visually fractured identities through the mirror image. The dialectic that Lacan describes between the mirror image as identification and alienation is

paralleled by H.D.'s formulation of feminine identity, which accounts for both outsider (i.e. masculine or clinical) perspectives as well as women's self-identification. Both perspectives, H.D. suggests, are essential for representing women's psychological states.

The possibility of narcissism as a productive space for feminine subjectivity is taken up by feminist theorists such as Kaja Silverman and Teresa de Lauretis. While narcissism remains a typical "diagnosis" of self-absorption in contemporary society, for feminist theorists the notion of narcissism in women is a potentially positive development in which women are able to break out of the patriarchal structures of society to define themselves through their own parameters.²⁴ In *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988), Kaja Silverman asserts the potential advantages of female narcissism:

[the] reformulation of the early history of female subjectivity...suggests, that is, that narcissism may at times be less an indication of the female subject's inability to cathect with an external object than an indication of her refusal either to cathect with any object other than the one which was first in her history, or to distinguish desire from object-choice in the way that the positive Oedipus complex teaches her to do. In other words, female narcissism may represent a form of resistance to the positive Oedipus complex, with its inheritance of self-contempt and loathing. (154)

In shifting the perception of narcissism from pathological to productive, Silverman asserts for women the ability to step outside of the male-centered Oedipal complex, escaping the patriarchal process that insists on a normative development of sexuality. Therefore, Hipparchia's rejection of Marius and Verrus in favor of her own selfhood is a move to reject the patriarchal system which would cause her self-loathing. Although her analysis through the mirror ultimately fails to fully "realize" or create a narrative for Hipparchia, it nonetheless succeeds in transferring the "power" of analysis from the masculine to the feminine. In the case of Raymonde, her analysis leads to an apprehension of the trauma that alters her perception of the world, peeling back the layers that

²⁴ See Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (1991).

have accumulated on her psyche. Without a clinical interpreter, Raymonde is given access to her fractured psyche for herself.

If the mirror can be read as a kind of interlocutor or analyst, and the recollections evoked by the mirror as case studies or histories, this process of gazing in the mirror erases the need for the masculine or patriarchal analyst to participate in the process at all. In many of his works, Freud argues that the role of the analyst is not merely to listen to symptoms, but to interpret those signs and draw conclusions about patients' psychological states from the gaps in memory as well as the positive signs offered to him in the clinic. In "Constructions in Analysis" (1937), he equates this process to an archaeological excavation:

His work of construction or, if you prefer, of reconstruction, corresponds extensively to that of the archaeologist who excavates a ruined and buried settlement or an ancient building. It is in fact identical to it, except that the analyst works under better conditions, and has more material to help him, because he is dealing with something living, not a ruined object; and perhaps his objectives are different. (213)

In this passage and in many others, Freud places the authority of analysis in the clinician. By removing this authority, *Palimpsest* allows Hipparchia and Raymonde unmediated (albeit imaginary) access to their psychological states, while simultaneously showing how their identities cannot be represented in a cohesive narrative (as in the case study). The episodes with Hipparchia and Raymonde in the mirror, and particularly the mirror's power to show both temporal and spatial changes in the character's conceptualization of self, become both the expression of a fragmented case study and the failure of a resolution for them, allowing for the unfiltered expression of feminine struggles for subjectivity without the interference of an analyst's (patriarchal) influence. Rather than becoming a stifling echo chamber of self-love, the mirror image offers Hipparchia and Raymonde an external image of themselves, and through that experience intimate access to their consciousness which no one else can achieve.

Alternatively, in *The Threshold of the Visible World* (1996) Silverman argues that the mirror image is ultimately the site of destruction of subjectivity because the subject's ego cannot withstand the idealized identity which it forces upon the mirror image. She discusses the process through which identity becomes fractured, writing,

The reflection offers what, for lack of a better expression, I will call 'identity-at-a-distance.' Such an identity is, of course, inimical to the very concept implied by that word, which literally means 'the condition or quality of being the same' (OED, 881). Identity-at-a-distance entails precisely the opposite state of affairs—the condition or quality of being 'other.' (15)

Silverman keeps the concept of "identity" and its alienation in tension, recognizing the impossibility of the mirror image to be an identical reflection of the viewer while at the same time claiming an identity with it. This "identity-at-a-distance" ultimately becomes revelatory for Hipparchia as it allows for the possibility of a psychoanalytic "working through" of her psychic trauma, but for Raymonde it becomes a moment of alienation and erasure from her past experiences. When considered together, the experiences of Hipparchia and Raymonde maintain the tension between "identity" in the mirror and the alienation of identity in "identity-at-a-distance." Through this tension, *Palimpsest* explores the dissolution of the subject through the various iterations of identity that are created through the mirror image.

In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault offers a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis that is similar to the one that H.D. seems to advance through the revision of narcissism and femininity in *Palimpsest*. He acknowledges the significance of Freud's contribution to medical discourse and the approach to madness, writing that "Freud demystified all the other asylum structures: he abolished silence and observation, he eliminated madness's recognition of itself in the mirror of its own spectacle, he silenced the instances of condemnation" (277). Foucault argues that Freud is admirable because he did not merely leave psychological dysfunction to be exacerbated in its own

echo chamber, silently observed by doctors, but he devised a plan for helping those who suffered from mental illness. However, Foucault writes, Freud does misstep in that the power of the doctor becomes consolidated through that movement, thereby failing in its endeavor to give a voice to madness. Foucault writes,

But on the other hand he exploited the structure that enveloped the medical personage; he amplified its thaumaturgical virtues, preparing for its omnipotence a quasi-divine status. He focused upon this single presence—concealed behind the patient and above him, in an absence that is also a total presence—all the powers that had been distributed in the collective existence of the asylum; he transformed this into an absolute Observation, a pure and circumspect Silence, a Judge who punishes and rewards in a judgment that does not even condescend to language; he made it the Mirror in which madness, in an almost motionless movement, clings to and casts off itself. (277-78)

In this passage, Foucault acknowledges the powerful and even revolutionary effect of the psychoanalytic approach to madness while also pointing out the power imbalance that was caused from moving madness from the asylum to the analyst's study. By concentrating the creation of knowledge in the hands of the doctor, Foucault argues, psychoanalysis declares itself the arbiter of truth. In *Palimpsest*, Hipparchia and Raymonde's perspectives and interpretations drive their own self-understanding, drawing the power of interpretation out of the hands of both masculine interlocutors and the medical establishment.

Foucault's critique continues in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which he argues that clinical medicine is a discursive system constituted through the cultural role of the doctor, the institution, and the subjects of their study, among others elements. He writes,

It can be said that this relation between different elements...is effected by clinical discourse: it is this, as a practice, that establishes between them all a system of relations that is not 'really' given or constituted *a priori*; and if there is a unity, if the modalities of enunciation that it uses, or to which it gives place, are not simply juxtaposed by a series of historical contingencies, it is because it makes constant use of this group of relations. (53-54)

Foucault argues that the medical institution is not organically constructed through relationships between its disparate parts, but is bound together and constructed through its discourse. Through its recognition of clinical discourses and the feminine resistance to them, *Palimpsest* creates a new discursive frame through which the female psyche can be comprehended in its totality. H.D.'s construction of femininity through dispersion becomes a counterpoint to the sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of feminine pathology.

While *Palimpsest* draws from psychoanalytic and sexological concepts such as narcissism, trauma, and relationships between the sexes, it also disrupts these discourses through its disjointed narrative style. Its construction becomes a reflection of Foucault's vision of discourse as dispersion, because of its gesture toward not only the master narratives of medical discourse and modernity but its erasures and eruptions. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault proposes an alternative mode of conceptualizing knowledge, one which resists the use of organizing history through its master narratives in order to create a coherent understanding. He specifically delves into the formation of psychiatric discourse in order to illuminate the nature of discourse as "highly dispersed," and materializes as a formation through "a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification" (44). Foucault writes, "They [relations of resemblance, proximity, distance, difference, transformation] do not define its internal constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, in short, to be placed in a field of exteriority" (45). Rather than approaching discourse as a process of homogenization and unification, Foucault proposes that relations which constitute discursive formations within institutions such as psychiatry should be approached through their dispersions. In his study of modernism, Foucault even draws from the image of the mirror to draw connections

to discursive articulation in literary works, writing “The milieu, of course, makes us think of a mirror—of the mirror which gives things a space outside them and transplanted from them, which multiplies identities and mixes differences in an impalpable knot which cannot be unknotted” (“Distance, Aspect, Origin” 99). This process of multiplication and complication is precisely the effect of the mirror in *Palimpsest*, in which the mirror offers distance from the characters but results in their dissolution rather than comprehension.

H.D.’s approach to representing feminine subjectivity as dispersion is an inversion of the case study, in which the mission of the analyst is to take dispersed events and draw them together to form a coherent understanding of the analysand’s dysfunction as well as to find its origin. By creating a comprehensible case history and narrative for the analysand’s symptoms, the analyst can interpret her experiences and offer a possible cure. The process through which identity is formed through Hipparchia and Raymonde in *Palimpsest* is chaotic and non-narrative, creating relations through the mirror image while simultaneously fracturing and erasing the characters’ apprehension of self. While the accounts of Hipparchia and Raymonde’s psychological states offer a view of their consciousness, it does not result in comprehension. Rather, it demonstrates the impossibility of conceptualizing the female subject, while at the same time attempting to represent its reality and its impossibility.

Like narcissism, maternal identification is a psychoanalytic concept tied to the development of female sexuality. In “Female Sexuality” (1931), Freud details the process by which young girls detach themselves from their first love-object (their mother) and become appropriately redirected toward affection for men, initially their father. The ambivalent status of motherhood in *Palimpsest*, however, depicts a failed application of this process to its protagonists. For Hipparchia, the mirror image evokes her relationship with her mother, while Raymonde’s presence in postwar

London brings up the trauma of her daughter's stillbirth. This mother-daughter connection, which in psychoanalytic terms would be related to the "pre-Oedipal" phase of sexual development, is one which is underdeveloped in Freud's works but is a contested theory in feminist thought. While some feminist theorists such as Julia Kristeva cite the connection with the mother (or "chora" in her terminology) as a significant one, others such as Teresa de Lauretis in *The Practice of Love* (1994) question the usefulness of the Oedipal mother for understanding female sexuality. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), Kristeva argues that because the pre-Oedipal stage and primary drives are focused on the body of the mother, writing, "The mother's body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*" (27). Kristeva establishes the semiotic *chora* as a significant concept for understanding psychoanalytic theories and their relation to modernist poetic constructions. By contrast, de Lauretis argues that,

The mother-daughter bond dear to feminist object-relations theorists, the bisexuality theorized by Sarah Kofman, the convergence of desire and narcissistic identification proposed by Silverman, or the fluidity of boundaries generally said to characterize female sexuality...are all themes of a popular feminist fantasy which *projects onto female sexuality certain features of an idealized feminist sociality*—sisterly or woman identified mutual support, anti-hierarchical and egalitarian relationships...etc. (185)

De Lauretis spends several pages of her chapter on maternal identification parsing the different feminist positions on the subject, ultimately concluding that the mother as myth is problematic for framing feminine subjectivity. H.D.'s text reflects a similarly critical attitude toward motherhood, highlighting maternal connections through Hipparchia's mirror image and Raymonde's traumatic past while showing how the characters both struggle with this identification with the mother (or motherhood).

The conflict in Hipparchia's consciousness in relation to her mother is introduced in the text as "the family problem," evoking the case history and particularly Freud's Dora case in which her diagnosis was directly tied to problems with her family. H.D. writes,

She was back, it appeared with the family problem, treading round and round and round. Like the donkey in the old grain-presser who walks round and round and round. So wandering round and round, would she finally evolve from the rough grain, the rough primitive matter that was her problem, meal fine-sifted, fit for nourishment or better still, for cakes for altar sacrament? Maybe...Treading the rough primitive stuff that was the very essence of her nature, into some fine sublimated matter, meal, ground fine that would finally (she must hold in her degradation to this hope) prove spiritual nourishment. (62)

The pattern of Hipparchia's approach to her family history, which is a physical and psychological act of circling around the problem until it finally dissolves, reflects the psychoanalytic practice of repeatedly returning to significant moments in the person's past. Here, the past is something that is drawn to the present and made a physical thing that Hipparchia can grind into "nourishment" of the present. She works through it over and over again (as the palimpsest in the text) in order to wear it out for consumption, although it ultimately fails to provide this sustenance. The phrase about the "family problem" is repeated throughout the text, much as a clinical analysis would constantly allude to one scene or mention from an analysand. By offering it a physical as well as psychological presence, H.D. draws the significance of the past to immediacy.²⁵

The phrase "family problem" is key, as well, in conceptualizing Hipparchia's relationship with her mother; earlier in the text, it is mentioned that Hipparchia looks at herself in the pool, but also sees her mother, another Hipparchia. This adds a temporal dimension to the fracturing of Hipparchia's subjectivity, sending her back in time as well as dissociating her present. H.D. writes, "Hipparchia her mother, rose most frequently to plague her. Hipparchia faced Hipparchia, her

²⁵ Freud notes in "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through" that repetition in the psychoanalytic process often replaces the function of remembering in a patient, and that repetition can also signal a resistance to working through the past.

mother, who rose to plague her” (78). The repeated use of “plague” suggests that Hipparchia’s connection with her mother is a conflicted one, and the identical names of Hipparchia the mother and Hipparchia the daughter confuses the identification of Hipparchia as a separate entity. Hipparchia also contemplates the role of her mother in the process of visiting her past: “So round and round and round. Hipparchia was ground now, fit spiritual nourishment. Was it her mother Hipparchia who so ground her?” (78). The play on “ground,” which could be an anchor or act of destruction, indicates the problem with Hipparchia’s mother, which does not anchor Hipparchia to a strong feminine past but acts to dissolve her identity in the present. The dissolution of her identity is exacerbated by the repetition of the name “Hipparchia,” which is used to identify both mother and daughter. H.D. writes, “Hipparchia would protect Hipparchia from Hipparchia. ‘She never took, she never took, she never took. She was more brave than you, Hipparchia who never dared take.’ But that was not right. Hipparchia, Hipparchia. She cried ‘Hipparchia’ and Hipparchia would stand there and plague” (78). In this passage, it’s difficult to see which Hipparchia is being identified. While one is allegedly the mother, there are at least two Hipparchias struggling to assert herself in the present. Rather than offer clarity or stability in conceptualizing Hipparchia’s psychological state, the invocation of the mother creates a further state of conflict.

While the conflict of identification for Hipparchia and her mother draws a familial trauma to the fore of Hipparchia’s consciousness, Raymonde’s relationship with London is constituted through the metaphor of war and stillbirth. Her child’s death, rather than being framed in psychoanalytic terms, elicits a different sort of medical discourse from the narrative. She senses an “undercurrent of masculine sympathy, a sternness, an inviolable rectitude, a strength, the very timbre all somehow entangled in the not-pain that was her sudden release” (110). This “undercurrent of masculine sympathy” expressed by the doctor is not framed as clinical and

therefore divorced from the emotional impact of her loss, but expresses a human connection between the doctor and patient. H.D. writes, “No one else—cared. A doctor had cared. She had seen it. He had said, “I’m sorry, Mrs. Ransome, it was a beautiful little—body—.” He had said that. From far and far and far, the very fibre of her being must claim fealty to London. To a London doctor who had said that, “I’m sorry, we’re all, Mrs. Ransome, sorry for your disappointment” (111). The choppy phrasing, the proliferation of dashes, and the use of “body” and “disappointment” are all expressions of alienation from the tragic matter at hand, yet Raymonde perceives that moment as the connection that binds herself to London. Through this encounter, the rigid boundaries that separate the clinician from the subject dissolve, and the trauma of her child’s birth creates an emotional connection to the city. At the same time, the encounter de-emphasizes Raymonde’s identity as mother, focusing instead on her status as patient.

The sympathetic depiction of medical discourse that she encounters through the doctor is contrasted later with another attitude toward Raymonde’s reaction to loss, which is the pathologization of her grief by an attending nurse. H.D. writes, ““Now Mrs. Ransome. Don’t, don’t for its sake get hysterical.’ Hysterical? Couldn’t they know, couldn’t they see, all these dear and blessed English people, what was happening? Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet” (141). The questioning of the word “hysterical,” which is a particularly gendered expression of insanity, blends the moment of Raymonde’s loss with the fall-out of World War I, and the gravity of both situations is lost in the repetitive “feet-feet-feet” of the bustling city. By reframing her reaction as something appropriate to the horrific context, Raymonde deflects the charge of hysteria. This moment also reiterates the reflection of London’s trauma in Raymonde, as Raymonde’s experience of stillbirth becomes London’s war trauma. H.D. writes, “Everything in life was blighted, still-born—that was the crux of the matter. Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. They were still-born generation” (117). Raymonde

and London become doubles of themselves and each other through their traumatic pasts, framing their identities as mothers through loss. This duality creates a multifaceted layering of the consciousness that enriches the palimpsest structure, juxtaposing as well as layering relationships between the cities and the women. Rather than clarifying or stabilizing their identities, however, maternal identification is another instigation of fractured identity for Hipparchia and Raymonde.

In addition to the concepts of narcissism and maternal identification in psychoanalysis, *Palimpsest* takes up the concept of the past and its relationship to the present through the palimpsest. The concept of the past in psychoanalysis, as detailed by Leonard Jonathan Lamm in *The Idea of the Past* (1993), is not merely one of historical time, but is constructed through the process of analysis. Lamm articulates the difficulty of writing about the “past” in psychoanalysis, writing, “The equivocality of the ‘past’ is explicable once it is recognized that the idea of the ‘past as present’ resolves into two seemingly distinct and discrepant notions: (a) the presentness of the past as potentially intelligible (if now distorted or unavailable) meaning, sign, and semiotic system; and (b) the presentness of the past as force, cause, and unintelligent (but lawful) process” (45). Psychoanalytic practice draws the past to the present in order to interpret the signs that have led to the present symptoms, thereby “constructing” the past rather than apprehending it in its actuality.

Foucault, Freud, and H.D. all use the metaphor of the archaeological dig in their texts to advance the importance of what Foucault terms “discursive formations” in the creation of knowledge. However, their views of how archaeologies should be conceptualized are divergent in important ways. *Palimpsest* uses archaeology explicitly and metaphorically, layering archaeologies of trauma in the first two sections of *Palimpsest* while using the third section’s depiction of a physical archaeological dig²⁶ to juxtapose the ancient past with the fractured

²⁶ The third section of *Palimpsest* diverges significantly in style and theme from the first two sections, reading as a realist-style narrative rather than a fractured, non-narrative modernist work. While its focus on an Egyptian

present.²⁷ By contrast, in “Constructions in Analysis,” Freud explains that the analyst must construct (or reconstruct) the analysand’s past by drawing out details that are repressed by the patient. Freud expresses this process through the metaphor of excavation, writing,

His work of construction or, if you prefer, of reconstruction, corresponds extensively to that of the archaeologist who excavates a ruined and buried settlement or an ancient building. It is in fact identical to it, except that the analyst works under better conditions, and has more material to help him, because he is dealing with something living, not a ruined object; and perhaps his objectives are different. (213)

While Freud acknowledges the importance of the analysand in doing the work of drawing from the past, it is the analyst (through the process of transference) who performs the construction of the past.²⁸ H.D.’s text challenges this notion in two ways: on the one hand, the analyst and analysand are replaced by a multiplicity of perspectives that arise from the consciousness of a singular character; on the other, the use of repetitions, gaps, and juxtapositions reflect the dispersion rather than the cohesion of construction in the feminine psyche. By seeking an “actual memory,” Hipparchia is rejecting the reconstruction of memory in order to arrive at a view of an unmediated past.

Palimpsest reflects this tension between present and past through the porous nature of temporality in the Raymonde section. While the past is often “reflected” in the mirror and in

archaeological dig creates a physical relationship between the past and present, its overall investment in psychoanalytic discourse is more understated than the sections on Hipparchia and Raymonde.

²⁷ Sasha Colby’s 2009 study *Stratified Modernism: The Poetics of Excavation from Gautier to Olson* argues that “archaeology was able to both create coherent narratives about the distant past as well as destabilize pre-established historical assumptions” for modernist artists (3). She contrasts H.D. and Freud’s approaches to thinking the palimpsest, writing “In contrast with Freud’s formulation, however, H.D.’s palimpsests are at once individual in their reflections of one person’s experience of time and space, and an experience that exceeds the self in that the other realms that can be accessed may include other epochs, other people, and other material realities” (135).

²⁸ “Transference(s)” are defined in “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria” as “new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic for their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician. To put it another way: a whole series of psychological experiences are revived, not as belonging to the past, but as applying to the person of the physician at the present moment” (*Freud Reader* 234). Thus, “construction” in analysis and “transference” are closely related, as they draw past emotions and events into the present through the process of analysis.

visions of trauma through London, the “present” is an equally important moment for constructing the “case history,” as it were, of Hipparchia and Raymonde. This insistence on the present evokes Foucault’s urging in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* to confront discourse in the context in which it occurs: he writes, “We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption; in that punctuality in which it appears, and in that temporal dispersion that enables it to be repeated, known, forgotten, transformed, utterly erased, and hidden, far from all view, in the dust of books” (25). H.D.’s text achieves this immediacy through the constant interruption of the present in the ruminations of the past, drawing the immediacy of *Palimpsest*’s modernist discourse to the characters’ histories.

The past is evoked for Hipparchia and Raymonde in brief snippets, but it is the focus on the present that becomes the most important for the female characters’ experiences of their consciousness. In one moment of the text Hipparchia thinks, “Hipparchia came back to actual memory, letting slide transition of blurred apprehension” (39). H.D. offers the term “actual memory,” which appears to be the experience of the present as perceived through the past, blurring this distinction. Hipparchia attempts to access “historical” memory, versus one that is clouded by her present emotion. This concept is further clarified later on the page, when H.D. writes, “Memory would paint over apprehension, lotus-vision, with actual image” (39). H.D. advances a concept of memory that is not processed through perception and present thought, but “actual memory” that can somehow be accessed (at least according to Hipparchia). This approach can be contrasted to the idea of both excavating and constructing memory, both of which are important to psychoanalytic practice as well as Foucault’s ideas about the construction of historical knowledge.

Hipparchia is also concerned with the temporal concept of the present—she is variously called to “actuality,” to “reality,” and “the present” (42-43). However, the circling of a hawk above

her constantly draws her out of the present. H.D. writes, “Her mind, hypersensitive to the point of anaesthesia, found this circle soothed her, counteracted her just realized fearful suspicion of an inimical dark world buzzing beneath her amethyst water-clear indifference” (43). This passage depicts layers which play with the idea of substance and insubstantiality—the indifference is “water-clear” and transparent, but it’s also a precious stone, an “amethyst.” These depictions also show the interplay between material existence and the experience of temporality, similar to the relationship between the palimpsest (substantial) and the mirror image (insubstantial). The concept of a physical and temporal layering adds a multidimensionality to the palimpsest because it allows the layering of the narrative and the character of Hipparchia to be constantly fluctuating in time. The constant fracturing of time between the past and present also reflects the fluctuation in identity caused by the mirror image.

While Raymonde struggles with her perception of the past and present through her trauma, the character of Ermentrude creates an even more unstable temporal frame. H.D. writes, “Ermy was not of to-day, not even of yesterday, but of always and forever” (126). Through her conversation with Ermentrude, Raymonde perceives Ermentrude as an ancient time traveler who is guiding Raymonde through the present. While Ermentrude’s status as a time traveler gives her authority over the present, Raymonde struggles with finding stable ground: “Was it not she Raymonde who was trivial? Raymonde who sub-divided her world into Limbo and an aura. Both false. London was not Limbo. It was actual. It was to-day. It was the very-present. Ermy had so made it” (126). This struggle with presentness, and the collision between the past and present through the layering of the traumatic past and the calm present, is the palimpsest that Raymonde sees as London as well as herself.

Ermentrude and the mediation of the mirror maintains a violent tension between the ancient past and the immediacy of the present, or modernity. H.D. writes, “Not of the far, eternal, static past. Raymonde only saw them of the present or of the far, far ever so much more distant past than just unearthed Queen Nerfertiti” (129). This stark division of the ancient past with the present is yet another factor that destabilizes her perception of reality. Then, Raymonde draws herself back to the present through physical, punctuated actions in the “actual” present. H.D. writes, “She would let go that aura of the past. She would come (with a thump) to. She wasn’t going to drift and drift any longer. The candles were too anemic. She switched on the electricity with a vicious little destructive jerk” (137). Here the palimpsest refocuses from the faded marks of the past to the solid reality of the present as Raymonde takes action to pull herself from the dissolution of herself. The jump to the present is emphasized by the shift in lighting, as the candles (which are a vestige of an earlier time) are exchanged with the modernity of the electric light.

Finally, modernity is depicted for Raymonde as a portal to antiquity instead of existing in its own right. H.D. ties the photographic/cinematographic quality of memory to the layered insubstantiality of modern experience: “Face upon face, impression upon impression, and all of modernity (as she viewed it) was as the jellified and sickly substance of a collection of old colourless photographic negatives through which gleamed the reality, the truth of the blue temples of Thebes, of the white colonnades of Samos” (158). The layering of the faces and impressions are liquefied and dissolved into one another, and the reality of modernity becomes an amalgamation of antiquity and the experiences of the present. While for Hipparchia the ancient present is the most urgent or immediate, for Raymonde the ancient past is more immediate than the present, slipping through the insubstantiality of the modern moment. This connection between the ancient

past and modernity binds the stories of Hipparchia and Raymonde together even as their uneven experiences of time threaten to unbind them.

Although *Palimpsest* is often tied to H.D.'s autobiographical experiences with stillbirth and World War I, its ties to a greater modernist project are laid bare through an analysis of its response to clinical discourses of the fin de siècle. Its forms do not simply evoke psychoanalytic and sexological concepts, but push beyond them toward a view of femininity which both incorporates and questions these discourses. H.D.'s critical engagement with clinical discourses in *Palimpsest*, as well as her use of experimental modernist forms such as repetition and fragmentation, attempts to reconstruct feminine subjectivity through their apprehension of themselves, responding against the pathologization of women's behaviors through medical discourses. It replaces the hierarchical structure of the clinic, with its reliance on an interlocutor to reveal the "truth" about femininity, and replaces it with a nuanced and fragmented account of subjectivity through Hipparchia and Raymonde. The incomprehensibility of the women in *Palimpsest* suggests that while the process of analysis can reveal truths about women, their consciousnesses are locations of endless complexity rather than sites for diagnosis and cure.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL MADNESS IN WILLIAMS AND THE BARONESS

In addition to examining the doctor-centered authorship of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and the patient-centered authorship of *Palimpsest*, this study explores the doctor/patient dynamic through the physician and poet William Carlos Williams and female artists who are positioned as “irrational” or mad through his works. Williams’s modernism has often been conservatively framed as expressions of a local poet whose knowledge and experience of the medical field is reflected in his “doctor stories.” However, Williams’s intellectual connection to the avant-garde New York Dada movement, and particularly his relationship to the Dada eccentric Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, is important for reading Williams’s investment in a new modernist aesthetic. The relationship forged through social encounters and artistic sparring between Williams and the Baroness is often presented as an entertaining footnote in their respective professional lives. However, I argue that the conversation created through their works can be read as a critical intervention into modernist aesthetics, sexuality, and madness. The discourse around femininity and madness at the turn of the twentieth century, brought into popular conversation by Sigmund Freud’s works on female sexuality and hysteria, becomes redirected in Williams’s modernist project toward destruction and renewal that he saw as key to producing “the new.”

The Dada influence on Williams’s poetry/prose hybrid work *Spring and All* (1923) has been examined by modernist scholars such as Bram Dijkstra, who argues that the rise of the avant-garde in the New York scene instigated an evolution in Williams’s poetry away from its investment in traditional poetics in 1909 to its more experimental aesthetics in *Kora in Hell* (1920) and *Spring and All*.²⁹ However, *Spring and All* can also be read as a response to the Baroness’s apocalyptic

²⁹ In *Cubism, Stieglitz, and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams* Dijkstra writes, “European movements in literature and art, such as Dadaism and later Surrealism, fascinated him and influenced the structure of his work” (129). However, he argues that ultimately those movements were of “minor importance...in comparison with his initial fascination with Cubism” (130).

critique of *Kora in Hell*, published in *The Little Review* in 1921.³⁰ While the Dada movement spanned several countries and was constituted by diverse philosophies, in *Dada and Surrealism* (2004) David Hopkins identifies some philosophical perspectives that were shared among Dada artists. Two in particular were important to the Baroness's art: a rejection of "rationality" as a paradigm for creating art, and the refusal "to subordinate the experience of life to that of art" (30). Both of these positions are key to the Baroness's critique of Williams's poetics, which calls for the destruction of the patriarchal foundation of poetry and is enacted through the destructive prose in *Spring and All*. The radical shift in Williams's poetic style from the improvisational prose of *Kora in Hell* to the sparse modernist aesthetic in *Spring and All* responds to the Baroness's encouragement and at times invokes her image. The Baroness's later appearance in Williams's critique of history *In the American Grain* (1925) exemplifies a bold feminine sexuality which Williams claims is often stymied by repressive American culture. Although references to the Baroness in Williams's work are brief and sometimes oblique, I read her criticism as a guiding force in his early poetry and prose.

The sexually charged relationship between Williams and the Baroness merits a brief chapter in Williams's *Autobiography* (1951) and is often reproduced through humorous anecdotes in critical studies about both authors.³¹ These stories present the Baroness as a borderline madwoman while Williams appears as a participant and victim in her violent seduction. Williams's

³⁰ Although in *Dada and Surrealism* David Hopkins questions the Baroness's significance in the Dada movement, recent critical works such as Amelia Jones's *Irrational Modernism* and studies by Irene Gammel argue that the Baroness was a central figure in New York Dada. By recuperating the Baroness's role, Jones and Gammel shift the masculine-centric perception of the avant-garde movement and highlighting the not-insignificant contributions of women artists.

³¹ Their initial meeting in the *Little Review* offices and their brief, often violent "love affair" are addressed in Paul Mariani's *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* (1981), Irene Gammel's *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity—A Cultural Biography* (2003), Linda Lappin's "Dada Queen in the Bad Boys' Club: Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven" (2004), and Andrea Barnet's *All Night Party: The Women of Bohemian Greenwich Village and Harlem, 1913-1930* (2004), to name a few.

social position as a middle-class family doctor in Rutherford, New Jersey, contrasts sharply with the Baroness's life as an avant-garde artist, living in poverty in Greenwich Village and staging radical performances through the streets of New York. In his *Autobiography* Williams expresses an ambivalence about their relationship, characterizing the Baroness as a brilliant artist but also pathological figure whose violence and sexual aggression is unsettling. Although Williams does not explicitly invoke his position as doctor in his relationship with the Baroness, questions of her sanity are pervasive in Williams's work and in contemporary accounts of her life.

While his letters and autobiography vacillate in their description of the Baroness between an artistic genius and a madwoman, the sexual energy that she exudes in her highly experimental Dadaist performances and poetry is reflected in his early poetics. The Baroness's presence throughout Williams's early modernist work suggests that her influence on avant-garde aesthetics extends beyond her cultural significance as a Dada icon, and that traces of both her experimental approach to poetry as well as her philosophical attitudes toward sexuality can be read through Williams's poetics. I argue that the Baroness, both because and in spite of her status as a pathologized woman, was highly influential in the production of Williams's approach to modernist form. By examining the dynamic of Williams's relationship to the Baroness through a lens informed by clinical discourses, I demonstrate that Williams's modernist project centers on a resistance to the perception of active, sexual femininity as dysfunctional through the evocation of the Baroness's pathology.

Reading Williams's work through the Baroness's critique facilitates a more dynamic understanding of how ideas about gender and sexuality were evolving during the modernist period. Rachel Blau du Plessis's *Purple Passages* (2012) confronts the limitations of focusing largely on female authors when exploring issues of gender in modernism: "The gynocritical imperative of

studying only female writers from the perspective of gender reinforces the assumption that women are the sole repositories of gender materials and the only spokespersons for everyone's gender problems" (15). By shifting the focus from a feminine-specific model of literary criticism to one that explores both male and female authors and their relationship to the shifting gender landscape of the early twentieth century, du Plessis argues that one can explore a more nuanced definition of "patriarchal" poetry and how it functioned in modernist circles. This approach offers a critique of patriarchal structures in high modernism through a nuanced view of masculinity while still maintaining a feminist perspective. Additionally, it guides readings of modernist sexuality and gender issues through both male and female authored texts. This mode of analysis is valuable to a reading of works by Williams and the Baroness, as both poets confront discourses of sexuality and gender as reactions to each other's works.

The pattern of influence that can be read through works by Williams and the Baroness is predicated on their brief but significant social relationship which eventually evolved into an artistic exchange of poetic philosophies. Their meeting and subsequent encounters as detailed in Williams's *Autobiography* and elsewhere reflect Williams's ambivalence toward her, but also his investment in her Dadaist creations. According to his *Autobiography*, he became intrigued by the Baroness's work through the offices of *The Little Review*, a little magazine edited by Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap in which the Baroness frequently published. One or two short encounters followed, in which Williams claimed that "we talked well and I was moved. But when later she went into her act, I put up a fight" (*Autobiography* 168). He describes how her violence toward him ended with his purchase of a punching bag to prepare for their next meeting, and a square punch to the Baroness's jaw on Park Avenue. According to Linda Lappin, Williams "issued a declaration of love" after their initial meeting, following this declaration with love letters and gifts

(316).³² He provided the Baroness with monetary support to travel to Paris, and his lasting impression of her was one of admiration. However, Lappin describes Williams's hesitation and ultimate rejection of the Baroness's sexual advances, which resulted in the physical confrontations that ended their relationship.

A significant part of Williams's ambivalence toward the Baroness was her often erratic behavior and her underlying, supposed madness. Lappin quotes of Williams, "The Baroness to me was a great field of cultured bounty in spite of her psychosis.... She was right. I found myself drinking pure water from her spirit" (317). Even in moments where Williams expresses the importance of the Baroness to his experiences, he describes her as a pathological figure. Lappin argues that Williams's reaction to the Baroness is typical of male modernist attitudes toward the Dada artist: "Her purity, validity, and genius are grudgingly recognized beneath her apparent madness—not viewed as a pose, but as an extreme form of 'non-acquiescence'—which however was a threat to American culture, to the self-assuredness of American men, as well as a source of danger to the Baroness' own mental health" (317). Lappin reads the Baroness's "apparent madness" from a gendered perspective, as a particular form of rebellion to normative prescriptions of femininity. In this depiction, Williams is a stand-in for the American patriarchal social order, even though his positive regard for the Baroness is evident in several of his fiction and non-fiction works.

The madness of the Baroness was debated among her female peers, and was often perceived as a function of her art.³³ In "The Art of Madness" published in *The Little Review* in

³² "Dada Queen in the Bad Boys' Club: Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. *Southwest Review* 89.2/89.3 (2004).

³³ In *Madness and Modernism* (1992) Louis Sass draws connections between mental illness and modernity, writing, "Modernist art has been said to manifest certain off-putting characteristics that are reminiscent of schizophrenia...these art forms are characterized not so much by unreflectiveness and spontaneity as by acute self-consciousness and self-reference, and by alienation from action and experience" (8). While Sass focuses primarily on schizophrenia and related disorders, pathologies which are not typically associated with the Baroness's

1919, Evelyn Scott writes, “It is only in a condition of disease or mania that one may enjoy an absolutely exalted state, that numbness of the sensibilities toward everything outside the single inspiration” (*Body Sweats* 329). Scott frames madness as a positive feature of artistic creation, identifying the Baroness as a carrier of this “disease” and praises her ability to reach this state. In order to corroborate her claim for the Baroness’s madness, she cites Jane Heap’s previous statements. Heap composed a reaction to “The Art of Madness,” writing, “I am not talking of mania and disease, of numbed sensibilities...hers is a willed state. A woman of brains, of mad beauty and *elegantes wesen*, who has abandoned sanity: left it cold” (*Body Sweats* 330). In their writing, Scott and Heap identify a self-induced madness in the Baroness that “frees” her mind for the radical art that she produces. The status of the Baroness’s madness is indeterminate in her contemporaries’ accounts, supposedly willed or potentially metaphorical while acknowledged as a feature of her personality.

Modern criticism of the Baroness focuses on her characterization as simultaneously genius and expressive of a mania in her performance art. Like Jane Heap, critics tend to read the Baroness’s madness as a cultivated feature of her artistic expression. In *Baroness Elsa* (2002), Irene Gammel identifies her as a highly influential and active artist in the modernist and Dada scenes, noting that she was partially relegated to the margins of international modernism “under the rubric of eccentricity and madness.”³⁴ However, Gammel argues, “For today’s reader and viewer...Freytag-Loringhoven’s corporeal art is far from being evidence of madness, craziness, or marginality, for her body-centered art and dislocation of conventional femininity intersect with

behaviors, his argument highlights how madness as a self-conscious and heterogeneous mode of being can be productively compared to modernist aesthetics.

³⁴ p.5. While Gammel’s text largely focuses on the biographical rather than critical approaches to the Baroness’s work, it establishes the Baroness as an important cultural figure in the Dada movement, as well as her influence in the more mainstream modernist movement. Gammel argues in her introduction to *Body Sweats* that it is crucial to read the Baroness through her self-presentation as well as her artwork, since these features of her oeuvre are often one and the same.

postmodern notions of radicality” (5). Gammel’s analysis rejects “madness” as a paradigm for understanding the Baroness’s work, instead shifting her focus to its intervention in critical discussions about feminine subjectivity.

The Baroness herself rejected the claims of insanity that her peers debated; quoted by Irene Gammel in *Baroness Elsa*, she writes, “Some call my tussle craziness—the easiest way out for common ignorant when they see brilliantly beyond their limit pluck in self-defense not to feel mediocre...” (1). Written in the style of her erratic Dadaist poetry and prose, the Baroness perceived the debates about her madness arising from envy of her talent. Charges of insanity, madness, and craziness from her peers, Gammel argues, are culturally contextual: the notion of the Baroness’s pathology relies on a contrasting, normative image of women’s behavior and sexual expression in the early twentieth century. The Baroness, through her radicality, breaks through traditional notions of femininity to critique the repression of artistic and sexual expression. It is this critical radicality, aimed at Williams, that is adapted by Williams to create a modernist poetics.

The Baroness’s critique of Williams is articulated in her poem “Thee I Call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring’: A Critique of *Kora in Hell* and Why...” (1921).³⁵ In this work, she frames Williams’s identity as bourgeois doctor as an inhibition for his writing. Her critique overturns the typical clinical structure which places the doctor in a position of power over the pathological: instead, the Baroness suggests that it is his position as doctor that weakens his poetics. She writes to Williams that in order for his modernist project to come to fruition, he must destroy the foundation and create a new aesthetic. Her critique, while often pointedly addressing Williams or W.C., is also a larger critique of the American literary tradition (or lack thereof). There is a thematic tension in the poem between the idea of American literature’s crumbling foundation and

³⁵ Originally published in part in *The Little Review* in autumn 1921, the poem in its entirety was republished in the edited collection of the Baroness’s work, *Body Sweats* (2011).

the sense that as a young nation, the “tradition” as such did not exist at all. The formal aspect of her work, which is a combination of prose and Dada-style poetry (sparse, disjointed, and reliant upon juxtaposition rather than fully articulated thought), in itself becomes a critique of Williams’s experimental prose book *Kora in Hell*. While a significant departure from many of the Baroness’s poems, which were often more recognizable as Dadaist in form (short columns, sound poems, and logic parodies), her hybrid poem integrates all of these elements in her critique.

The Baroness’s poem is lengthy and comprised of many disjointed themes, including destruction and Williams’s repression as a bourgeois doctor. It begins with an example of the way she uses juxtaposition to express many ideas at once while connecting them through verbal associations. Although she doesn’t name Williams immediately, the Baroness begins her work by addressing the dysfunction of modern technologies:

Quiet child of brain—logic: European war.
 Moral strength of scientist—surgeon—physician of degree. Vision.
 Brutality: child of denseness—inability to feel, think clean—lack
 of vision—vulgar blood-fogged brain—run amuck!
 Despair of helplessness to escape blindness of jungle vines of
 thought tangled—of waste barren, unfertile—violent
 action—noise—clamour; (von Freytag-Loringhoven 293)

She contrasts medical concepts such as “logic,” “brain,” “scientist,” “surgeon,” with the destruction that was the “European war” with its “violent/action—noise—clamour.” This juxtaposition evokes the modernist and avant-garde movements’ rebellion against conventional and logical forms which were proven to be annihilated by the destruction created by large-scale, technological warfare. The effect is reinforced by the chaotic organization of words that does not establish a clear subject/object relationship, but rather leaves the words in relation to one another without guiding a “reading” of its message. The Baroness positions the forces of reason against “brutality,” which is not associated with the destruction of war but rather the perspective of the

physician which is detached from emotion and creativity. The Baroness claims that the “blood-fogged brain,” which could be one that has encountered violence but also one that is actively engaged, is “vulgar,” an ironic claim that it is actually the “reasonable” that is itself vulgar. In the next lines, she sees the logical brain bound up in confused thought, and the “waste barren, unfertile” landscape from which it attempts to draw creativity is confronted with the “violent action—noise—clamour” of modernity, embodied by both warfare and the violent Baroness herself.

At this early point in the poem, the Baroness has not yet brought Williams, or the initials W.C. (standing for William Carlos as well as “water closet”), into the discussion. However, the dissonance created between the sterility of the physician’s logic and the messy context of modernity in which this sterility operates is what the Baroness wants to critique about Williams’s *Kora in Hell*. Williams becomes a stand-in for the male modernist and the bourgeois doctor whose creativity is restricted by his position as a man of logic. Through her poem the Baroness claims that this position has been both created and annihilated by war and the modernist movement, so Williams has to establish a new foundation for his poetics.

This claim is reaffirmed later in the poem when the Baroness critiques American literature on a more general scale: “No time—no time—no time to fasten roots downward—become/civilized naturally—inside slow progress—chemical logic—” (von Freytag-Loringhoven 294). The Baroness claims that the youth of the United States makes it groundless, yet urges Williams to exploit this fact for his art which would necessitate the release of his bourgeois physician identity. Her repetition of “no time” becomes an important concept in Williams’s *Spring and All*, as his poetics manipulates temporality through his “new” modernist form. A few lines down, the Baroness writes of America, “Americans not possessing tradition—not born within

truth's lofty/ echoing walls—born on void—background of barren/ nothingness—handle such truth's coin—picked up--/flippantly! (von Freytag-Loringhoven 294). In these lines, the Baroness argues that Williams is attempting to stand on a foundation of artistic production that does not exist, that has both never existed and no longer exists because of the war. However, Williams develops this apocalyptic vision of a void and “barren/nothingness” in *Spring and All* as a point of positive poetics. Williams argues throughout *Spring and All* that in order to arrive at the “new” poetics that modernism claims to achieve, he must enact destruction of the traditions which are holding him back. In this sense, the apocalyptic prose of *Spring and All* adapts the Baroness's critique of Williams's attempt to anchor his work to a foundation that no longer exists.

She maps this critique of American tradition onto a pointed argument about his writing—she claims that Williams's words have no meaning, and therefore accomplish nothing:

No rhythm—curves—science—conviction—background—
tradition!
Where your circus?
Where do you stand?
What do your words mean?
Never to point—what point?
There is none—carry no meaning—aimed at blank! (von Freytag-Loringhoven 295)

This critique is ironic for a Dadaist poet whose poetry is often nihilistic and does not appear to achieve a “point.” She follows her claim of lack to tradition with a critique of Williams's inability to adhere to a conviction or tradition. However, through this line of questioning she interrogates Williams's lack of substance and authenticity throughout his work. Even though Dadaist poetry and artworks exist to evoke emotion instead of meaning, the Baroness pushes Williams to say something meaningful within his art, unencumbered or unguided by the supposed “logic” that his position as doctor affords.

Later in the poem, she clarifies her position on Williams and of the failure of American literature, and transitions to a claim about the productivity of creating in such a failed environment: “Around us result of family cave: encased legs—brains—in faulty/foundation’s debris: America./W.C.’s “art” faulty foundation—crumbling walls” (von Freytag-Loringhoven 300). The foundation of America, she claims, has made brains and legs immobile, and Williams is caught in this trap. However, according to the Baroness, it seems that there is an opportunity for escape—through the crumbling of this “faulty foundation,” a destruction which will set him free from the ideal of “tradition” and allow for the creation of better, new art.

Shortly thereafter, the Baroness evokes yet another scene of creative destruction through the seasons: “Winter: summer’s logical successor—killer by necessity—for/advancement—new bloom./Nature sits in nature’s lap: one two—two one—action—contra—/action—clash—*new life*” (von Freytag-Loringhoven 301). Through this passage, it appears that the Baroness does not look negatively upon destruction—instead, it is through this idea of renewal through destruction that allows for artistic production. By invoking a cyclical system (the seasons), the Baroness advocates for embracing violence as a generative process. The emphasis on violence is especially important as the winter does not only “naturally” follow summer, but the tension between “action” and “contra-action” creates a violent “crash” from which emerges “new life.” Similarly, the often-violent relationship between the Baroness and Williams bears fruit, as it facilitates the creation of her poetry/prose work, and stimulates Williams to create his own.

Finally, the Baroness draws Williams’s identity as a doctor into her argument, positioning Williams as both a physician and hysterical patient. On the one hand, she asserts that Williams’s career as a physician inhibits his creation of art: “Has to heal people—keep consultation hours—in general--/particular—concentrate brainpores chiefly around other/ people’s affairs—including

family—expense—income” (307). Rather than using metaphorical language as she does many times throughout the text, with crumbling foundations and empty circuses, the Baroness concretely points to the mundane details of Williams’s clinical practice as an inhibition to his art. Because his energies are focused on his patients, he is unable to develop his aesthetic.³⁶

On the other hand, she associates Williams with sexual repression, offering a gender-bent diagnosis of hysteria. In one early section, she writes, “Strength of you: brutality—makebelieve—phantasmagoria--/cheating before limelight—hysteria! such it is” (295). While she draws out qualities of Williams that are associated with “strength,” the inclusion of hysteria as a feature of Williams’s personality is a significant charge. While hysteria is a condition associated with femininity and the repression of desires which came out through non-normative behaviors, the Baroness charges Williams himself with hysteria.³⁷ This is emphasized later as the Baroness charges Williams with the inability to properly sexually engage with a woman. She writes, “Put woman into book because cannot put her with good conscience--/grace—right touch—any more into bed!” (von Freytag-Loringhoven 304). Sexual repression and hysteria, according to the Baroness, are part and parcel of Williams’s status as a “moral” doctor, leading to his inability to create art. In this way, the Baroness not only succeeds in critiquing Williams but the structure of

³⁶ This critique also echoes an account in Williams’s *Autobiography* of the Baroness’s advice, in which he writes, “Once later she had an intimate talk with me and advised me that what I needed to make me great was to contract syphilis from her and so free my mind for serious art” (Williams 165). In this encounter, the Baroness frames her creative madness as a sexually transmitted disease that might transform Williams’s poetics. Her reference to syphilis specifically evokes disease, madness, promiscuous sex and prostitution, as syphilis was perceived to be a major public health crisis at the time. In *The Social Hygiene Bulletin* in February 1917, the Public Health Commission is quoted: “When we say that gonorrhoea and syphilis cause untold social and economic loss we are admitting our inability to obtain a reasonable estimate through reliable statistics” (2). With the association of syphilis with illicit behavior, immorality, and chaos, the Baroness is encouraging Williams to think of the world outside of the confines of his measured, bourgeois life.

³⁷ According to the OED, hysteria “was originally thought to be due to a disturbance of the uterus and its functions.” In *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, Elaine Showalter writes, “In the twentieth century, these views about an essential and organic female biology that produces hysteria have mutated into more psychological portraits that link hysteria with femininity—with a range of ‘feminine’ personality traits. In a psychoanalytic context, women have been seen as disadvantaged in mastering oedipal tasks and thus disposed to hysterical behaviors” (287).

medical discourse itself. Instead of a male doctor analyzing the hysterical woman, it is the Baroness who sees Williams as the hysterical person who needs to be drawn out of his repressive state.

While the Baroness's critique can hardly be considered a coherent piece of writing due to its investment in Dadaist practices and their attendant reliance on rejecting rationality, the philosophical positions that the poem constructs for the Baroness and Williams parallel larger debates about mainstream modernism and the avant-garde. Amelia Jones's *Irrational Modernism* (2004) takes the Baroness as a point of departure for discussing an alternative view of the avant-garde against the historical and "mainstream" modernist practices of the early twentieth century (a category to which Williams would nominally belong). Jones argues, "While modernity can be usefully characterized by dominant strains of rationalism...it was also continually disrupted by the very irrationality it labored to contain" (16). By taking up the Baroness as exemplary of this "excess," Jones traces the ways in which the avant-garde movement was able to challenge conventional art in the way that the Baroness does in "Thee I Call 'Hamlet of Wedding-Ring.'" Jones also addresses the idea of the Baroness's madness, writing, "The Baroness lived, performed a kind of unhinged subjectivity that most of the other artists of her day only examined or illustrated" (5). By characterizing the Baroness's pathology as "performed," Jones argues that the Baroness was able to examine subjectivity outside the confines of modern dictates of rationality. Far from being a pathological subject, then, the Baroness used perceptions and enactments of insanity as an artistic medium in order to push the boundaries of art, a claim that echoes the debates of Scott and Heap.

Jones explicitly positions the Baroness as a radical foil to Williams, whose white, middle class masculinity seems threatened by the Baroness's bold and often aggressive, excessive sexuality. While Jones positions the Baroness as a central figure of the avant-garde, she takes

Williams as exemplary of the relatively conservative mainstream modernist movement. However, this perspective elides the more radical formal innovations and transgressive poetics of Williams's earlier works. By reading the published critiques of Williams and the Baroness in conversation, I argue that Williams should not be positioned in binary opposition to the Baroness's radicality but his poetics were revitalized through her critique. In particular, his perception of her pathology and its aesthetic effects, inflected by his experiences as a practicing physician, becomes central to his use of destructive and productive sexuality in *In the American Grain* and *Spring and All*.

As the Baroness claims in her critique, Williams's experiences as a family physician shaped his writing in both practical and philosophical ways. However, critical accounts of the relationship between Williams's medical practice and art are often reductive and conservatively framed. In *A New World Naked* (1981), Paul Mariani draws explicit connections between Williams's approach to modernism and his career as family physician: "Writing always seemed to have to wait for life, and that fact both angered him and made him feel guilty at his own topsyturvy system of values. Of course life was more important, of course his patients and wife and kids mattered" (183). Mariani's depiction of the negative impact of Williams's dual identity as doctor and poet omits the more serious investment in poetics that was enhanced by his perspective as a medical doctor. Williams's experiences of caring for pregnant women and underserved families around Rutherford are central features of his poetry and prose and were influential in the development of his poetics, which seek to emulate everyday experience through common subject matter and sparse aesthetics. One significant way that his relationship with the Baroness affected his work in a positive sense is that her radical approach to art in a metropolitan setting drew him outside of a bourgeois context. Consequently, his works composed around the time of his relationship with her (including *Spring and All* and *In the American Grain*) contain echoes of the

Baroness's aggressively sexual, apocalyptic style. The Baroness's "dysfunction" became the site for Williams to challenge the pathologization of femininity in *In the American Grain* as well as an opportunity to reframe destructive sexuality as a possibility for positive poetics in *Spring and All*.

Although Williams's writing on the Baroness rarely alludes to his medical background, his attitude toward gender issues was shaped by his position as family doctor. In *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams* (1993), T. Hugh Crawford argues that reading Williams's evolving stances on scientific knowledge can be read through his poetics: "As modernism became institutionalized, however, Williams began to question both its authority and the cultural power of technoscientific discourses in general—a questioning that led him toward a form of postmodernism" (4). Crawford frames Williams's critique of modernism as extending to the authority of the medical institution, a move which Crawford argues was productive in shaping Williams's more radical aesthetics. This dual skepticism cannot strictly be read through the textual relationship between Williams and the Baroness, as Crawford notes that his texts do not often deal explicitly with his medical knowledge. However, Crawford argues that Williams's position as a doctor influenced his approach to establishing authority in his writing. He writes, "For Williams, writing is often aligned with masculine sexual power and is surreptitiously reinforced by the 'masculine' world of science and technology. This is not a stable attitude in his texts, however" (74). While Crawford argues that Williams "phallicized" poetry by linking it to a "masculine" scientific discourse, Williams's writing suggests that issues of gender were complicated by his professional relationships with women as well as his ambivalent stance toward gender relations.³⁸

³⁸ Crawford briefly notes that Williams was influenced by Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, "particularly by Weininger's division of psychology into male and female halves" (67). This philosophical debate played out in an early correspondence-based text published in *The Egoist* entitled "The Great Sex Spiral," in which Williams debates Weiningerian principles with contributing editor Dora Marsden. In one correspondence, he writes, "In *Sex and Character*, Weininger claiming for man a soul, denying it for woman, means just this: man philosophically or psychologically denies the earth, woman proclaims it...But his most palpable error (as Miss Marsden has herself pointed out) is that in his eagerness to make out a case for man he deliberately perverts and transposes facts. Man is

His stance toward the liberation of female sexuality in particular challenges the sexological and psychoanalytic framework that often casts femininity as passive. Rather than asserting a poetics that is dominated by masculine power, Williams's *In the American Grain* and *Spring and All* places the femininity (as overtly sexual and destructive) as central to constructing a new poetics.

At the same time, Williams's modernist project considers the value of adapting clinical concepts and discourses for his poetics rather than a complete rejection of medical perspectives. In *William Carlos Williams and the Diagnostics of Culture* (1993), Brian Bremen argues that Williams's clinical practice and his writing were symbiotic, writing, "Specifically, it is the act of diagnosis that is at the core of both Williams's medicine and his poetry" (85). Bremen reads Williams's works as critique via diagnosis, positioning Williams's perspective as doctor as central to his poetics. In particular, Bremen argues that Williams's attention to not only the conditions of the body, but his emphasis on "the more symbolic realms of both the self and the social" takes a critical stance on traditional diagnostic practices" (85). He argues, "By asserting his own dialectical mechanism in opposition to customary forms of representation, Williams engages in a cultural critique that acts as both an engaged diagnosis and a step toward cure" (Bremen 8). Bremen's reading of Williams's cultural critique via medical diagnosis and cure is compelling, particularly when read through his short stories, prose works, and poetry which specifically engage with his medical practice. However, Williams's experimental poetics equally resist medical attitudes toward diagnosis and cure, particularly concerning psychoanalytic and sexological conceptions of femininity, sexuality, and hysteria. His adoption of Dadaist forms in *Spring and All*

the vague generalizer, woman the concrete thinker, and not the reverse as he imagined" (*William Carlos Williams Review* 23). Although Williams counters Weininger's core claims about the differences between men and women, he nonetheless supports (and demands) the division of psychology into masculine and feminine spheres. The Baroness, described as a "masculine" figure by Williams, is nonetheless positioned as exemplary of liberated femininity in *In the American Grain* and a site of destructive sexuality in *Spring and All*.

and his admiration of the Baroness's manic sexual energy in *In the American Grain* draws the pathological figure of the Baroness to the center of his modernist aesthetics, asserting their positive value in the creation of a new poetics.

While *In the American Grain* (1925) can be read as a revision or re-imagining of American history, one of its most prominent themes is the repression of feminine sexuality and its detrimental effect on American culture.³⁹ Its critique echoes Freud's essay "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and the Modern Nervous Illness" (1908) in which he writes, "Generally speaking, our civilization is built up on the suppression of instincts. Each individual has surrendered some part of his possessions—some part of the sense of omnipotence or of the aggressive or vindictive inclinations of his personality" (Young-Bruehl 167). Although Freud repeatedly frames harmful cultural repression as a problem for masculinity, his endeavors to ameliorate the repressions of women in psychoanalytic practice also acknowledges women's struggles with restrictive cultural attitudes toward sex.

Williams's critical stance toward repressed sexuality in *In the American Grain*, unlike Freud's in "'Civilized' Sexual Morality," is focused on women's sexuality, taking up the Baroness and the treatment of her performance art by law enforcement as exemplary of the ways in which femininity is criminalized and pathologized. He introduces the Baroness in context of overt and public feminine sexuality, and the way that American society will not allow such sexuality to exist. He writes,

Atlanta, Georgia, is far worse than Paris for girls on the streets soliciting, but there is no good in it,—I don't suppose there has ever been an American woman like Kiki or that delightful Baroness who paraded Fifth Avenue one day with a coal-scuttle for a chapeau. Naturally they arrested her. Naturally. She would have been arrested in any city, but not, I

³⁹ Although this work was published after *Spring and All* (1923), Williams's explicit reference to the Baroness in *In the American Grain* ties her directly to Williams's cultural critique of American attitudes toward "active" female sexuality.

imagine, with quite such a sense of duty as in America. To permit such a thing would cast a very awkward light on us all. (*In the American Grain* 178)

Williams's tone when discussing the Baroness's arrest after her street performance in New York is sarcastic and biting. He is highly critical of the way that American society is quick to condemn and even criminalize sexuality that is expressed by a woman, especially that which is publicly and proudly declared. He notes that America is unable to "permit" overt displays of sexuality, and it is impossible to imagine an American woman capable of this boldness. In this iteration of the Baroness's characterization, she is a vehicle through which Williams and his reader can see the positive possibilities of feminine sexuality. Although in his *Autobiography* Williams is critical of the Baroness and her violent actions (actions that had gotten her arrested several times, including the time that Williams first met her), in *In the American Grain* Williams uses the Baroness as an example of the ways in which American society cripples feminine sexuality and creativity, through its repressive morality. In this way, he takes the Baroness's performance art as exemplary of a progressive sexual politics, one that is condemned by American culture as criminal but should be understood as reflective of a new modern attitude toward feminine sexuality.

Preceding Williams's mention of the Baroness and her public displays of sexual aggression is the central essay of the prose work, which is not an original piece but an excerpt from the Puritan tract "Cotton Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World." This piece of conceptual writing reproduces the testimonials of the Salem Witch Trials and the ideology surrounding the proceedings. While this segment of the text is uncharacteristic in its reproduction rather than revision of American history, in the context of Williams's work it stands as a condemnation of the repressive attitudes of the Puritan culture. The way that women were targeted as witches and stood trial because of their "wicked" ways is reflected later in the text as Williams argues that repression of sexuality in women leads to atrocities such as the Salem Witch Trials. In the next chapter, "Pere

Sebastian Rasles,” Williams continuously argues against his interlocutor who seems to have enjoyed reading Cotton Mathers’s work:

You know, I asked him, do you not, how other means being denied them, the Puritans ran madly to OFFICIAL sexual excess—during the long winters? It was a common thing for men to have had as many as seven wives. Few had less than three. The women died under the stress of bearing children, they died like flies under the strains and accidents of childbirth PLUS the rigors of primitive labors. (*In the American Grain* 119)

While the document recording the Salem witch trials portrays the accused witches as the marginal figures, in this passage Williams points to how the repressive attitudes of the Puritans resulted in what could be considered sexual and reproductive abuse of women. This critique of misogynistic attitudes in the central narratives of *In the American Grain* grounds the work in this skeptical attitude toward prudishness and the hypocrisy that is pervasive in Puritan attitudes toward sexuality.

Williams reads the Puritanical foundations of United States culture as dangerous, but understands experimental modernist forms as working to upend the status quo. He writes, “Already the flower is turning up its petals. It is *this* to be *moral*: to be *positive*, to be peculiar, to be sure, generous, brave—to MARRY, to *touch*--...to create, to hybridize, to crosspollenize—not to sterilize, to draw back, to fear, to dry up, to rot” (*In the American Grain* 121). His emphasis on morality in juxtaposition to positive stances toward sexuality argues for a perspective of sexuality *as moral*, and the poem-like prose evokes both *Spring and All* and the fragmented prose-poetry of the Baroness’s work. Additionally, he uses sexually charged language to emphasize the rise of the feminine as creative and reproductive, a theme which is reinforced through the hybrid constructions of *Spring and All* and *Paterson*.

Williams also situates the Baroness’s creativity in relation to a more contemporary and creative woman, Emily Dickinson, whom he sees as an important feminine literary figure but one

who is stymied by her isolation. Williams writes that Dickinson was “starving of passion in her father’s garden, is the very nearest we have ever been—starving” (*In the American Grain* 179). Here, Williams draws connection between the poverty of female authorship and the suppression of feminine sexuality. He continues to critique the idea that feminine sexuality is evil, writing, “It’s the central lie!” (183). Williams counters this “central lie” through his deployment of the Baroness’s performance of sexuality as exemplary of liberated femininity and creativity. Claims like these echo the arguments of some second wave feminists who saw the suppression of female sexuality as part and parcel of a rigidly structured patriarchal society. Through Williams’s defense of sexuality in *In the American Grain*, particularly as expressed by women such as the Baroness, he critiques the repressive culture that Freud also observed as working against the sexual health of civilization. Unlike Freud, however, Williams’s work advocates for the free expression of bold sexuality in women through his depiction of the radical Baroness.

Although the Baroness is drawn into *In the American Grain* as a cultural figure, echoes of her critique of Williams’s limited bourgeois perspective in her prose poem become central concerns to his 1923 modernist work *Spring and All*. Through this prose hybrid work, Williams endeavors to critique the historical foundations of poetry and cultivate what Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life* termed “the unhistorical” to build on a new foundation of poetry whose form was much closer to sparse Dada poetry than the romantic poetry of the previous century. The unhistorical, fragmentary moments in the poetry and the uneven mixture of the historical and unhistorical in the prose exemplify the experimental, avant-garde quality of Williams’s work. Williams’s manipulation of the temporal in *Spring and All*

serves as a modernist enactment of Nietzsche's historical critique, indicating Williams's philosophical engagement with history in his desire to create a "new" poetics.⁴⁰

The Baroness's vision of winter creating the opportunity for spring in "Thee I Call 'Hamlet of Wedding-Ring'" becomes adapted in *Spring and All* to the concept of creative destruction. On the other hand, the poetry and prose of *Spring and All* achieves something which the Baroness had urged Williams to create—a sense of meaning or purpose to his work. Although *Spring and All* was not a commercially successful venture for Williams, and the poetry is often anthologized and divorced from its original prose contexts, I argue that the poetry and prose work together toward a particular purpose—that is, a theorization of modernism through a temporalizing of the poetic experience.⁴¹ Williams's theorizing of modernism through *Spring and All* is a complex process through which he performs a philosophical critique of traditional concepts of history in prose, while enacting the result of this critique through poetry. This critique is tied explicitly to gender, as women and the feminine play a central role within *Spring and All* as sites of both creation and destruction, at times simultaneously.

Echoes of the Baroness's critique of *Kora in Hell* can be read in the prose of *Spring and All* itself: Williams positions this work as drawing from the experiences of composing his "Improvisations" while moving beyond them. He writes, "I think often of my earlier work and what it has cost me not to have been clear. I acknowledge I have moved chaotically about refusing or rejecting most things, seldom accepting values or acknowledging anything" (42). While Williams does not dismiss his earlier work out of hand, he does acknowledge the validity of the

⁴⁰ According to Nietzsche, the "unhistorical" perspective is one in which men are able to "settle on the threshold of the moment forgetful of the whole past" (9). Williams's poetry, which is often suspended in a moment and detached from the "historical" through his apocalyptic prose, can be said to achieve the unhistorical.

⁴¹ After the initial publication of *Spring and All* in Dijon 1923 failed to gain traction, the poetry of *Spring and All* was published in collected works but the poetry and prose did not appear as a whole work again until the New Directions publication *Imaginations* in 1970.

a crown for her head with
castles upon it, skyscrapers
filled with nut-chocolates—

dovetame winds—
stars of tinsel
from the great end of a cornucopia
of glass (Williams 17-18)

Although the poem does not explicitly name “her,” several stylistic elements reference the Baroness’s performance art and poetry. The use of the created word “dovetame,” which is a common feature of the Baroness’s poetry; the use of blank space to create movement of words across the page; the fracturing of lines, repetition, and the use of dashes: all of these features parallel the aesthetic of the Baroness’s Dada poetry. The coronation of the “her” with objects of the city evokes the Baroness’s performance art on the streets of Greenwich Village, in which she would wear sculptures of her own creation hanging from her body.

The poem also plays with the concept of the unhistorical, creating tension between movement and stasis. While Williams creates an image through the descriptive language, the lights are flashing and stars are shining as he “carr[ies] her/ among the lights,” integrating movement in an otherwise static image (18). Finally, the use of the phrase “burst it asunder” and “break through” is both sexually suggestive and evocative of violence, echoing the Baroness’s aggressive sexuality. Many other poems in *Spring and All* use similar approaches to construction as well as sexual elements, and in his prose Williams declares himself liberated. He writes, “So most of my life has been lived in hell—a hell of repression lit by flashes of inspiration, when a poem such as this or that would appear” (43). In this passage, Williams acquiesces to the Baroness’s critique, admitting that his life is “a hell of repression.” Through the destruction enacted in the prose and the unleashing of the “imagination,” Williams is liberated.

The prose of *Spring and All*, in addition to responding to criticism of his earlier works, can be read as a development of his modernist poetics while his poetry reads as an enactment of his experimental aesthetics. Williams is particularly critical of the language of symbolism, instead arguing for a direct relation between language and experience, by means of what he termed “imagination.” He writes of symbolism in literature, “Such work is empty. It is very typical of almost all that is done by the writers who fill the pages every month of such a paper as. Everything that I have done in the past—except those parts which may be called excellent—by chance, have that quality about them” (20). These claims call back to the Baroness’s critique of Williams and the lack of meaning in his work. What follows in *Spring and All*—“an escape from crude symbolism, the annihilation of strained associations, complicated realistic forms designed to separate the work from “reality”—is the poetic realization of Williams’s goals (22).

Julia Kristeva’s *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984) is particularly helpful in reading Williams’s desire for destruction of literary forms in *Spring and All* as critical of the gendered dynamics of art. In the beginning of the work, Williams writes, “meanings have been lost through laziness or changes in the form of existence which have let words empty” (*Spring and All* 507). Williams’s project destroys the context through which readers have come to understand poetry and language, and reintroduce them through his own imaginative perspective. He wishes to reconnect the reader to language in a way that is denaturalized and removed from their everyday context, elevating simple words and scenes to a universal status. This way of thinking about imagination and language mirrors the system of the semiotic and symbolic that Kristeva outlines. Kristeva draws from Lacanian concepts of the feminine-identified imaginary and masculine-identified symbolic, identifying a dialectic relationship between these modes of language. Kristeva writes of the semiotic “chora,” or the maternal, “the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus

specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm” (26). Williams seeks to break down the symbolic order through the apocalypse at the beginning of *Spring and All*, and encourages the reconnection of the female-gendered imagination, which in Kristeva’s theorization would be identified as the semiotic chora.

It is the feminine imagination, Williams claims, that leads men forward to the new: “The imagination, freed from the handcuffs of ‘art,’ takes the lead! Her feet are bare and not too delicate. In fact those who come behind her have much to think of. Hm. Let it pass” (*Spring and All* 15). This is the introduction of the feminine to the scene, and the masculine that is left behind “have much to think of.” While Williams does not elaborate on this relationship between masculine and feminine in the prose at the outset, he sets up these differences that resonate throughout the poetry and prose.

This sense of the contentious relationship between masculine and feminine is intensified after the “female” imagination leads the men out of confusion, in a section entitled “Chapter I.” Williams writes, “These men who have had the governing of the mob through all the repetitious years resent the new order” (15). Williams alludes to the masculine tradition of art and the male artist’s resistance to the “new order” which destroys the hierarchical tradition. Those who are invested in the already-existing structure are concerned about their loss of power (an observation which is often applied to Williams’s attitude toward the Baroness, but is here critiqued by him). While Williams desires to annihilate literary tradition through an enactment of the apocalypse, he is also invested in drawing attention to the gendered aspect of this destruction. This gendered conflict reads as a response to the sexologist Otto Weininger’s claims in *Sex and Character* (1903) that “male thought is fundamentally different from female thought in its craving for definite form, and all art that consists of moods is essentially a formless art” (191). Although Weininger’s text

constructs and reinforces a binary which leaves femininity or W devoid of genius, in *Spring and All*, Williams depicts the feminine as the foundational principle of renewal, while masculinity is in chaos.⁴²

While gender and sexuality appear and disappear throughout *Spring and All* as a touchstone through which Williams critiques the traditional order and affirms the creation of the new, the strongest sense of gendered destruction occurs in one of the most well-known poems in *Spring and All*, the poem which is often referenced as “To Elsie.” Elsie is described in a sexualized and even objectified manner, although her body does not only express an overt sexuality which is meant to be consumed by Williams. Instead, her sexuality is the vehicle that simultaneously destroys Williams while creating his engagement with the imagination. Williams’s description of Elsie, like his description of the Baroness in his *Autobiography*, vacillates between profound respect and objectification:

voluptuous water
 expressing with broken

 brain the truth about us—
 her great
 ungainly hips and flopping breasts

 addressed to cheap
 jewelry (*Spring and All* 66)

While the poem’s initial description of her states that her existence reflects “the truth about us,” suggesting that her existence has “meaning” beyond its value to the male gaze, the poem ironically shifts into a hyper-sexualized view of Elsie’s body. Her body is offered up in its unvarnished nakedness, conveying her position as object and poverty through its juxtaposition with “cheap

⁴² This philosophical position is solidified in *Paterson*, which depicts this clash between masculinity and femininity as productive in creating a modernist aesthetic.

jewelry.” It is this hyper-sexuality, in fact, that reveals the truth about man, which is that “we” (men) are

degraded prisoners
destined
to hunger until we eat filth

while the imagination strains
after deer
going by fields of goldenrod in

the stifling heat of September
Somehow
it seems to destroy us (*Spring and All* 66-67)

It is this degradation of man through Elsie’s sexuality that leads to destruction, while the imagination strives beyond the objectification of femininity. In the end of the poem there is a sense of loss of control: “No one/to witness/and adjust, no one to drive the car” (*Spring and All* 526). Without the prose, it would seem that Elsie derails the masculine through her sexuality, and this destructive sexuality creates chaos. However, the larger project embraces loss of control as an impetus for creation—it is Elsie and her destructive sexuality that engages the imagination and allows for the creation of the new.⁴³

Therefore, *Spring and All* does not only achieve a Nietzschean reevaluation of the historical and the annihilation of traditional literary forms through its innovative and “unhistorical” approach to poetry, but it can also be read as a reply to the Baroness’s critique in “Thee I Call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring.’” *Spring and All* seems to feed from the destructive sexuality that the Baroness brought to Williams’s creative consciousness, revealing that the Baroness’s madness became an

⁴³ In “New York Dada: Beyond the Readymade” (2005), Amelia Jones also notes the connection between the Elsie of Williams’s poem and the Baroness, writing, “While ‘Elsie’ serves the purpose of invigorating Williams’ mundane bourgeois existence (and his poetic ruminations), she also functions as a radical disruption of both in that, Clifford notes, her ‘very existence raises *historical* uncertainties undermining the modernist doctor-poet’s secure position.’ Amazingly enough, given this salient conjunction of terms, we have seen that the Baroness—whose first name, we recall, was Elsa—knew Williams well during this exact same time” (160). Jones’s reading connects Elsie and the Baroness through the Baroness’s relationship to primitivism.

entry point for Williams's poetic breakthrough, dismantling the relational hierarchy of hysterical woman and rational doctor that Williams establishes in his *Autobiography*.

The critical stances that Williams and the Baroness adopt toward pathologized femininity in their works reflect the mutually constitutive development of modernism and medical discourses. In the introduction to *The Mind of Modernism* (2004), Mark Micale writes, "Both psychological medicine and the literary-artistic avant-garde centered, but then destabilized, the self, and both fields were responsive to the subjectivity of individual consciousness and its relations to the external world" (2). Micale points to the parallel development of the discipline of medicine and experimental literature and art in order to demonstrate how these fields saw a similar shift in cultural conceptions of subjectivity.⁴⁴ This connection can also be traced in Williams's relationship with the Baroness, in which his aesthetics were productively shaped by her destructive impulses and "irrational" perspective.

While Williams was a practicing physician who drew from his experiences to create poetry, he was also skeptical of the conversations taking place in popular sexology. According to Mariani, Williams took issue with Weininger's widely circulated sexological text *Sex and Character*: "Now in *Sex and Character*, Williams remembered, Weininger had claimed souls for men but not for women. but here, Williams asserted Weininger was wrong...moreover, Williams was willing to concede—without getting anxious over the discovery—it was woman—with her genetic grasp of reality—who was inevitably the superior of the two sexes" (142). While Williams actively participated in discussions concerning sexological texts, the Baroness's art (and Dada art in general) is often resistant to logic and scientifically-based arguments, often parodying those

⁴⁴ While some movements such as Surrealism draw directly from psychoanalytic concepts to examine the unconscious and its expression through dream states, others such as the Dada movement can be read as a reaction against the limitations that were imposed on modern conceptions of self through clinical discourses.

discourses rather than participating in them. I read their relationship as a confrontation between these forces—the clinical from Williams’s perspective and the excessive or “mad” from the perspective of the Baroness. Williams does not preserve the authority of the clinic through his engagement with the Baroness, but demonstrates how her madness restructures his vision of “the new.”

The focus on subjectivity and the development of consciousness in the medical field is particularly important to Freud’s psychoanalytic work, which endeavored to illuminate those connections between psychological development and its cultural causes. Some of Freud’s essays, most famously “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria,” focused on female sexuality and hysteria. This in turn had an influence on twentieth century perceptions of female sexuality and pathology, as it was widely read and absorbed into the cultural consciousness of Europe and America. In her introduction to *Freud on Women: A Reader* (1990), Elisabeth Young-Bruehl argues, “His presentation of female sexuality...is from the point of view of neurosis—or of a form of hysteria he considers so common as to be typical, that is, genital anesthesia or frigidity” (24). While some of Freud’s theories lend themselves to a positive feminist critique, Young-Bruehl’s introduction depicts his attitude toward female sexuality as shades of dysfunction. The Baroness’s explicit, often violent, sexual expression stands in stark contrast against the repression that characterized hysteria in women. Rather than being suppressed, the Baroness’s desires are enacted through her performance art, although her sexual expression is accompanied by an unsettling mania. While she is often described as a “masculine” figure by Williams and others, her overt, excessive sexual expression represents a counter-narrative of female sexuality that is not repressed, but liberated.

Further, the Baroness expresses the two kinds of deviant sexuality that Freud identifies in “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality:”

In the first place (disregarding people whose sexual instinct is altogether excessive and uninhabitable) there are the different varieties of *perverts*, in whom an infantile fixation to a preliminary sexual aim has prevented the primacy of the reproductive function from being established, and the *homosexuals* or *inverts*, in whom, in a manner that is not quite understood, the sexual aim has been deflected away from the opposite sex. (Freud 169)

Freud frames these forms of sexual desire as “harmful deviation[s] from normal sexuality—that is, sexuality which is serviceable to civilization” (169). Even as Freud endeavors to explore the negative impact of sexual repression on civilization, his work in “Three Essays on Sexuality” and other studies continue to explore the dividing line between normal and pathological sexual expression. The Baroness encompasses both the “pervert” and “invert” sexuality: her love interests were both men (Williams, among others) and women (Djuna Barnes) and her sexual expression was never bound to conventional or reproductive aims. Her sexual identification is fluid, expressing femininity through her attire and nude modeling while being identified by Williams as a “lean, masculine figure” (*Autobiography* 165). The Baroness’s artistic performances reflected an amalgamation of these so-called sexual pathologies, which served to break the boundaries of not only art and life, but delineations of madness and sanity.

The result of these non-normative behaviors, Freud writes, is that sexual instinct becomes deviant: “The man who, in consequence of his unyielding constitution, cannot fall in with this suppression of instinct, becomes a ‘criminal,’ and ‘outlaw,’ in the face of society—unless his social position or his exceptional capacities enable him to impose himself upon it as a great man, a ‘hero’” (167). In its examination of cultural norms of acceptable sexual expression, Freud’s essay critiques the criminalization of sexual instinct and its uneven application based on social class. His use of quotations around the terms “criminal,” “outlaw,” and “hero” would suggest that these terms are

relative, defined through cultural norms rather than bound by biological reality. The Baroness, although not a “man,” encompasses the role of “outlaw” and “hero” in one—her first encounter with Williams is as a criminal emerging from jail, yet her retained title of “Baroness” gives her a position which allows her to avoid the more problematic issues of criminality. Williams himself sees her as a brilliant artist, but also a threatening figure because of her aggressive sexuality. This duality of her nature is a consistent feature of her characterization throughout biographical and critical works.

Freud’s cultural critique carves out a space for the artist: “An abstinent artist is hardly conceivable... [he] probably finds his artistic achievements powerfully stimulated by his sexual experience” (175). While Freud is identifying the masculine artist in this passage, the Baroness explicitly uses sexuality through her performance art and seductive language to stimulate her art. Her sexual aggression, then, can be read as a repudiation of Freudian conceptions of passive femininity and a liberation from those cultural expectations of acceptable sexual expression that Freud identifies as detrimental to civilization. This critique also comes through explicitly in her prose poem “Thee I Call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring’: A Criticism of ‘Kora in Hell’ and Why...” in which she confronts male modernism through Williams.

The Baroness’s use of explicit sexuality in her performance art and poetry can be read as cultural critiques in themselves. In *The Sadeian Woman*, Angela Carter suggests the possibility of pornographic works to be transformative for women, even as pornography itself often leads to the degradation of women. She writes, “The more pornographic writing acquires the techniques of real literature, of real art, the more deeply subversive it is likely to be in that the more likely it is to affect the reader’s perceptions of the world” (19). Carter’s claims about the transformative power of integrating pornographic writing into “real art,” which is exemplified in the writing of

the Marquis de Sade, is particularly compelling when considered in relationship to avant-garde art that was endeavoring to collapse the art/life divide.⁴⁵ Although in many ways the Baroness is marginalized by modernist and avant-garde studies, her controversial artwork and its emphasis on the sexual in particular had far-reaching influences beyond her own work. Her advocacy of open sexuality and her frequent use of sexual language can be read as subversive acts, and this energy can be read explicitly through Williams's *In the American Grain* and implicitly through Williams's apocalyptic prose and experimental poetry in *Spring and All*.

Because of her destructive sexuality, the Baroness reads as a "Sadeian woman:" Carter writes, "He [Sade] urges women to fuck as actively as they are able, so that powered by their enormous and hitherto untapped sexual energy they will then be able to fuck their way into history and, in doing so, change it" (27). In her critique, Carter uses Sade's heroines to discuss pornography as a medium depicting liberated female sexuality, one that emphasized women's desire rather than their merely reproductive or passive nature. As Maggie Tonkin notes in *Angela Carter and Decadence* (2012), "Whereas Justine merely reaffirms cultural assumptions that women are natural victims, Juliette is a 'blasphemous guerrilla of demystification' (105) who radically undermines patriarchal ideas about the nature of femininity" (160). Williams's description of the Baroness's aggressive sexuality and the ways in which she endeavored to create art through this energy can be read as an enactment of Sade's philosophical attitudes toward female sexuality.

Williams's unconventional approach to reason and madness can be read as a Foucauldian critique of attitudes toward the pathologizing of femininity in clinical discourse. His adoption and evocation of the Baroness's pathology in his poetics suggests a desire to represent modernity in its

⁴⁵ Peter Bürger's seminal text *Theory of the Avant-Garde* posits that the foundational feature of avant-garde art is the collapse of art into life.

multifaceted totality rather than the artificial categories of normative and pathological behaviors. Michel Foucault's works on clinical discourses and madness can guide a critical reading of the Baroness's "madness" and Williams's response and adoption of this "madness" for art. In *The History of Madness* (1961), Foucault reveals the extent to which discourses of madness and reason were constructed throughout the preceding centuries of scientific development, and how these discourses were directly related to psychoanalysis and sexuality. Foucault writes,

In the light of its own naivety, psychoanalysis understood that all forms of madness have roots in troubled sexuality; but to say that is to do little more than note that our culture, by a choice typical of its own form of classicism, placed sexuality on the dividing line of unreason. Since time immemorial, and probably in all cultures, sexuality has been governed by systems of constraint; but it is a comparatively recent particularity of our own culture to have divided it so rigorously into Reason and Unreason. As a consequence and degradation of that, it was not long before it was also classified into healthy or sick, normal or abnormal. (89)

Foucault's claims in this passage echo Freud's cultural critique of the relative delineations of sexual norms, but extends the argument to include a consideration of sexual pathologies as artificially constructed. The relationship between madness and sexuality in psychoanalytic works is significant for an understanding of the Baroness's position in relation to mental illness. The pathologization of sexuality that Foucault describes in his text is embodied by the Baroness's alleged "madness," a charge that is evidenced by her radical, hyper-sexualized art. While her performance art and often scandalous poetry led to censorship and sometimes imprisonment, her bold sexuality is cited as the defining feature of her radicality. However, Foucault's perspective suggests that the association of the Baroness's overt sexuality with her madness is a cultural delineation of pathology rather than an innate connection.

Foucault also demonstrates how the banishment of pathology to the medical institution was a reflection of cultural dictates, particularly the desire to define normative expressions of sexuality as exemplified by the bourgeois family. Through these delineations, Foucault argues, anything

outside of those boundaries was relegated to madness and alienated from modern experience, which included all forms of resistance to this confinement. Foucault writes,

These experiences can be summed up by saying that they all touch either on sexuality and its relation with the organization of the bourgeois family, or on profanation in relation to the new conception of the sacred and of religious rituals, or on *libertinage*, i.e. the new relations that were beginning to emerge between free thinking and the system of the passions. Together with madness, these three domains of experience form a homogeneous world in the space of confinement where the meaning of mental alienation as we know it today was born. (82)

Foucault describes the way in which madness, as well as non-normative sexuality and ways of thinking, became collectively alienated through the development of an all-encompassing pathology. The critical poetics of Williams and the Baroness draws the abstractions of reason and madness to the fore, questioning the usefulness of those categories. The Baroness particularly critiques Williams for his allegiances to the bourgeois and the medical, urging instead a release from these constraints in order to release the inhibited imagination. His pursuit of an uninhibited, radical aesthetics in *Spring and All* and his advocacy for freedom of feminine sexuality in *In the American Grain* retain influences of his clinical background, but also channel the Baroness's resistance to conventional forms and themes.

The Baroness's liminal position between madness and reason, and Williams's adoption of these expressions in his poetics, signals a way out of the "patriarchal" structures of modernist literature. In *What Does a Woman Want?: Reading and Sexual Difference* (1993), Shoshana Felman argues the impossible position of women in literature: "If, in our culture, the woman is by definition associated with madness, her problem is how to break out of this (cultural) imposition of madness *without* taking up the critical and therapeutic positions of reason: how to avoid speaking both as *mad* and as *not mad*. The challenge facing the woman today is nothing less than to 'reinvent' language, to *re-learn how to speak*" (40). Felman argues from the position that women

always already occupy madness, a space from which it is almost impossible to speak, but at the same time endeavor to find a way of writing that resists the system that relegates them to madness. In *Writing and Madness* (2003), Felman elaborates on the relationship between literature and madness, writing, “But every literary text, I argue, continues to communicate with madness—with what has been excluded, decreed abnormal, unacceptable, or senseless—by dramatizing a dynamically renewed, revitalized relation between sense and nonsense, between reason and unreason, between the readable and the unreadable” (5). This argument is particularly significant for reading the conversation constructed between works by Williams and the Baroness. Their experimental approaches to poetics, when understood as a critical exchange, is a move toward a reinvention of language that makes space for madness and non-madness.

Additionally, in *What Does a Woman Want?* Felman addresses the difficult position of women’s voices in literature that is dominated by male voices. Her work seeks “to trace within each text *its own resistance to itself*, its own specific literary, inadvertent *textual transgression of its male assumptions and prescriptions*” (6). Felman’s project is to read the way in which resistance can be read through the text, even though authors are writing under a patriarchal system. Rather than being resistant in structure, texts by the Baroness and Williams explicitly seek to break down the structures of masculine bourgeois modernism, even as Williams is trapped within that role as a middle class physician. However, his adoption of experimental forms in *Spring and All* and his advocacy for liberated sexuality in *In the American Grain* can be read as a way for him to undermine the clinical position of doctor while also acknowledging his limitations for representing female sexuality.

This conversation around Williams’s work continues through minor, unpublished works by both the Baroness and Williams. After reading *Spring and All*, the Baroness composed a letter

which takes the form of a prose poem entitled “Spring and All” and reads as a reply to his new poetic venture. While she maintains a critique of his work, she acknowledges *Spring and All* as an accomplishment. At the beginning of the letter, she writes, “The longer you search the duller you will get—because you have faith in nothing” (1). This critique of his emptiness is a theme which goes throughout her earlier critique as well as the later: however, Williams draws from this sense of emptiness or lack to create his apocalyptic prose and sparse poetry. On the second page, she acknowledges that she had received a copy of *Spring and All* from Djuna Barnes: “It is your best—because most sincere—least braggardly loutish” (2). While the letter maintains a tension between Williams’s genius and his inability to escape the circularity of his thoughts, she reads *Spring and All* as an accomplishment.

The letter also accuses Williams of madness, even as the work that the Baroness is composing is repetitious, full of erasures and misspellings, and generally reads as erratic thoughts from an unstable person. She writes, “you rave along—older—older—crazy more crazy—cathing nothing nothing—never—never—in all your vanity and madness—you very well—very distinctly—begin more and more to recognize your own folly—know you are mad—that you lack entrails—that you have all your life been disembowled—that that was matter!” (3). The repetition of “crazy,” “mad,” and negation words such as “never” and “nothing” emphasize Williams’s detachment from modern ideas about reason and progress. The Baroness’s charge of madness to Williams is ironic in the context of the letter’s own “ravings” and the larger understanding of the Baroness’s pathology established through her peers and Williams’s perceptions. Although this accusation ultimately reads as an ironic projection of madness onto Williams, her claim that Williams recognizes his madness indicates a potentially “critical” madness, one which has been produced through Williams’s acknowledgement of his own failures. In this sense, the Baroness’s

response to “Spring and All” affirms the Baroness’s influence of madness on Williams’s aesthetics.

The final word on the Baroness comes from an essay that can be found in the Williams papers, entitled “The Baroness Elsa Freytag von Loringhoven.”⁴⁶ This piece of writing has a similar composition style to his chapter on the Baroness in the *Autobiography*, in the sense that it reads as a meditation on a variety of subjects pertaining to poetry and philosophy. He writes in generalities about “friends” without consistently tying his musings to the Baroness, although her presence can be read throughout the text by name and in spirit. At one point in particular, Williams seems to call back to the Baroness’s critique of his work. He writes,

I have suffered bitterly from slights too immaterial to be of visible consequence but curiously important to me. They have come from friends who believed me a liar in deed since I did not carry my “spring” through, that I stopped there. That that is why I live as I do working in an unimportant society (if you will call it such), that I do not go out and face a dangerous and rewarding world. In short that I am too much a writer, not enough a doer. (280)

The critiques to which Williams is responding could have come from many of his “friends” in poetry circles. The accusations of “liar,” and the reference to “spring” in a work titled with the Baroness’s name, however, suggests that there is a relationship between the Baroness’s critique of Williams’s isolated position as a bourgeois doctor and the subsequent works that struggled through the issues that the Baroness brought to her critique.

Two paragraphs later, Williams brings in the Baroness explicitly, writing, “The Baroness tried to destroy me. That made no difference to me because she couldn’t, but the form it took was familiar. ‘Come with me and I will make a man of you.’ Yea, yea” (280-81). This section draws attention to the destructive nature of the Baroness, and Williams’s resistance to that destructive

⁴⁶ This piece of text was unpublished by Williams, and was published in 1989 by *Twentieth Century Literature* with permission from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The date on the archival finding aid reads “circa 1949,” suggesting that this text was written decades after the Baroness’s death in 1927.

nature. His dismissive “yea, yea” at the end suggests that Williams did not believe that the Baroness was effective in her destruction, and in a sense she wasn’t. Instead, Williams channeled that destructive nature into a reevaluation of poetic and prose forms, as well as new vision for hybrid forms.

He contradicts himself in this dismissal of the Baroness when he later writes,

So I truthfully say that every love is the aroma and the fires about one love. We say ‘she.’ It expresses what—all I am willing or care to say. She is there. I run from here when her image which I saw once in inspiration and had photographed on my spirit, a purity I have never had equaled in me. That is remarkably fast in me. Nothing even approaches it...The Baroness was that to me—but she was schooled in a tougher school than mine—she was like Cortez coming to Montezuma and she wanted to do the same stupid thing he did. Destroy. (282-83)

Although Williams identifies destruction as “stupid” in this passage, his enactment of the apocalypse in *Spring and All* offered a path to a new poetics. It also binds the destructive spirit that the Baroness inspired in him to the production of his poetics. He maintains this ambivalence toward her in the passage in which he identifies her pathology: “The Baroness to me was a great field of cultured bounty in spite of her psychosis, her insanity. She was right. She was courageous to an insane degree. I found myself drinking pure water from her spirit. I found it so that is all. I could not go to bed with her. Disease has no attraction for me” (283). He allegedly resisted her because of her “disease,” yet simply states that “she was right.” This tension between his perception of her as mad is countered by his perception of her as genius. These descriptions, as they relate to the Baroness, apparently cannot be extricated from one another. This relationship between genius and madness, purity and disease, breaks down the dichotomy of sickness and wellness that clinical practice creates, as Foucault suggests in *The History of Madness*. Although Williams retains his position as a bourgeois doctor throughout his poetry, his poetics also considers madness as an important perspective for examining modern subjectivity.

While a certain amount of ambivalence can be read in Williams's relationship with the Baroness through his description of her in this text, she is also clearly important to his vision. He writes, "Her image which gave my young immature instincts the fact. Living. Actual. I offer it. They despise me for it and want another thing, another way and yet that is all I can offer" (283). This echoes the prose of *Spring and All*, in which he lays bare all that he has to offer the world. Additionally, it ties the "image" of the Baroness to his focus on the "actual," creating the immediacy of experience buttressed by his enactment of the unhistorical through his poetry. Although Williams's essay on the Baroness does not make explicit claims for her influence on *Spring and All*, it demonstrates the ways in which Williams's poetics were shaped by their relationship.

Reading Williams's work as a reaction against the pathologization of femininity via his relationship with the Baroness enriches an understanding of Williams's poetics beyond his position as a male modernist working in the canonical tradition. While Williams is often categorized as a major male modernist with T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound and the Baroness is marginalized in most discussions of the modernist and avant-garde movements, the symbiotic relationship between their texts reveals that they were highly influential to the development of each other's projects. The Baroness's work is often read as a radical engagement with female sexuality, while Williams's position as a doctor is read as a retrenchment of patriarchal values. However, his poetics developed through *Spring and All* and *In the American Grain* draw the idea of female sexuality as pathology out of the context of clinical perspectives on femininity in order to create an experimental poetics which valorizes female sexual expression. His position on feminine sexuality advanced through his early works, centered on the figure of the Baroness, runs counter to conventional understandings of Williams's participation in the modernist movement.

CHAPTER 4: DISMANTLING CLINICAL AUTHORITY IN *PATERSON*

In the final chapter of this study, I explore how the relationship between William Carlos Williams and Marcia Nardi as represented through the poetry and prose in Williams's modernist epic *Paterson* challenges the doctor/patient and normal/pathological binaries through its use of Nardi's prose. I argue that Williams uses *Paterson* to challenge the alienating structure of the clinic, with its concentration of power and interpretation in the doctor, through his use of Nardi's letters (known as the Cress or "C" letters in the poem) as a critique of gendered structures of knowledge and poetic authority. In contrast to the various local and historical documents that appear in montage form with Williams's poetry, Nardi's letters constitute a personal communication and direct confrontation with a Williams stand-in, a doctor-figure known as "Dr. P." The letters' intimate nature, their repeated appearance throughout the first two books, and the controversy surrounding their use gives them a unique status among the other prose fragments in *Paterson*.

Although Williams's use of her letters has drawn criticism from feminist scholars, the way the poetry and prose work toward a reconsideration of clinical gender relations is a significant feature of his modernist project in *Paterson*.⁴⁷ The relationship between Nardi and Williams was primarily structured by Williams's status as an established poet, but it was initiated in the context of his clinical practice.⁴⁸ Nardi's letters engage in a critique of patriarchal attitudes toward

⁴⁷ For a more comprehensive account of the feminist critique of *Paterson*, see Theodora Graham's "'Her Heigh Complaynte': The Cress Letters of William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*" (1983), Sandra M. Gilbert's "Purloined Letters: William Carlos Williams and 'Cress'" (1985), and Elizabeth Gregory's *Quotation and Modern American Poetry* (1996).

⁴⁸ In her introduction to *The Last Word*, Elizabeth Murrie O'Neil notes that Nardi and Williams first met in his office to discuss a problem that Nardi was having with her son, who had been hospitalized at Bellevue (xii). O'Neil writes, "Breit suggested that Nardi ask his friend Williams if (as a physician) he could help unsnarl what had become a bureaucratic nightmare at Bellevue Hospital, where Nardi's son had been hospitalized.... According to Nardi, they talked for a couple of hours in his office; before she left, she showed him some of the poems she had with her and left them for him to read" (xii).

femininity, attitudes which she argues are implicitly shaped by Williams's social and intellectual status as "doctor" and "poet." In *Paterson*, Nardi's words are not positioned as passive, interpretable symptoms of female hysteria, but instead work toward a theorization of female subjectivity, one which is critical of masculine perspectives of madness. The hidden architecture of Nardi's prose sections in *Paterson* books 1 and 2, which is constituted by letters exchanged between Nardi and Williams as patient and doctor, and then protégée and master, depict a relationship that is driven by Nardi's emotional and economic neediness. She offers her symptoms to Williams as if he were her physician, while he resists taking that position in their relationship. He attempts to help her with his literary connections and money, but their relationship dissolves into acrimony. In her letters, Nardi is plagued by physical and mental ailments that block her artistic abilities, while Williams's replies position him as a measured and reasonable counter to her illness. After months of correspondence Nardi ultimately lashes out at Williams in anger for his dispassion, and their letters temporarily stop.

This angry letter, when reproduced in the final prose section of *Paterson*, reads as a critique of Williams's position as doctor and arbiter of female experience. Nardi's prose sections, spanning the first two books of *Paterson*, act as a critique of male authorship from a woman's perspective. Through their inclusion, Williams highlights the importance of her perspective for the formation of his modernist vision. The poetry, set against the "feminine" prose, is positioned as masculine poetry, which evolves through Nardi's critique from the long epic lines of the beginning to the eventually short, fractured, and sparse poetry of the later parts of the text. Through this dialectical construction, *Paterson* engages in a critique of clinical structures that were established between Williams and Nardi through their letters, a power dynamic which was defined by gender as much as social position.

The archive of letters between Williams and Nardi reveals their relationship to be multifaceted, comprising mentorship as well as pleas for diagnosis and cure. In his letters to his editor James Laughlin at New Directions, Williams acts as an advocate for Nardi's writing. To her, he acts as an editor and confidant, although he resists taking up the role of doctor for her many ailments. Their relationship evolved from doctor/patient to mentor/mentee from their first meeting, but their letters both within the context of *Paterson* and outside maintain this connection between doctor and patient. The intimacy created by their correspondence was ultimately shattered by Williams's publication of her personal letters, which reveals her anxieties for Williams's artistic gain.

Nardi and Williams were in sporadic contact for over a decade; briefly from 1942 until their break in 1943 (ending with the letter that appears in *Paterson* book 2) and from 1948 until 1956 (O'Neil). According to O'Neil in *The Last Word*, the Nardi letters instigated Williams to begin working on *Paterson* again, a work that had been stalled in production for years (ix). She writes, "He used her words to further the themes of his poem and, at the same time, he gave her ideas a forum they would not otherwise have had" (O'Neil xv). This explanation reflects the ambivalence toward Nardi that Williams seems to express through the use of her letters. Theodora Graham compares several Nardi letters to their excerpt counterparts in *Paterson*, arguing that Williams's revision of Nardi's letters substantially weakened "Cress's" perspective, and that their letters more faithfully reflect the complexity of their relationship and Nardi's position.⁴⁹ Graham writes, "Read sequentially with the omitted paragraphs restored, Nardi's letter communicates a firmer hold on reality. Her depression may be real, her identity fragile, but she is far from hysterical and not a little bold" (178). However, I argue that the letters presented in *Paterson* retain their

⁴⁹ "Her Heigh Complieint": The Cress Letters of William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*" (1983).

critique of Williams's relatively insulated masculine perspective and reflect the contentious relationship that Williams and Nardi formed over years of correspondence.

In the beginning of their correspondence, Williams's role shifts quickly from doctor to mentor. Nardi would send Williams drafts of poems, which he would mark up with his suggestions and return to her. Williams's responses to Nardi's letters would often strictly refer to her work without commenting on her personal situation (about which she wrote to him at length). Williams emphasized the good quality and promise that he saw in Nardi's work, writing in one early letter, "Your letters show you to have one of the best minds I have ever encountered—I say nothing of its reach which I have had no opportunity to measure but its truth and strength. Your words as I read them have a vigor and a cleanliness to them which constitute for me real beauty. I sincerely and deeply admire you" (O'Neil 22). His positive response to the writing in her letters suggests that Williams saw her prose as particularly compelling, even though she was primarily writing to him in order to seek feedback on her poetry. His publication of her prose in *Paterson*, and particularly the prominence of those sections in the text, highlights the importance of her prose over her poetry. However, the move to include Nardi's prose in *Paterson* also works to subordinate her poetic authorship, creating a tension between the poetry and prose through this gendered division.

This admiration of her writing led to a correspondence with Williams's publisher James Laughlin at New Directions in June 1942, in which Williams energetically supports her work. Even in his advocacy, Williams perceived Nardi's art to be inflected by her personal situation, which he turned into positive proof that Nardi was worthy of editorial attention. He writes to Laughlin, "I'm afraid the damn thing will die if we don't pick her up. Take my word for it she's a piece of good steel" (O'Neil 23). Williams's communication with Laughlin is strikingly different

in tone from his communication with Nardi, situating Nardi between the two men as an object of simultaneous weakness (“the damn thing will die”) and strength (“a piece of good steel”). However, Williams’s communication with Laughlin also reflects his admiration of her work and his status as a frequently published poet at *New Directions* created important connections for her poetry in the publication world.

While their relationship was initially professional, Nardi’s letters developed into detailed and lengthy diatribes on her health, financial situation, and struggle being a female writer in a male-dominated world. In her second letter to Williams, she writes, “But I am not well at the moment, and therefore lack the physical energy to add a lot else I’d like to say about the great value your criticism will have for me. It’s nothing for medicine to cure. Just one of those unfortunate temperaments which cause any and every emotional upset to take itself out most horribly on one’s body” (10). In this passage, and in many others throughout her writings to Williams, her illness is presented as innately tied to her artistic ability, and she appeals to Williams as one who might not be able to offer a cure, but friendship through mentoring. Williams’s replies rarely contain suggestions for diagnosis or cure, but merely sympathetic phrases and allusions to his medical duties which similarly affect his ability to write. In one such letter he writes, “In the technical side of writing I may be of some assistance to you and you may believe me I’ll always be ready to be of assistance if I can” (22). In this letter and in many others, Williams avoids addressing Nardi as a patient, but engages with her as a poet and producer of art. In this sense, he perceives her as a mentee or protégée, and encourages her writing alone.

Nardi’s letters draw an explicit relationship between her physical and mental problems and her writing, emphasizing the importance of her health to the production of poetry. In an early letter she writes,

But my problems with poetry have been so intermingled with my personal problems (the latter having so often taken me away from the former) and I have spent the past month so unable to cope with the isolation that surrounds my life in its intellectual and spiritual aspects, that I feel at the moment as if I'll go mad unless I did [*sic*] some talking about it to someone who would at least understand it, however helpless in altering the situation. (16)

This passage addresses the relationship between her mental and physical health and her ability to produce art as well as the role that she imagines Williams will perform in her process of recovery and artistic production. She indicates that although she doesn't look to Williams for diagnosis, she might find a curative effect from merely unloading her issues on someone external to her situation. In a sense, she positions Williams as a psychoanalyst who might be able to listen to her psychological dysfunctions. Her art becomes a medium through which she attempts to enact a cure, and their correspondence serves as a site for diagnosis and cure even though Williams resists taking up this position.

Williams's letters to Nardi allude to his own personal issues with producing art because of his position as a practicing physician. In one letter from 1942 he writes, "Please forgive my slowness in answering your last letter, I could not even get to read it until this morning, one pressing duty dovetailed into another all day yesterday—and in the end I lost a baby I was most anxious to save" (O'Neil 22). This apology expresses the difficulty that Williams himself encountered in separating his work as a doctor with his work in poetry. However, he often fails to acknowledge Nardi's health problems, instead continuing to strictly address her poetry and thereby keep her at arm's length. It is this alienation from Williams that Nardi critiques in later letters, and Williams reproduces through the tension between the poetry and prose in *Paterson*.

In a later letter, Nardi explicitly addresses the idea of her letters as a potential medium for cure:

My over long letters are in themselves an indication of how desperately I need more outlets for self-expression in words, and my sufferings in the way of insomnia have been much more the result of my frustrations in writing than in my private emotional life, because I have a stronger feeling of physical well-being when I am reading or writing than at any other time. I feel well only then. (88)

In many of her letters, she is acutely aware of the way that her prose reads as symptomatizing, while at the same time expressing a consciousness of how the practice of writing can positively impact her psychological health. Nardi implicitly draws Williams into this process of overcoming illness, as he initially works as an advocate for the publication of her poetry. While Nardi argues that writing creates positive effects for her physical and emotional well-being, Williams often perceives her letters imploring him to reply as burdens. He eventually scolds her for demanding protracted replies to her letters, writing, “You cannot hold it against anyone that they do not reply to your letters in detail. It is uncalled for for you to expect it” (90). The tone of this letter can be contrasted with his earlier ones, which map out suggestions for her poetry in greater detail, with a more congenial and encouraging tone. When Nardi’s letters became focused on her health and financial problems, Williams’s correspondence became cold and terse, eventually demanding the severance of correspondence between them.

Williams’s resistance to Nardi’s letters, and his eventual move to cut off contact completely with Nardi, reads as an enactment of Freud’s arguments about transference in the clinical setting in “Observations on Transference-Love” (1915). Transference is a psychoanalytic phenomenon in which the patient, or analysand, projected feelings that were dredged up through the psychoanalytic treatment onto the analyst, at times creating strong feelings of love. Freud identifies a particular type of female patient, “women of elemental passionateness who tolerate no surrogates,” and are “violent in their love” (384). Of these women, Freud writes that if the transference phenomenon is not adequately solved through the course of a patient’s treatment,

“One has to withdraw, unsuccessful; and all one can do is to turn the problem over in one’s mind of how it is that a capacity for neurosis is joined with such an intractable need for love” (384). The physician’s duty, according to Freud, is to abandon the process of working toward a cure because of the patient’s excessive emotions. The correspondence between Williams and Nardi, while not taking place in the physical environment of the clinic, reflects a similar structure in which the “patient” (Nardi) offers symptoms and seeks validation of her suffering from the “doctor” (Williams). His replies, which often do not address Nardi’s symptoms and eventually stop responding to her letters altogether, can be read as a withdrawal of treatment. His inclusion of her letters in *Paterson* read as a re-engagement in their debates, and attempts an amelioration of their conflict while maintaining the tension that defined their relationship.

Stephen Frosh’s *Psychoanalysis Outside the Clinic* (2010) offers a framework for reading Williams and Nardi’s letters in relation to the institutional structure of the clinic. Frosh writes,

Psychoanalysis arose at the end of the nineteenth century as a practice rooted in the 'clinic.' This clinic had a specific location in Freud's consulting room in his home in Vienna, but it rapidly became a metaphorical space referring to the setting for an encounter between a patient, defined as someone in a certain amount of psychological distress, and an analyst, who, through listening and interpreting, could alleviate that distress. Borrowing the terminology of medicine, both because this gave it prestige and also because most of the early analysts were doctors, the consulting room became the model for psychoanalysis thought of as a *treatment*. (1)

Although Williams’s medical practice was not psychoanalytic in nature, his relationship with Nardi and particularly the way in which her psychological and physical ailments became a significant feature of their correspondence can be understood as a clinical encounter. When their relationship is framed as one between doctor and patient in addition to mentor and mentee, the inclusion of Nardi’s letters as moments of rupture in the poetic development of *Paterson* can also be read as a subversion of clinical structures. Her critique of Dr. P becomes central to the framing

of the poetry, offering her perspective a legitimacy that patients' voices often do not occupy in a clinical framework.

Her unsent reply to his last letter in 1943 contains a revelation about her eagerness to communicate with him. In this letter from February, she invokes his position as a doctor and specifically critiques him because of his insensitivity to her health issues. She writes,

The physician and the practical man in you may have found all my neurotic physical ailments and my economic maladjustments decidedly exasperating. (There were indications of that in almost all your notes.) But the writer and poet and psychologist in you could not but know how destructively the repressions of the inner self can take themselves out on the body and on the whole external framework of one's life. (109)

This critique echoes the final letter reproduced in *Paterson*, in which Nardi attacks Williams for his too-narrow perspective. Nardi reads Williams's correspondence as that of a dispassionate doctor rather than a poet who would be sensitive to the ways in which her physical issues were destructive for her art. Later in the letter, she references her tacit desire for cure through their relationship: she writes, "I said—apart from poetry matters—that seeing you might possibly help me to throw some light on a serious health problem I have had for some time, and while that was overshadowed by the greater stress I placed on my intellectual solitude, it nevertheless was of great importance to me too" (109). Although she does not clarify her "serious health problem" in the letter, Nardi reveals that her correspondence with Williams was motivated by seeking a cure, which is evident by her repeated allusions to her illness. Although Williams often refused to engage with Nardi's health issues, it is precisely that clinical distance that he maintained through their relationship that Nardi perceives as damaging to the development of her art.

The letters from Williams to Laughlin, as well as his letters to Nardi, reflect his ambivalence toward her as well as the importance of his social position as "doctor" and hers as "patient." Williams's personal ambivalence toward Nardi comes out in *Paterson* through the

gender relations that he posits through the female poet's prose and the male poet's poetry, but the prominent placement of her critique suggests an acknowledgment of her words as important for representing and understanding her perspective on feminine pathology. When integrated into *Paterson*, the underlying personal relationship and the connective material between the doctor and female poet are lost, instead offering a collage of archival materials and poetry fragments. However, *Paterson* performs a different sort of work through the juxtaposition of these elements and the creation of a new aesthetic. The use of Nardi's letters in *Paterson* is not a move to draw a contrast between the masculine poetry and feminine prose, but endeavoring to depict a relationship that becomes productive through their juxtaposition.

As represented by the prose fragments in *Paterson*, Nardi's letters to Williams serve as a blunt, realistic account of a female experience of poetry and authorship as well as critique of the male doctor/poet. Short snippets of Nardi's letters appear as a few of several archival prose excerpts that appear among the poetry entries of book 1, but they become increasingly prominent in length and number until the end of book 2, when the prose cannibalizes the poetry and Nardi's words become a several-page wall of text. The final letter, reproduced in its entirety in *Paterson*, is an explicit indictment of Williams's attitudes toward Nardi and his ignorance of the interdependency between authorship and psychological wellness. The poetry reflects the growing agitation of Nardi's prose: although it begins as an epic, its long-lined stanzas adhering to romantic themes about sleeping giants and comparing women to flowers, the poetry evolves to short, choppy lines that do not adhere to traditional poetic forms. While the Nardi prose sections in book 1 join a chorus of similar, seemingly mundane pieces of archival materials, by book 2 their prominent presence becomes a central feature of the work. The dialectical relationship between the biting critique of Nardi's prose and the experimental poetry produced by Williams challenges the

alienation of the doctor/patient relationship and situates female subjectivity as a driving force in creative evolution.

In Williams scholarship, the role of Nardi's letters in the development of Williams's modernist aesthetic in *Paterson* is debated on the grounds of ethics as well as aesthetics. On the one hand, Williams's use of her letters were historically critiqued as exploitative and reflective of typical modernist male attitudes toward women authors by critics such as Theodora Graham, Sandra Gilbert, and Elizabeth Gregory, among others. However, other scholars read Williams's engagement with Nardi's prose as a move toward challenging hierarchical structures. In *Poetics of the Feminine* (1994), Linda Kinnahan examines how Williams's works, through *Paterson*, deconstruct their own masculine authority with their depictions of gendered violence: she writes that Williams "scrutinizes his own authority to speak when based upon a (masculinized) power structured through gendered hierarchy, through relations of dominance and submission. Williams, as a result, moves toward a different formulation of authority—an authority envisioned as a model of contact or contiguity that allows for difference rather than suppressing it through hierarchy" (5). Kinnahan's argument about the ways in which Williams both acknowledges hierarchies of authority and seeks to challenge them in earlier works is evident in *Paterson*, as he cultivates these "points of contact" through the juxtaposition of his poetry and archival prose. By contrast, Carla Bilitteri advances an argument about Williams's elitist attitude which is exemplified by his quotation of Nardi:

Prose is, in fact, for the most part, the discursive space of the mob, or of those who aspire to elevate themselves from the populace to the aristocracy, but cannot because of their maddening petulance and lack of mastery over their words and thoughts. A notable example is the poet Marcia Nardi, born into a lower-middle class family, but fallen into economic and social destitution. Williams uses her letters (which Nardi herself characterized as 'deplorable' and 'annoying' [*Paterson* 87] to counter point the sparse lyrical movements of his own poetry. (58)

Billiteri's reading of Williams sees his poetics as reflective of aristocratic and conservative ideals, which are contrasted by the populations represented in the archival materials of *Paterson*, who represent the "mob." She also argues that Williams positions Nardi's letters as a "counter point," although the thematic relationship between her words and Williams's poetry would suggest a move beyond creating contrast. While his adoption of Nardi's prose within his poetry work (without her express permission) certainly creates a questionable power structure in the gender politics of publication, the use of the letters in an aesthetic sense constitutes a critical intervention in such debates.

Stephen Tapscott traces the development of Williams's depiction of women in the beginning of *Paterson*, where Tapscott reads women as frightening, aggressive, and voiceless, to the lesbian characters of Corydon and Sappho in books 4 and 5 of *Paterson*. He writes, "He realized this lesson by learning to conceive of female sexuality differently than he had before: as a force that was not so much repressed/reciprocal, but more mysteriously and completely Other, as forceful as his own and as inclined toward transcendence" (37). Tapscott contrasts the relatively enlightened perspective of feminine sexuality that Williams developed later in his life to Williams's use of Nardi's prose in the first two books of *Paterson*. He argues, "Cress is not a 'serious' poet; she conceives of poetry as therapy, and her neediness overwhelms Paterson. In any case, Williams implicitly discredits her as a poet by quoting from her prose letters but significantly omitting her poems" (Tapscott 34). Tapscott's reading of Nardi's letters emphasizes the break between the poetry and prose by framing Nardi's words as purely emotional, divorced from the "serious art" that Williams produces in his poetry.

More recent interventions in the conversation about Williams's relationship to Nardi advance arguments about how Williams productively uses Nardi's letters to challenge patriarchal

constructions in poetry. In “William Carlos Williams, Marcia Nardi, and *Paterson*” (2007) Erin E. Templeton argues that Williams seeks to cultivate a poetics which relies on a model that emphasizes collaboration with other poets, in contrast to critiques that frame Williams’s use of Nardi’s letters as an abuse of their relationship. While this does not immediately ameliorate claims of Williams’s misogyny in the treatment of Nardi’s letters, Templeton goes on to argue that “by unleashing Cress in all of her fury upon *Paterson*, Williams, I think, starts a domino-like chain reaction that destabilizes all the binaries he had established in the poem up until that point” (19). Templeton reads the use of Nardi’s letters not as an attack on Nardi, but as a productive and collaborative move on the part of Williams. She also writes, “Cress and Dr. P. should be read as complementary perspectives which balance each other and ultimately present a whole greater than the sum of its parts instead of oppositional, antagonistic positions which negate and annihilate each other” (23). Templeton reads the hybridity of *Paterson* through the tension between the Williams poetry and Nardi prose to argue that those particular prose sections are key to understanding Williams’s poetic project. While Templeton’s argument maintains that *Paterson* is working toward a sense of unity, the tension between the masculine and the feminine is maintained in a dialectical sense, pointing toward the void spaces even as it mends them.

Although the relationship between Williams and Nardi, and the way this tension plays out in *Paterson*, has been examined at length, the relationship between doctor and patient that is tacitly constructed between Dr. P and Cress has not yet been explored. The hierarchical dynamic between doctor and patient, which is often gendered and reproduced as gendered through clinical practice, is challenged in *Paterson* through its use of Nardi’s letters as a critique of masculine attitudes toward female authorship, and the patriarchal structures (including the clinic) that cripple women’s ability to create poetry. The gendered dynamic of the clinic, which positions the doctor as the

interpreter of the patient's symptoms, is transformed in *Paterson* into one in which the feminine voice wields a transformative power over the masculine, and the patient-positioned woman does the work of interpreting and critiquing the "symptomizing" poet.⁵⁰ Although the relationship between Nardi and Williams in their letters is a transactional one, in which Williams variously plays the role of doctor, mentor, and advocate for Nardi's poetry, in the context of *Paterson* Nardi's words become a source of archival knowledge that instigates poetic evolution. Through this transformative process, the pathological voice disrupts the power dynamic established through clinical discourse.

The dialectical tension between the masculine and feminine created by the hybrid construction of *Paterson* echoes the debates of Freudian psychoanalysis and anticipates the later interpretations of Freud's works on femininity by Jacques Lacan. Extensive writings by Freud and Lacan attempt to discuss femininity and female sexuality, but ultimately conclude with vague gestures toward the "unknowable" topic that is femininity. In *Sexuality* (2011), Joseph Bristow writes, "Freud's writings on femininity, if striving to maintain consistency within the terms of the castration and Oedipus complexes, are notable for what they refuse to entertain, as if they were acting out their own systematic repressions" (80). Bristow's observation about the ways in which Freud's works read as resistant to conceptualizing femininity is reflected in feminist debates about how psychoanalysis both succeeds and fails to account for female experience.⁵¹ This blind spot in Freud's examination of femininity can be read through his "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," as well as his later works such as "Femininity" and "Female Sexuality" that applied the

⁵⁰ This dynamic recalls Williams's relationship with the Baroness, in which her critique and her sexually-charged, destructive poetry became an important site for the development of Williams's poetics.

⁵¹ Seminal works on feminist theory such as Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Luce Irigaray's *This Sex Which Is Not One*, and Kaja Silverman's *The Threshold of the Visible World*, among others, variously draw from psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Freud to conceptualize femininity. Other feminist theorists such as Shoshana Felman (*What Does a Woman Want?*) and Teresa de Lauretis (*The Practice of Love*) use psychoanalytic theory to counter the ways that Freud and Lacan wrote about femininity.

Oedipus complex to feminine development. Although Freud spent decades developing a theory of female sexual development through an understanding of the castration and Oedipus complexes, his studies represent an ongoing and incomplete account of female sexual psychology.

Lacan's work on feminine sexuality takes a similarly conflicted view, although he frames the "problem" of femininity differently. In his seminar "Guiding Remarks for a Congress on Feminine Sexuality" (1962), he discusses the status of feminine sexuality as both constructed through language and its representation, and how this alienation of sexuality from experience creates a void between the masculine and feminine. Lacan writes, "The otherness of sex is denatured by this alienation. Man here acts as the relay whereby the woman becomes this Other for herself as she is this Other for him" (93). Lacan's argument about how woman becomes alienated from herself is significant because of its philosophical implications for understanding "woman" as such. If woman is alienated not only from man but from her conception of self, then women occupy an impossible subject position. Additionally, Lacan's approach to feminine sexuality takes up the castration complex in order to explore the way that the symbolic order, created through a phallogocentric perspective, is constructed through the dialectic created by masculinity and femininity. Feminine sexuality becomes dictated not by her own experience, but becomes defined by her positioning as Other by the masculine. Therefore, while masculinity and femininity are posited as mutually constitutive in Lacan's work, femininity remains defined by its status as lack against the positivity of masculinity.

The struggle for a clinical definition of femininity and the female resistance to this conceptualization plays out in *Paterson* through the positioning of Nardi's prose letters as radical Other. The prose sections physically and thematically serve as an interruption to Williams's lyrical poetry, eventually leading the poetry to a sparse modernist aesthetic. Nardi's letters, like the other

sections of the prose, are physically set apart from the poetry through a smaller and denser type set, creating a disconnect between the poetry's project and the prose. However, they perform a different function than the other archival material: while many prose sections come from public archives and create a historical narrative, her letters address the "doctor" Paterson in the present time. The inclusion of Nardi's critique serves as a disruption of the male/female dialectic because of its refusal to participate in the artistic production, producing a fracturing effect. At the same time, *Paterson* maintains this dialectical relationship between the masculine and feminine in order to challenge the alienating structure of the clinic (as an institution and as an encounter between doctor and patient), which for Williams and Nardi was inflected by differences in gender and social status. All of these conditions, as Nardi demonstrates, are bound up in one another.

This dual conceptualization of woman as Other while working toward a dialectical construction of gender dynamics in art is evident from the first Nardi excerpt. *Paterson* begins with a dyadic structure, with book 1 entitled "The Delineaments of the Giants." The divergent relationship between man and woman is clear from the beginning, when Williams writes, "A man like a city and a woman like a flower/--who are in love" (7). This structure that sets up men as cities and women as flowers immediately precedes the first letter excerpt by Nardi, indicating that the prose segment is representative of the feminine voice. The poetry that begins Book I is long-lined and descriptive, establishing the city of Paterson as an ancient sleeping giant. Williams begins the poem,

Paterson lies in the valley under the Passaic Falls
its spent waters forming the outline of his back. He
lies on his right side, head near the thunder
of the waters filling his dreams! Eternally asleep,
his dreams walk about the city where he persists
incognito. (6)

The poetry in the very beginning establishes *Paterson* as an epic, with its invocation of an ancient

power and narrative images. The first of Nardi's prose sections, which appears on the second page of book 1, is established as a contrast to the poetry in its use of everyday language. Its function, early in the text, is to represent the woman poet while highlighting its insufficiency for representing her identity as such. She writes, "I know myself to be more the woman than the poet; and to concern myself less with the publishers of poetry than with...living..." (7). Nardi's letter identifies her as primarily a woman, alluding to her position as "poet" but denying that identity as important from the beginning. While the conversational language of Nardi's prose stands in contrast aesthetically to Williams's lyrical poetry, it does not initially represent the perspective of a failed or psychologically damaged poet, but rather initiates the tension between the presence of the "female poet" and the absence of her poetry.

The first prose excerpt, taken from the first letter that Nardi sent Williams after their meeting, is not only concerned with the status of gender issues in poetry authorship, but contains an allusion to the professional context of their meeting. Immediately preceding the line about being more a woman than the poet, Nardi writes "it was the human situation and not the literary one that motivated my phone call and visit" (7). This "human situation" is a reference to Nardi's visit to Williams as a physician, as she was seeking his professional help with troubles that she was having with her adolescent son. This inclusion in the first prose excerpt is a significant one, because it establishes Nardi's identity as not only a poetic protégée and woman, but a patient of the later character Dr. Paterson. Therefore, the first prose excerpt of Nardi's letters (the only one explicitly approved by Nardi before Williams's publication of book 1) performs a dual function. While it establishes a feminine voice in the text as a binary contrast to the poetic masculine voice, it also positions the woman as a patient to the unknown narrator's doctor. At the same time, the feminine prose signals a disruption within the male poet's experience, acting upon the text rather than strictly

serving as a representation of a particular perspective.

The influence of the feminine voice on the poetry can be read through the shift of the poetry from a more languorous and epic form to shorter and more exclamatory, separating words and lines from their stanzas and often using bold punctuation. Toward the middle of the first section of the first book, Williams's poetry transforms into shorter and more chaotic lines, reflecting the thematic issues of both language and gender in the poetry sections. At one point in the second section of book 1 Williams writes,

They begin!
The perfections are sharpened
The flower spreads its colored petals
wide in the sun
But the tongue of the bee
misses them
They sink back into the loam
crying out
--you may call it a cry
that creeps over them, a shiver
as they wilt and disappear:
Marriage come [sic] to have a shuddering
implication. (11)

The flower that Williams draws into his short-lined poetry calls back to the concept of "woman like a flower" at the beginning of the poem, a categorization that immediately preceded Nardi's first prose section. The cycle of birth and death is paralleled with the evocation of marriage and divorce as well as the flower's disappearance that is accompanied by a silent "cry," suggesting that Williams is exploring the failing relationship of women to language. These stanzas about women and language stand apart from the other poetry in the first book, as the lines are significantly shorter and creating a more splintered aesthetic. The evocation of the flower metaphor and the depiction of women's failed relationship to language calls back to Nardi's theorization of women's problematic relationship with authorship, although her prose does not appear in book 1 past that

first section. Her prose introduces conflict between masculinity and femininity, a theme that echoes through the poetry of the first book.

The significance of her prose can be perceived by its growing prominence, gaining urgency and length until the conclusion of book 2, when her pages-long letter concludes the section. Simultaneous to the growing ire of Nardi's prose, the poetry evolves from an earlier depiction of "love" or sexual relationship as harmonious to one which is at odds, reflecting the growing clash between the masculine and feminine. Specifically, Williams provides prose which is not meant to represent artistic production as such, but the psychological architecture of artistic production from a feminine perspective, one which is doubly positioned as gendered and clinical. Nardi's letters become the void space that is female artistry and the female subject position in modernity. It also superficially represents femininity as pathological, with the woman displaying hysterical symptoms to the doctor through her passionate rambling. Simultaneous with this diagnostic move, however, the prose engages in a critique of masculine authorship and ignorance, positioning it as interpretive as well as symptomatic. This variegated oscillation between masculinity and femininity is also one between doctor and patient, a tension which is not resolved but meant to question the clinical structures that identify masculinity with rationality and femininity with pathology.

While book 1 sets the stage for the tense relationship between man and woman as well as the poetry and prose sections with the introduction of Nardi's prose sections and the poetry about women and language, it is much less conflicted than the poetry and prose of book 2. It hints toward the conflict to come while continuously returning back to the other archival material of *Paterson*, which consists mainly of news stories drawn from the town's archives. The tension between the masculine and feminine is maintained throughout the first book, but seems to bubble under the

surface until the beginning of book 2, when the gender conflict comes to a head.

Book 2, entitled “Sunday at the Park” begins with poetry like book 1, but it is markedly different from the poetry in both scope and form. It begins not with the material existence of Paterson as a mythological giant, but the internal intricacies of his powerful mind. Williams writes,

Outside
 outside myself
 there is a world,
 he rumbled, subject to my incursions
 --a world
 (to me) at rest,
 which I approach
 concretely—. (43)

The poetry is sharply contrasted to the beginning of the epic: instead of long, measured lines of detailed imagery and the evocation of an ancient historical masculinity, book 2 begins with fragmented, repetitive lines scattered around the page. It is unclear whether the man speaking is Paterson or the poet, dissolving the distinction between man and the city. The poetry’s physical shape and philosophical position has changed from book 1, creating physical voids between the words while shifting the perspective of the poem from a sweeping geographic exploration of Paterson to a deeper philosophical perspective of the male poet.

After this poetry introduction of the man in the park, the excerpts from Nardi begin again. However, these are markedly different than the initial letter. Instead of declaring her as a poet and a woman, the letter excerpts present Nardi as an agitated and scorned woman. This personal affront (not enacted in the text, but alluded to in her letters) has affected her ability to write, and she lashes out at Williams for his passive yet destructive actions. In the first excerpt, appearing only three pages into book 2, she writes, “Despite my having said that I’d never write to you again, I do so now because I find, with the passing of time, that the outcome of my failure with you has been the complete damming up of all my creative capacities in a particularly disastrous manner such as I

have never before experienced” (Williams 45). The excerpt addresses the conflict between the state of being a woman and a poet in a way that the first prose segment elided. The woman poet takes her poetic failure head-on, accusing the male poet of obstructing her creativity through his impassiveness. This excerpt is typical of the later letters from Nardi to Williams—although Williams was initially very interested in reading Nardi’s poetry and letters, he eventually became resistant to and unresponsive to her letters.

The prose excerpt continues, with Nardi’s words perceptively identifying the ways in which her psychic trauma has destroyed her artistic abilities, connecting that failure to a loss of her very identity:

For a great many weeks now (whenever I’ve tried to write poetry) every thought I’ve had, even every feeling, has been struck off some surface crust of myself which began gathering when I first sensed that you were ignoring the real contents of my last letters to you, and which finally congealed into some impenetrable substance when you asked me to quit corresponding with you altogether without even an explanation. (45)

Here, Nardi’s accusations read as a performance of self-analysis, examining the ways that her psyche has been pulled apart by the failure of their relationship, which for Williams is merely the ignoring of her letters. Nardi’s reference to “surface crust” and the “congealed...impenetrable substance” evokes the archaeological metaphors that Freud uses in his works to talk about psychoanalysis.⁵² Her reference to the “real contents” of her letters suggests that the male poet is missing something that she is explicitly endeavoring to get through to him, something which is voided in *Paterson* because of its absence. The dialectical structure of their relationship is made clearer with the inclusion of this excerpt, because while the woman’s poetry remains hidden, as well as the earlier letters and the male poet’s reply, the excerpt performs the function of identifying and decrying those void spaces which are created by the male doctor/poet’s absence.

⁵² See Freud’s essays, “A Note upon the ‘Mystic Writing-Pad’” (1925) and “Constructions in Analysis” (1937).

This performance of self-analysis is particularly fascinating in context of the poetry that precedes it, which slips from the highly fragmented modernist aesthetic of the beginning of the book with a sort of return to “classical” forms of poetry, but shifting to medical content. Immediately preceding Nardi’s first prose section of book 2 are the lines,

The body is tilted slightly forward from the basic standing position and the weight thrown on the ball of the foot, while the other thigh is lifted and the leg and opposite arm are swung forward (fig. 6B). Various muscles, aided (45)

This medical description of walking, appearing after the fragment “Walking —” is a jarring digression from the modernist poetry, leading into Nardi’s prose. It is a short but significant moment in which medical jargon is evoked and juxtaposed with Nardi’s self-analysis, associating her words with the status of a patient.

The final line of the prose excerpt explicitly addresses the concept of woman as radical Other: “That kind of blockage, exiling one’s self from one’s self—have you ever experienced it? I dare say you have, at moments” (45). While the woman poet’s voice has been established as “Other” through the binary construction of the male poet’s poetry and the woman poet’s prose, in this moment the woman poet acknowledges that alienation from herself as well as the poet, which is made clearer through her status as exiled from the poet’s regard and the poetry of the epic. The next excerpt repeats Nardi’s verbalization of the alienation of woman from herself, which for Nardi is explicitly connected to her relationship with Williams: “If that situation with you (your ignoring those particular letters and then your final note) had belonged to the inevitable *lacrimae rerum* (as did, for instance my experience with Z.) its results could not have been (as it *has* been) to destroy the validity for me myself of myself, because in that case nothing to do with my sense of personal identity would have been maimed” (48). Nardi’s identity becomes not a woman as well as a poet, but splintered and alienated because of her difficult relationship with Williams. At the end of the

passage, she repeats this analysis, writing “it could not but follow that the whole side of life connected with those letters should in consequence take on for my own self that same kind of unreality and inaccessibility which the inner lives of other people often have for us” (45). This excerpt, while connected to the first of book 2, continues with the expression of self-alienation that Nardi experienced in her creative and personal isolation from Williams. The repetition of this assertion, compounded by the repetition of Nardi’s excerpts throughout book 2, challenges the alienation of Nardi’s prose from the poetry because of its constantly returning presence. While Nardi’s words are accusatory and passionate, they also contain a theorization of femininity that accounts for the psychological experience of alienation while never resolving it.

Her final prose contribution to the second section of book 2 brings the theme back to her rejection of Williams’s position as doctor, explicitly critiquing the void between doctor and patient that structures the clinical encounter. She writes, “I wouldn’t want to see you unless with some little warmth of friendliness and friendship on your part.... Nor should I want to see you at your office under any circumstance” (76). Nardi suggests that the worst context in which to mend a relationship would be in Williams’s office where he sees patients because Nardi does not wish to be placed in that position, even though she asserts the curative effect of their correspondence (and the damaging effect of its break). Through her letters, Nardi seeks to mend her relationship with Williams and in doing so “recapture some faith in the reality of [her] own thoughts and ideas and problems” (76). Nardi identifies her break with Williams with a break in her psyche and even her sanity, even as she cogently lays out this devastation in her letters. By presenting her letters in *Paterson*, Williams demonstrates the way that feminine subjectivity can be presented as a dialectic beyond the tension between masculinity and femininity, but within its own complex structures of knowing and not-knowing oneself.

While taken as individual excerpts, the woman poet's words read as the symptomizing of a woman who has been personally and professionally rejected by a man. However, her words also express ideas which are typically hidden from masculine understanding. When contextualized in *Paterson*, Nardi's words draw the radical Other, or the alienated feminine, out of their particularity as personal correspondence and into a dialectical relationship with the poetry. These emotionally charged prose sections escalate as the poetry becomes increasingly splintered. While the poetry that begins book 2 suggests the power of the male poet through the epic giant of Paterson, later the violent fracturing from the conflict between the female and male poet causes destruction. At the same time, this destruction is also the unveiling of the archive and the presentation of the invisible "hidden architecture" as visible. This revelation of the archive, and the threat of the status quo of the male poet by the powerful encroachment of the female poet's prose, creates the opportunity for the new to emerge. Beginning the final section of book 2, Williams writes,

Look for the nul
defeats it all

the N of all
equations •

that rock, the blank
that holds them up

which pulled away—
the rock's

their fall. Look
for that nul

that's past all
seeing

the death of all
that's past

all being •

But Spring shall come and flowers will bloom
and man must chatter of his doom • •

The descent beckons
as the ascent beckoned
Memory is a kind
of accomplishment
a sort of renewal
even
an initiation, since the spaces it opens are new
places. (77)

This poetry, appearing after a Nardi letter had just wrapped up the final prose of the second section, is profoundly tied to the sense of creative destruction brought on by Williams's interactions with Nardi. The "rock" of tradition is falling away, creating a void space, the "death of all/that's past." The structure of the poetry, which was previously orderly and lengthy, has become sparse and peppered with punctuation that separates the words from one another, physically creating this void space. Nardi's prose sections emphasize this void space because of their expression of subjective negation that happened through her relationship with Williams, and her inability to access herself. In turn, Williams's poetry absorbs and reflects the void space created through Nardi's words to create a sparse modernist aesthetic.

Thematically, this segment of poetry calls back to the gender conflict that initiated *Paterson*. Going back to the concept of women as flowers, Williams's poetry narrates how the "Spring" and flowers (indicating female poets) will come into a place of prominence, while man is aware of his falling away. This null, and spring, and process of crumbling and deconstructing, is productive as it allows for the space of the new. By engaging with the prose of Nardi, Williams is pointing toward the advent of the female poet (the disruptive and often frustrating relationship) who creates the very moment which causes the male poet to destruct, and therefore to be renewed.

At the point in which the male figure in the poetry is assailed by the female in the prose, the divergent issues become one. It is through the archive of the Nardi correspondence (that which is hidden) that Williams is able to reveal this null space.

Nowhere is this rise of the feminine and the destruction of the masculine more prominent than in the final pages of book 2, which are filled with Nardi's prose from one of her lengthy letters. In a sense, the prose reproduced in this final section is a rehashing of the themes throughout Nardi's letters: of feminine identity, alienation, and how those concepts are related to the conflicted relationship with the masculine figure of Williams. She claims that when presented with the reality of the situation of a woman in the world, Williams was unable and unwilling to provide Nardi with an outlet to continue her personal development, which led to the destruction of her creativity. She writes,

That my particular emotional orientation, in wrenching myself free from patterned standardized feminine feelings, enabled me to do some passably good work with *poetry*—all that was fine, wasn't it—something for you to sit up and take notice of! And you saw in one of my first letters to you (the one you had wanted to make use of, then, in the Introduction to your *Paterson*) an indication that my thoughts were to be taken seriously, because that too could be turned by you into literature, as something disconnected from life. (86)

Nardi herself accuses Williams, in the very body of *Paterson*, of exploiting her prose for personal gain, to the detriment of their relationship and her sanity. She derides his reaction to her rejection of “standardized feminine feelings,” which in their very nature could be considered symptoms of a pathological condition, as laudable in the context of creating art but repulsive in their relationship. Nardi argues that Williams's fascination with her poetry (and prose) is part and parcel of her perceived psychological issues, which for the purpose of art were something to be encouraged but in “life” were to be ignored and exacerbated by that closing off. She references Williams's move to use her prose in his poetry as a manipulation of her thoughts, in order for

Williams to achieve his poetic endeavor to access “the thing.” In including this critique, Williams is accessing “the thing,” the psychological reality of Nardi’s conflict and his own shortcomings. Through his poetry alone, Williams fails to access the concrete reality that Nardi addresses in her prose. Through the prose’s inclusion, Williams reveals both Nardi’s achievement of articulating her subjective experience while noting the failure of poetry to account for this perspective.

At times, Nardi’s final prose section echoes the Baroness’s critique of Williams’s position as a bourgeois male doctor. She writes that Williams is like writers “who are so sheltered from life in the raw by the glass-walled conditions of their own safe lives” (87). This critique is particularly prescient for Williams, who is exposed to “life in the raw” in his clinical practice but is nonetheless sheltered from the consequences of the poverty that he observes and exploits in his poetry because of his privileged position as physician. She also points to women’s inability to “sail free in her own element” as Williams urges, because of women’s status with men as lesser: “The members of any underprivileged class distrust and hate the ‘outsider’ who is *one of them*, and women therefore—women in general—will never be content with their lot until the light seeps down to the, not from one of their own, but from the eyes of changed male attitudes toward them” (87). Nardi connects her conflict with Williams and the subsequent psychological and artistic issues arising from that conflict to the larger social inequality between men and women that damages women’s relationships with men, other women, and ultimately themselves. Nardi is the “outsider,” positioned in “real life” by her marginal status as an impoverished and ill poet in society, and in *Paterson* by her prose’s status as archival documents.

Nardi further digs at Williams and his privileged position, in the next paragraph, by addressing Williams as “dear doctor” (87). The deployment of his professional title indicates his privileged status, but the tone of her critique undercuts that privilege as if *she* is teaching *him* a

lesson. She continues this critique of doctors on the next page, as she again ties his failure with her to his status: “Your whole relationship with me amounted to pretty much the same thing as your trying to come to the aid of a patient suffering from pneumonia by handing her a box of aspirin or Grove’s cold pills and a glass of hot lemonade” (88). In this case, however, Nardi juxtaposes Williams’s supposed good sense of clinical practice as a doctor with his failure to understand and provide Nardi with what she needed to be productive, which certainly was not “owed” to Nardi but she perceived as a cruel slight.

This argument comes to a head when Nardi writes about Williams’s disconnect from “life in the raw,” which he thinks he can access through his clinical practice (or perhaps through the archive) but Nardi argues is not possible. She writes, “But living (unsafe living, I mean) isn’t something one just sits back and decides about. It happens to one, in a small way, like measles; or in a big way, like a leaking boat or an earthquake” (91). While Williams drew from his clinical practice to write about the “reality” of life, Nardi’s argument is that his position as a doctor, and the alienation from doctor and patient that clinical practice creates, inherently separates him from understanding the realities of “unsafe living” which he seeks to represent in his texts. Williams’s inclusion of Nardi’s prose serves as evidence of that failure: he can’t represent “the real” in the same way that archival material can, and he can’t represent the struggle of female authorship that Nardi can through her prose.

It is through this conflict that the audience of *Paterson* is perhaps offered a window into an understanding of Williams’s concept of the archive through Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1966). The ambivalent relationship between Nardi and Williams, and the seemingly genuine admiration that Williams feels toward Nardi about her writing, comes through with his inclusion of the prose alongside the fractured, violent nature of the poetry. At the same time, the

female poet's poetry and the male poet's reply to the letters is withheld, creating a gaping void which creates a dialectical relationship between the poetry and prose rather than a direct connection. As the poetry and prose converge to create the world which Williams is constructing in *Paterson*, the work achieves both the "unveiling of the Same" as well as the simultaneous "appearance of the Double." Williams accomplishes the act of bringing the poetry and prose together in a dialectical tension without dissolving the structural and thematic differences between them.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault examines the ways that modern thought, in contrast to Classical thought, falls into a dialectic in which man exists both within and without the orders of knowledge created through medical and philosophical structures. Most significantly, Foucault reads void spaces between experience and representation as key to understanding modern structures of knowledge. He connects this project to the arc that began with *History of Madness*, writing,

The history of madness would be the history of the Other—of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcize the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness); whereas the history of the order imposed on things would be the history of the Same—of that which, for a given culture, is both dispersed and related, therefore to be distinguished by kinds and to be collected together into identities. (xxiv)

Foucault's point, in connecting conceptions of madness to that of the "Other," is to suggest that medical knowledge creates delineations of interiority and exteriority of illness even as it demonstrates that these categorizations are disrupted by their dialectical relationship. He suggests that in modernity, these bifurcations (of Same and Other, of madness and sanity) become the unstable ground on which man can conceive of himself. Nardi, and the category of femininity to which she belongs, occupies this space of madness and Other. To read her prose and Williams's

poetry through this lens would suggest that Williams drew Nardi's words into his work to bring not only poetry and prose, masculinity and femininity, into a dialectical relationship, but also discourses of the clinic and madness. Rather than use Nardi's prose as representative of artistic or psychological dysfunction, Williams uses discourses of supposed "madness" to create a modernist aesthetic which disrupts these categories while maintaining their dialectical tension.

Later in his work, Foucault clarifies this thesis in contrast to Classical knowledge. He connects the loss of words as representation to modernity, noting that this revolution emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with Nietzsche's reflections on language. This loss is fundamentally related to conceptualizing man in his embodied state, creating a tension between transcendental and empirical knowledge. Foucault conceives of man's existence, in modernity, as "a finitude—which is in a sense the same: it is marked by the spatiality of the body, the yawning of desire, and the time of language; and yet it is radically other" (315). However, this containment within the body does not ultimately result in a totality, but a process of fracturing. Foucault writes,

Transcendental reflection in its modern form does not, as in Kant, find its fundamental necessity in the existence of a science of nature (opposed by the perpetual conflicts and uncertainties of philosophers), but in the existence—mute, yet ready to speak, and secretly impregnated with a potential discourse—of that *not-known* from which man is perpetually summoned toward self-knowledge. (323)

Foucault's description of thought and knowledge in modernity repeats this dialectical construction, in which negation and void spaces are the always-elusive conditions of man's conceptualization of self. His description of the known and not known can be useful in examining the role of gender difference in *Paterson*, precisely because woman, as radical Other and as the negation of the masculine, inhabits this space of the "not-known." While Foucault's work does not explicitly engage with the question of femininity, he questions the status of man as such, a question which

was posed of women by Freud decades earlier.⁵³ Read through this lens, *Paterson* is a project of explicitly constructing the known and the not-known, engaging those perspective simultaneously in order to create a more comprehensive account of gendered subject positions in modernity.

A more explicit engagement with the dialectical relationship of masculinity and femininity can be read through Foucault's conceptualization of man and his "doubles." He writes, "The unthought (whatever name we give it) is not lodged in man like a shrivelled-up nature or a stratified history; it is, in relation to man, the Other: the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, nor in man, but beside him at the same time, in an identical newness, in an unavoidable duality" (326). Rather than conceptualize man as a totality, Foucault identifies the "unthought" as something outside of and simultaneous with the creation of man in modernity. He writes, "The whole of modern thought is imbued with the necessity of thinking the unthought" (327). If Foucault argues that the unthought is the central thesis of modern thought, then the position of "femininity," which Freud struggles to conceptualize and which Lacan puts in a negative relationship to masculinity, could be interpreted as the key to the dialectic of modernity. Rather than take femininity as negativity, or a "problem," Williams uses the status of femininity as negativity to create his dialectic with Nardi's prose.

At the end of *The Order of Things*, Foucault brings his discussion back to the "human sciences" including the rise of psychoanalysis. Emerging from the fragmentation of discourse in the modern age, psychoanalysis is one of the sciences that according to Foucault is "the locus of interpretation, because the methods applied to it are above all those of comprehension, because it

⁵³ At the end of his lecture on "Femininity" (1933), Freud famously said, "That is all I had to say to you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. But do not forget that I have only been describing women in so far as their nature is determined by their sexual function. It is true that that influence extends very far; but we do not overlook the fact that an individual woman may be a human being in other respects as well. If you want to know more about femininity, enquire from your own experiences of life, or turn to the poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information" (*Freud on Women* 362).

finds itself wound around the clinical pole of knowledge” (349). Although as Foucault states the practice of psychoanalysis is invested in the act of interpretation through clinical practices in order to comprehend the structure of the psyche, for Freud and Lacan women represent the limit of these practices. This can be read through Freud’s frustrated inconclusive ending to the Dora case, and his assurance to psychoanalysts in “Analysis Terminable and Interminable” (1937) that some women are so difficult and emotionally projective that sometimes it’s necessary for an analyst to simply end treatment altogether. While Williams’s attitude toward Nardi in his letters would suggest a failure of communication (and perhaps a failure of treatment), through the act of including her prose in *Paterson* Williams brings the (un)interpretable “symptoms” of Nardi’s psychology into conversation with a project that seeks to retain the tension without posing a solution.

In his argument about psychoanalysis and pathology, Foucault writes that although Freud was “the first to undertake the radical erasure of the division between positive and negative (between the normal and pathological,” etc, he was also to a certain extent unable to achieve that erasure (361). The structure of the clinic implicitly maintains that dualistic structure of normal and pathological and the inherent power imbalance contained therein through its positing of the doctor as the locus of knowledge and interpretation, set against the symptomatic patient. Foucault identifies the limit of psychoanalysis, writing

All analytic knowledge is thus invincibly linked with a praxis, with that strangulation produced by the relation between two individuals, one of whom is listening to the other’s language, thus freeing his desire from the object it has lost (making him understand he has lost it), liberating him from the ever-repeated proximity of death (making him understand that one day he will die). (376)

In this passage, Foucault turns the process of psychoanalysis on its head, showing the ways that in the context of the clinic, the *doctor* becomes the one who is freed from his object through the

repetition of another's language. It is in the space of the clinical encounter, Foucault suggests, that the unfolding of man's finitude (the project of modernity) reveals itself. However, this unfolding happens through the expression of "madness" from the patient and the drawing out of the analyst's own psychological dynamics through his interpretation. Therefore, if Nardi's prose is posited as the psychodynamics of a patient in the context of a clinical encounter, the unfolding poetry becomes not the contrast to the "rational" poetics of the male doctor, but the symptomatic product of the doctor's encounter with the patient.

CONCLUSION

My study of gendered pathology in modernist literature began with questions about the relationship between the discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis and the formal innovations of modernist literature such as collage, hybrid constructions, and juxtaposition. I was also interested in how the approaches of the male “doctor” author and the female “patient” author reinforce or deconstruct the categories of femininity and sexuality that were produced out of those medical discourses. Finally, I set out to explore how the discourses of madness and femininity were framed in medical discourses and modernist texts. I arrived at this field of inquiry through my interest in William Carlos Williams and his relationships to female modernists, particularly the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Marcia Nardi, whom I considered influential in the production of his modernist aesthetics. In exploring those figures in relation to Williams, I discovered that his works were significantly inflected by the women’s critique of Williams’s position as “doctor,” which led to broader considerations of the connection between medical discourse and modernist aesthetics. My research illuminates the ways in which clinical discourses not only contributed to the construction of pathologies from a gendered perspective, but how modernist works succeed in critiquing these conclusions through their discursive constructions.

The modernist authors in my study offer a perspective of medical discourse that is grounded in their practical experiences of the clinic as well as cultural conversations about human sexuality that emerged out of the fields of psychoanalysis and sexology at the end of the nineteenth century. Alfred Döblin and Williams, as practicing physicians in areas with economically depressed populations, wrote about the ways in which illness arose out of the conditions in which their patients struggled. On the other side of the clinical dynamic, H.D.’s experience as a patient of her friend Havelock Ellis and later Freud shaped her depiction of women’s perspectives of self-

identification. Finally, the Baroness's Dadaist work produced from a perspective of "madness" and Nardi's prose arising from the doctor/patient relationship formed through her communication with Williams represent interventions in the discussions about the authority of clinical discourses. I argue that these modernist authors used their works to frame pathology against gendered expectations of normative sexual behaviors delineated in works by Krafft-Ebing, Otto Weininger, Havelock Ellis, and Sigmund Freud.

In his modernist novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Döblin draws from psychoanalytic concepts to depict the relationship between the individual and society. I read his depiction of Biberkopf in relation to Freud's system of drives as well as symptoms of traumatic war neuroses. Sexological discourse also plays a role in the novel, as both a source of medical comprehension and an imprecise account of Biberkopf's sexual experiences, showing the ways in which clinical discourses can illuminate or obfuscate comprehension of sexual dysfunctions. In *Palimpsest*, H.D. evokes pathological narcissism by highlighting the mirror as a site for Hipparchia and Raymonde's comprehension of their identities and their histories. She also explores the problematic status of maternity through Hipparchia's relationship with her mother and Raymonde's traumatic loss of her child in stillbirth. In Williams's *In the American Grain*, a work which I argue was influenced by the Baroness as a cultural figure and a critic of his work, he references her status as a "mad" woman, which he perceives as part of cultural attitudes toward female sexuality. He continues this critical approach in *Paterson*, in which Marcia Nardi's prose are positioned as a critique of clinical authority. I read these works in relation to the Baroness and Nardi's dialogic relationship with Williams, offering a view of sexual pathology from both "doctor" and "patient" perspectives.

These modernist authors' desire to represent modernity through the individual particularity of characters and cultural figures rather than an overarching diagnostic understanding of pathology

became an important aspect of their aesthetic practices, resulting in representations of modern experience that were driven by formal innovations such as montage, non-narrativity, fracturing, and juxtaposition, among others. My study reads these formal innovations as not only reflecting the medical context in which these authors were writing, but as a form of critique of the problematic nature of understanding pathology solely through a medical lens. By reading these modernist works through the framework of discursive constructions, I understand experimental forms to be interventions into the institutional structures of medicine. The concepts introduced by Foucault's works on the medical institution in *Mental Illness and Psychology*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *Madness and Civilization*, and the organization of knowledge structures in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* offer a way of reading the modernist literature in my study as responding to these clinical concepts at the level of their structural innovations.

In chapter 1, I examine how Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* uses montage construction to integrate clinical discourses within its depiction of modernity in order to reveal the discursive construction of gendered expectations of sexual behaviors. Döblin concentrates specifically on wounded masculinity after the war, and the way that expectations of masculine virility and violence feeds into Biberkopf's proto-fascist mindset. This psychological dynamic is reinforced through the narrator who partially represents sexological discourse as well as Biberkopf's social milieu, dissolving the authority of the doctor as he becomes implicated in Biberkopf's crimes and pathological behaviors. I read these elements through Foucault's writing on the clinical institution in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, in which the isolation of madness through its institutionalization becomes problematic for understanding pathology. Through Döblin's use of montage narration, he resituates the pathological individual and highlights his experience as reflective of his situation in post-World War I Berlin.

In chapter 2, I draw from Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in order to demonstrate how H.D.'s *Palimpsest* discursively constructs femininity as dispersion, challenging the authority of medical discourses to diagnose, "narrate," or represent female subjectivity. The mirror image fractures the protagonists' identities as well as the novel's narrative coherence, while also offering access to the characters' psyches through that mediation (rather than the analyst). While most readings of H.D. focus on psychoanalytic readings of her works in context of her biography, I argue that H.D.'s use of repetition and non-narrativity maintains a tension between the psychoanalytic case study and the novel's resistance to the pathologization of its main characters.

Shifting from a single-author lens to one that places modernist authors in conversation, in chapters 3 and 4 I show how Williams's relationships with female artists were influential to his modernist aesthetic. Using Foucault's *The History of Madness*, I examine how The Baroness's critique of Williams's status as bourgeois doctor becomes productively channeled through his vision of destructive sexuality in *Spring and All*, as well as his view of female sexuality in *In the American Grain*. While Williams encounters her as a "mad" woman, her critique of Williams's rationality nonetheless opens the possibility of a radical aesthetic which reconsiders notions of active female sexuality as non-normative. In my reading of *Paterson*, I use Foucault's theory of the archive in *The Order of Things* to read Williams's use of Nardi's prose as critical of the structural alienation of clinical practice, with its consolidation of power and interpretation in the doctor. I use the archive of letters between Williams and Nardi to establish the clinical relationship between them, which differently inflects the poetry/prose tension in *Paterson*. I conclude that Williams's use of Nardi's letters creates a space for "madness" to speak, creating a clinical encounter that draws out Williams's own psychological dynamics through his poetry.

Although it is well known that Williams and Döblin were writing from their experiences as physicians and H.D.'s experiences in psychoanalysis are often central to scholarly criticism of her works, my analysis turns away from "biographical" readings of their prose. Instead, my research works toward an understanding of modernist aesthetics through the authors' critique of clinical structures and relationships. Through this intervention, I demonstrate how modernist literature from authors with firsthand knowledge of these structures and texts were able to offer a view of the ways in which pathological conditions were conceptually evolving in the early twentieth century. By examining texts authored by male physicians and female "patients," I offer critiques of clinical perspectives of pathology from experiences across the patient/doctor divide as well as the male/female author binary. By allowing pathological authors and characters to speak from positions that are both cognizant of and resistant to clinical discourse, the modernist works in my study offer a multi-perspectival understanding of pathology and highlight the intersection between modernist studies and the medical field.

REFERENCES

- Bajun, Sanja. *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Barnet, Andrea. *All-Night Party: The Women of Bohemian Greenwich Village and Harlem, 1913-1930*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2004.
- Bernheimer, Charles, and Clair Kahane, eds. *In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Billitteri, Carla. "William Carlos Williams and the Politics of Form." *Journal of Modern Literature* 30.2 (2007): 42-63.
- Boone, Joseph Allen. *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Bremen, Brian. *William Carlos Williams and the Diagnostics of Culture*. Cary: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Bristow, Joseph. *Sexuality*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Brooks, Peter. *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
- Buhle, Mari Jo. *Feminism and Its Discontents*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Carden-Coyne, Ana. *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Carter, Angela. *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* (1979). New York:

- Penguin Books, 2001.
- Chisholm, Dianne. *H.D.'s Freudian Poetics: Psychoanalysis in Translation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Colby, Sasha. *Stratified Modernism: The Poetics of Excavation from Gautier to Olson*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2009.
- Crawford, T. Hugh. *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.
- Davies, Steffan, and Ernest Schonfield, eds. *Alfred Döblin: Paradigms of Modernism*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
- Döblin, Alfred. *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929). Trans. Eugene Jolas. New York: Penguin Books, 1978.
- Dollinger, Roland, Wulf Koepke, and Heidi Thomann Tewarson, eds. *A Companion to the Works of Alfred Döblin*. Rochester: Camden House, 2004.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Dijkstra, Bram. *Cubism, Stieglitz, and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams*. Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Doolittle, Hilda. *Palimpsest*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- Du Plessis, Rachael Blau. *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle*. Bloomington: Indiana University

Press, 1986.

-----*Purple Passages: Pound, Eliot, Zukofsky, Olson, Creeley and the Ends of Patriarchal Poetry.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012.

Ellenberger, Henri. *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry.* Basic Books, 1981.

Ellis, Havelock. *Man and Woman: A Study of Human Secondary Sex Characteristics.* London: Walter Scott, Ltd, 1894. Google Books.

-----*Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion.* Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1922. Google Books.

-----*Studies in the Psychology of Sex: The Evolution of Modesty, The Phenomena of Sexual Periodicity, Auto-Eroticism.* Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1901. Google Books.

-----*Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Selection in Man.* Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1906. Google Books.

Felman, Shoshana. *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

-----*Writing and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis).* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Foucault, Michel. "Distance, Aspect, Origin." *The Tel Quel Reader.* Ed. Patrick Ffrench and Roland-Francois Lack. London: Routledge, 1998.

-----*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason.* Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon Books, 1965.

- Mental Illness and Psychology*. Oakland: University of California Press, 1987.
- The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.
- The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1973.
- History of Madness*. Ed. Jean Khalifa. Trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalifa. London: Routledge, 2006.
- The History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books, 2012.
- The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle: A Study of the Death Instinct in Human Behavior*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: Bantam Books, 1959.
- “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and the Modern Nervous Illness.” *Freud on Women: A Reader*. Ed. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990.
- “‘Constructions in Analysis.’” *Wild Analysis*. Ed. Adam Phillips. London: Penguin Books, 2002.
- “‘Femininity.’” *Freud on Women: A Reader*. Ed. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.
- “‘Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria.’” *The Freud Reader*. Ed. Peter Gay. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.
- Freud on Women: A Reader*. Ed. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.

- “On Narcissism.” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. New York: Hogarth Press, 1964.
- “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through.” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XII*. New York: Hogarth Press, 1958.
- The Ego and the Id*. Ed. James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989.
- The Freud Reader*. Peter Gay, ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Penelope’s Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.’s Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Frosh, Stephen. *For and Against Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Psychoanalysis Outside the Clinic: Interventions in Psychosocial Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Fuechtner, Veronika. “‘Artz und Dichter’: Döblin’s Medical, Psychiatric, and Psychoanalytical Work.” Roland Dollinger, Wulf Koepke, and Heidi Thomann Tewarson, eds. *A Companion to the Work of Alfred Döblin*. Rochester: Camden House, 2004.
- Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond*. University of California Press, 2011.
- Gammel, Irene. *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity—A Cultural Biography*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002.
- and Suzanne Zelazo, eds. *Body Sweats: The Uncensored Writings of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011.

- Gilbert, Sandra M. "Purloined Letters: William Carlos Williams and 'Cress.'" *William Carlos Williams Review* 11.2 (1985) 5-15.
- Graham, Theodora. "'Her Heigh Complaynte': The Cress Letters of William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*." *Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams: The University of Pennsylvania Conference Papers*. Ed. Daniel Hoffman. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- Gregory, Elizabeth. *Quotation and Modern American Poetry*. Houston: Rice University Press, 1996.
- Guest, Barbara. *Herself Defined: H.D. and Her World*. Tucson: Schaffner Press, 2003.
- Hoberman, Ruth. *Gendering Classicism: The Ancient World in Twentieth-Century Women's Historical Fiction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Homans, Margaret. "Feminist Fictions and Feminist Theories of Narrative." *Narrative* 2.1 (1994): 3-16.
- Hopkins, David. *Dada and Surrealism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Huffer, Lynne. *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Jelavich, Peter. *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film, and the Death of Weimar Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Jones, Amelia. *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004.
- "New York Dada: Beyond the Readymade." *The Dada Seminars*. Ed. Leah Dickerman. Washington: Distributed Art Publishers, 2005.

- Kinnahan, Linda. *Poetics of the Feminine: Authority and Literary Tradition in William Carlos Williams, Mina Loy, Denise Levertov, and Kathleen Fraser*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Kloepfer, Deborah Kelly. "Fishing the Murex up: Sense and Resonance in H.D.'s 'Palimpsest.'" *Contemporary Literature* 27.4 (1986): 553-573.
- Kolocotroni, Vassiliki, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou, eds. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Trans. Margaret Waller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Lamm, Leonard Jonathan. *The Idea of the Past: History, Science, and Practice in American Psychoanalysis*. New York: NYU Press, 1993.
- Laplanche, Jean and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-analysis*. London: Karnac Books, 1988.
- Lappin, Linda. "Dada Queen in the Bad Boys' Club: Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven." *Southwest Review* 89.2/89.3 (2004): 307-319.
- Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- Lunn, Eugene. *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Mariani, Paul. *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1981.
- Micale, Mark S. *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880-1940*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

- Mitchell, Juliet and Jacqueline Rose, eds. *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1982.
- Morris, Adalaide. *How to Live, What to Do: H.D.'s Cultural Poetics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- Nietzsche, Frederich Wilhelm. *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980.
- O'Neil, Elizabeth Murrie, ed. *The Last Word: Letters Between Marcia Nardi and William Carlos Williams*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1994.
- Pease, Allison. *Modernism, Feminism, and the Culture of Boredom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Peppis, Paul. *Sciences of Modernism: Ethnography, Sexology, and Psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Rentschler, Eric. "Terms of Dismemberment: The Body in/and/of Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980). *New German Critique* 34 (1985): 194-208.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex. *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. Ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. 157-210.
- Sass, Louis A. *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender." *Hysteria Beyond Freud*. Ed. Sander L. Gilman, et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. 286-344.

Silverman, Kaja. *The Acoustic Mirror. The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema.*

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

-----*The Threshold of the Visible World.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Simon, John. *General Pathology, As Conducive to the Establishment of Rational Principles for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease.* Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1852. Google Books.

The Social Hygiene Bulletin 4 (1917). New York: American Social Hygiene Association, 1917-1922. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard University. Accessed 09 March 2016.

Stevens, Hugh, and Caroline Howlett, eds. *Modernist Sexualities.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.

Tatar, Maria. *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Taylor, Georgina. *H.D. and the Public Sphere of Modernist Women Writers, 1913-1946.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Templeton, Erin E. “‘The eternal bride and father—quid pro quo’: William Carlos Williams, Marcia Nardi, and Paterson.” *The Heritage of William Carlos Williams: Points of Contact.* Ed. Ian D. Copestake. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007.

Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies Vol 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History.* Trans. Stephen Conway. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

-----*Male Fantasies Vol 2. Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror.*

Trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Tonkin, Maggie. *Angela Carter and Decadence: Critical Fictions/Fictional Critique.* London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

- Trotter, David. *Paranoid Modernism: Literary Experiment, Psychosis, and the Professionalization of English Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- von Freytag-Loringhoven, Elsa. "Thee I Call 'Hamlet of Wedding-Ring': A Critique of Kora in Hell and Why..." *Body Sweats: The Uncensored Writings of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*. Ed. Irene Gammel and Suzanne Zelazo. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011.
- "William Carlos Williams." Series 2: Correspondence and Personal Papers. *Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven Papers*. Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries, Hornbake Library: College Park, MD.
- von Krafft-Ebing, Richard. *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct: A Medico-legal Study*. Trans. Charles Gilbert Chaddock, M.D. Philadelphia: The F.A. Davis Company, 1899. Google eBook.
- Weininger, Otto. *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*. Trans. Ladislaus Löb. Ed. Daniel Steurer with Laura Marcus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Williams, William Carlos. *In the American Grain*. New York: New Directions, 1956.
- Paterson* (1946). New York: New Directions, 1995.
- Spring and All* (1923). New York: New Directions, 2011.
- *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams*. New York: New Directions, 1967.
- "The Baroness Elsa Freytag von Loringhoven. *Twentieth Century Literature* 35.3 (1989): 279-284.
- "The Great Sex Spiral." *William Carlos Williams Review* 30.1/30.2 (2013): 21-23.
- Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. *Freud on Women: A Reader*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990.

ABSTRACT**AFTER THE CLINIC: GENDERED PATHOLOGY IN MODERNIST LITERATURE**

by

ALISA ALLKINS**December 2016****Advisor:** Dr. Barrett Watten**Major:** English (Literature)**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

After the Clinic: Gendered Pathology in Modernist Literature demonstrates the ways in which formal innovations of modernism construct a relationship between sexual pathology and modernity. I read a selection of canonical and lesser known modernist works through their investments in overturning hierarchical relationships constructed through the clinical institution, focusing on their depiction of clinical types such as the traumatized male veteran, the hysterical woman, and the often-patriarchal figure of the doctor. Modernist prose and hybrid works by Alfred Döblin, William Carlos Williams, and H.D. depict sexological and psychoanalytic definitions of pathology as gendered products of clinical discourse and the chaotic reality of modern life. These prominent modernist authors draw on their experiences as doctors and patient, respectively, to take sexual pathology out of the limited field of clinical discourse and contextualize it within modern experience. Lesser known or marginal artists Marcia Nardi and the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven confront the hypocrisy of clinical alienation from modern experience through their position as hystericized or “mad” women. Through their works, modernist artists both adopt and challenge the perspectives of Sigmund Freud as well as cultural sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, and Otto Weininger, among others. Modernist novels such as *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, *Palimpsest*, and various prose and hybrid works by William Carlos Williams use

montage, non-narrative forms, and experimental poetics to challenge how pathology is defined through cultural expectations of normative sexual behaviors and reproduced through medical discourse. They counter the methodology of the clinic, particularly the concentration of power and interpretation in the doctor, and reject the division between the normal and pathological as a framework for representing modern life. Rather than adopt psychoanalytic and sexological perspectives of pathological sexual behaviors, I argue, modernist texts show pathology to be dialectically constructed by medical discourse and the conditions of modernity in which medical discourse is produced. Furthermore, these works draw attention to how the cultural construction of pathology is a gendered one, in which expectations of normative yet divergent sexual functioning in men and women cast aspersions on those whose sexuality lies outside the confines of “normal.” The authors’ reorientation of pathology creates an ethical relationship between doctor and patient, creating space for madness to “speak” out of a clinical context.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I graduated from Oakland University with a B.A. in English in 2009, then came to Wayne State University in 2010 to complete my M.A. and Ph.D. in 2016. My research interests include modernist literature, American literature, critical theory, gender and sexuality studies, and literature and medicine. I have presented at conferences in the United States, Germany, and Canada.