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We Moderns: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home

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We Moderns: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home

by

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Dedication

To Henry and Linda Rumbarger, my parents.

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I am so grateful to Alan Friedman for the years of his patient guidance, good humor, elegant readings, and sharp and quick eyes; to Ann Cvetkovich for making me part of a sustaining community of writers, for her understanding of what it might mean to build an archive of fleeting things, and for modeling the generosity in service that builds better departments. Adam Newton is sensitive and serious reader who has always makes my work better, and makes me want it to be better still. UT's Division of Rhetoric and Writing, under John Ruszkiewicz's purposeful leadership, has supported my teaching and given me a chance to discover that the heart of this project lies with my students. The staff of the Computer Writing and Research Lab introduced me to photo editing and MOOs and blogs, and made me feel capable of, and excited about, learning things I never expected. The University Continuing Fellowship allowed me to focus on this project for the past year—receiving it was a great support, and an honor.

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throughout my time in the graduate program. Jeanette Herman—a warm, generous friend and nuanced, detailed thinker—talked me through every stage of this project. In fact, sitting in Austin Java before I had a dissertation topic, she told me that the (academic, presumably) subject I talked about that most interested her was women modernists' war writings. So I talked about it more. Eve Dunbar, my favorite troublemaker, closest friend, and soon-to-be colleague makes me enjoy the academy, and most things, infinitely more. Thank you to my family, Henry, Linda, and Catherine Rumbarger, It is impossible to properly acknowledge the contribution my parents have made to this project, to me wanting and being able to undertake it, and to the best, most hopeful parts of myself. This is dedicated to you with much love.

We Moderns: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home

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Sensational, participatory, everyday—we rarely describe literary modernism in such terms. But I insist on them in my dissertation, *We Moderns: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home*. I examine interwar and World War II writings by Elizabeth Bowen, Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas, and Virginia Woolf; I reappraise these women as originary theorists of trauma who argue for the home as a key site of embedded war history. Their texts—from Toklas' bloody recipes for meals under German Occupation, to Stein's interior decorating ideas inspired by a radiator she'd like to steal from Hitler's house, to Woolf's account of hostessing in war's aftermath—work as interactive popular genres, inviting identification with clichéd advice on home and housekeeping, then confronting readers with war violence in our most intimate, familiar "rooms." Moreover, in refusing to neatly encapsulate the events of war, these writers produce what I call modernist sensation texts: they viscerally engage readers in the anxiety-ridden, disorienting monotony of daily life during wartime. In bringing war home, women modernists challenge the divide between private and public life, between home and front,

and call for readers' active participation in the unfinished work of remembrance and mourning. The archive I redefine as war texts envisions a wartime history that is idiosyncratic and inclusive, a type of living that strives for communication, and a type of reading that bears witness—a vision, as I discuss in detail, that I try to maintain in my own *Rhetoric of the Homefront* critical reading and persuasive writing classroom.

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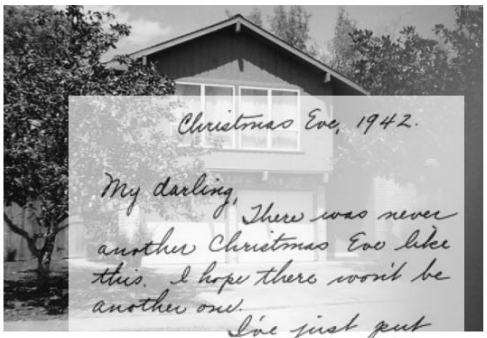
how unified whole.

—Virginia Woolf, on her World War II novel
Between the Acts

I almost would like to be an historian myself to perhaps do something.
—Gertrude Stein, 1934 lecture on narration



What do I want to do to my readers? Convey to them an idea, an image or a sensation—I suppose, really, all three simultaneously—to which they shall react with my own intensity.

—Elizabeth Bowen, interview for the British Broadcasting Company, 10 May 1950

—Catherine Burke Rumbarger,
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Introduction

We Moderns: Women Modernists' Writing on War and Home analyzes the centrality of home and housekeeping to interwar and World War II writings by Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, and Elizabeth Bowen. My study calls for a broader understanding of the modernist project that includes the very popular and participatory modes it is perpetually defined against, and also engages questions—as urgent now as in the early twentieth century—of how responsibility for war is represented, shared, and, in particular, taught. I argue that women modernists' war texts invoke, then threaten, readers' universalized notions of home, rather than provide safely distanced accounts of battles and battlefields. By employing what I term interactive popular genres—recipes, accounts of hostessing and interior design, detective novels, sensation texts—they locate war not in a completed history, but in an expanded present perpetuated by many everyday interactions.

Though, for example, Georg Lukács maintains that modernism is marked by "a negation of outward reality" that "empt[ies] everyday life of meaning," my analyses of women modernists' war texts demonstrate that, far from emptying everyday life of meaning, they use everyday life to *lend* its meaning to war (25,45). Tropes of at-risk homes and housekeeping are tangible and immediate, whereas the statistics, heroes, and events of war provide only a closed and monolithic history: "everyday quabble" offers critical—and perhaps the only—sites, materials, and affective frame through which we can approach historical violence actively, rather than in detached acquiescence.[1] As

[1] Though, as I explain in paragraphs to come, Shoshana Felman endorses a sense of crisis as the only mode through which readers can engage testimony, her co-author Dori Laub offers a quieter, perhaps more

women modernists embed traumatic history within clichéd domestic advice, these writers initiate readers into what Stein calls a "wartime state of mind": a battlefield may be beyond imagining, but home is, perhaps, where the heart is. She writes in the epilogue to her novel *Mrs. Reynolds* (1952):

> This book is an effort to show the way anybody could feel these years. It is a perfectly ordinary couple living an ordinary life and having ordinary conversations and not really suffering personally from everything that is happening but over them, all over them is the shadow of two men [Hitler and Stalin], and then the shadow of one of the two men gets bigger and blows away and there is no other. There is nothing historical about this book except the state of mind.

Here, Stein makes a distinction between survivors of the battlefront and survivors of the homefront, but she also acknowledges the shadow-fall of war trauma "all over" "anybody." Or, rather, she acknowledges, as Margot Norris put it, "the oblique and invasive effects that perdure beyond war's specific spatial and temporal confines to enter into the most intimate recesses of private and domestic life" (2). A "feel," a "state of mind," exists, through the witness-reader, in *those* and in "*these* years" [emphasis mine].

By "witness-reader," I mean to indicate that women modernists' wartime texts—as they instruct "anybody" to, say, cook or decorate and simultaneously to engage accounts of historical violence—challenge a wider "we" of intergenerational readers to

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thoughtful model. He describes voices "set free" and "liberation" gained through a deeply present engagement with another's story and specifically situates this engagement within the "ordinary" and "commonplace"—within the "routine of everyday quabble" (63). As a psychiatrist, Laub hears his patients' distress as "a more subtle melody" sounding through quotidian conversations with them.

see ourselves continuingly implicated in war and its active remembrance. To put it another way: because women modernists write about war in texts that also model and instruct on domestic practices, their readers are especially called to interact with and involve themselves in the history represented. My terminology, then, gives weight to the role readers might play, not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as intimates and fosterers, scrapbookers and hosts, of these "everyday" wartime histories; I offer "witness-reader" not to predetermine what all readers' relationships to these texts will be, but to underscore the potential for readers' varied, active, and ethical participation, through them, in a past that informs a lived experience of the present.

In keeping with this contention that, by engaging reader participation in homefront life, women modernists' "teach" readers to witness war, I extend my study beyond discussions of war and modernism to reading and writing pedagogy in *We Moderns'* final chapter: my experience teaching these texts to lower-division students in my *Rhetoric of the Homefront* course, which also includes contemporary units on Baghdad and the United States during an ongoing "war on terrorism," serves as a case study. Shoshana Felman similarly triangulates literature, witnessing historical trauma, and contemporary pedagogy in "Education and Crisis," the opening essay of her influential book *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992), co-authored with psychiatrist Dori Laub. Felman poses the suggestive questions: "if literature is an *alignment between witnesses*, what would this alignment mean? And by virtue of what sort of agency is one *appointed* to bear witness?" (2).

As an answer, Felman introduces the course texts (by Camus, Freud, and Paul Celan, among others, and videotaped testimonies by one man and one woman who

survived the Holocaust), major writing assignment, and her experiences as teacher of a graduate course at Yale entitled "Literature and Testimony." Her students—who "felt actively addressed" by the literary and, as she puts it, "real" testimonies they encounter through the course—are themselves traumatized by "assuming the position of witness," she claims (48, 42, 52). For Felman, testimony is a speech act that "addresses what in history is *action* that exceeds any substantized significance, and what in happenings is *impact* that dynamically explodes any conceptual reifications and any constantive dimensions" (5). In other words, because they are careful readers of texts shot through with uncontainable pain, something *happens* to Felman's students: like chemicals that only react in combination, witness and witness, reader and survivor, produce knowledge together.

Beyond sharing Felman's insight that there is a kind of writing so important it's more than writing—it's testimony; a kind of reading so important it's more than reading—it's witnessing, I respect her urgent sense that teaching about (and in) wartime should change our pedagogy. ("In the era of the Holocaust, of Hiroshima, of Vietnam—in the age of testimony—teaching, I would venture to suggest, must in turn *testify*, make something *happen*" [53].) But it is also telling that Felman's emphatic italics and language of explosion differ from my description of the witness-reader in their performance of crisis. Felman writes:

> I would venture to propose, today, that teaching in itself, teaching as such, takes place precisely only through a crisis: if teaching does not hit upon some sort of crisis, if it does not encounter either the vulnerability or the explosiveness of a (explicit or implicit) critical and unpredictable dimension, it has perhaps *not truly*

> *taught*: it has perhaps passed on some facts, passed on some information and some documents, with which the students or the audience—the recipients—can for instance do what people during the occurrence of the Holocaust precisely did with information that kept coming forth but that no one could *recognize*, and that no one could therefore truly *learn*, *read* or *put to use*. (53)

This sense of crisis as the necessary condition of learning and teaching stands in contrast with women modernists' representations of the lasting and everyday presence of historical violence—violence present as much in the ordinary and "eventless" as in the shocking and the singular. Or, as Alyssa Harad writes in "Resisting Crisis: Trauma, Pedagogy and Survival":

> When we teach in order to (or how to) bear witness to trauma, we must teach for the long term. To do so we must sometimes work against our fascination with crisis—the shock or wound that penetrates a witness' apathy or false reality to compel their attention—and work toward the more subtle work of articulating the haunting presence of trauma in everyday life. (*The Scholar and Feminist Online*)

Moreover, because she advocates initiating a crisis for her students, Felman creates a situation in which she herself, in order for the class to continue, must provide and, in turn, ask student to mimic, totalizing accounts of the course that reintegrate individual responses into her authoritative narrative. Felman reports that her students are so affected by the course readings that she must unify them through a half-hour lecture that both summarized their reactions and "attempted to articulate for them *an integrated view* of the literary texts and of the videotapes—of the significance of all the texts together, in relation to their own reactions" (49). Similarly, students' paper assignment asks them:

"What has this experience taught you in the end? What did it change in your perceptions of those other texts? *What difference did it make in your global perception of the class*?" (51-2)

In chapter four, I provide a writing assignment as an alternative to Felman's that asks students to work as witnesses and archivers without reinstating monolithic narratives or my singular authority. (Felman, too, views archival materials as key to her course. But, again, she is the only one empowered to decide which "raw documents" should be included—she emerges from the Yale archive with the two Holocaust testimonies—and including them at all is recounted primarily as a landmark in her teaching career: "for the first time in the history of my teaching, I decided, therefore, to have recourse to the archive" [42].) For now, I point out that this dissertation project, like that writing assignment, is densely peopled with students and teachers, readers and storytellers—contemporary snapshot collectors and writing students, a dollhouse maker, a blogger, my grandmother. I have attempted to, through these voices, indicate the diversity of people who have a place in a conversation about war, and its aftermath, and its prevention. True to the rich citationality particularly of works by Stein and Woolf, I turn to these everyday authorities as much as to institutionally sanctioned ones.

BOOKS OF SCRAPS

> I have a lot of snapshots and these albums, these family albums that I keep and store in my house. I had one night when, I don't know why, but when all this stuff started to really bother me, that I had it in my house and, I don't know, I didn't want it there any more. I didn't know why, it made me just feel really really uncomfortable. Sometimes it just feels wrong that you've got these things and they're, like, pictures from the 1920s and you know that everyone's dead – you don't know what happened to them and you don't know why you own their lives and they're in your possession. It's rather like having a family of ghosts living in your bedroom with you and sometimes that's not nice. I don't know—I can't throw them away because it's sort of sacrilegious to do that and you take

> on a sort of weird responsibility to these people. You become their sort of carers in their afterlife. I don't know—I'm the foster parent of all these photographs. They're definitely more than the paper they're printed on—they're these strange, magical frozen people.
>
> —Leonie Branston, snapshot collector

Not knowing why—I don't know—Leonie Branston houses hundreds of discarded photographs that she buys at flea markets: they become intimates in her home, ghosts in the bedroom, they in her possession and she in theirs. An unlikely inheritor of histories, Branston takes care of this "paper" and, therefore, of the "people" represented on it. One of 12 collectors of strangers' snapshots interviewed in the documentary *Other People's Pictures* (2004), Branston describes an intense connection to the lives of dead others that is common, and surprising, to the collectors. Many seem shy—perhaps defensive, even a bit mystified by the power of their own protectiveness—as they describe their collections. Fern Rickman, reaching past folded clothes in her closet toward Tupperware containers packed with thousands of bought photos, explains, "You have to look through more. The more photos you look through, you have to look through more because you might miss something." With a similarly sharp sense of personal responsibility, Ken Brown says he started collecting 15 or 20 years ago "by finding a box of snapshots on a street; it was, like, trash day and there was this box sitting there—and they were some family's whole life—and it was just cast out on the street."

Collectors respond to the demands abandoned photos make (several say they "rescued" their images) by bringing them home, into their domestic lives: some keep their photos in memory trunks, resting on the mantle, or in albums and scrapbooks. For example, Drew Naprawa seems pleased that visitors often mistake the pictured people for his own family when they page through his albums. (His mother threw away their family

albums when he was an adolescent, around the same time he left her home; it comforts him, he says, to think another collector saved them.) Some collectors select damaged or aesthetically marred photos: mutilated shots with faces scratched out or figures excised, or shots with photographers' shadows spilled over them. Beyond valuing the typically unexamined and devalued, these collectors establish private archives unavailable in public repositories of information: they gather photographic evidence of un- and under-told histories that are important to them. For example, Rickman, who works with developmentally disabled adults, looks for shots of children with Down syndrome—so far, she's found four: "The amazing thing about this collection is the absence—why aren't there more?" Lisa Kahane, who collects shots of women she considers early feminists, "women with attitude"—mostly black-and-white shots of women with guns or telescopes, or dragging cigarettes, or in drag, or at the wheels of cars or the reins of buggies—says, "They kind of keep me company [….] I just like having those women around." Leslie Apodaco also seeks specific, rare photographic subjects as he builds a collection of erotica and what he terms "male affection" shots: "A lot of people who don't know about what I'm collecting just don't really understand it because for them it's just dirty photos or 'why are you buying pictures of all these gay boys?' For me, a lot of it is, since I'm gay, it's history—a history of being homosexual. And I don't want that to be destroyed—I want it to be saved [….] Why can't I save gay history? They've got entire museums full of their history. Me, I've got a trunk full of mine."

Dan Lechner keeps his history on his walls. Matted and framed, portraits of his ancestors, Polish Jews, share wall space with matted and framed snapshots of Nazi men in uniform—Lechner's flea market collection. As he tours the filmmakers around his

spacious, airy home, he lingers on a photograph, displayed in a bedroom, of 12 members of his father's family, everyone pictured but his dad murdered in the Holocaust. And he notes a snapshot of a wedding party, Nazi groom smiling. Lechner muses, "While they were enjoying their happy wedding, my relatives may have either been in the ghetto in Ludz, or in a concentration camp." Through the placement of images, Lechner recreates a violent, victimizing historical meeting within a controlled domestic "frame"—he insists that frozen Nazis cohabit with him and his relatives, gazing perpetually at the Lechners' faces, so animated with the shared humanity Nazis denied, inside of the family home of a surviving son's surviving son.[2] The Nazis regime forced itself into the Lechners' story, an intrusion he represents by including their photos. But more than representing that traumatic breach, Lechner controls the site and sequencing of its pictorial narrative—his, the careful eye of the collector, the archivist, the home decorator.

With a similar, if less personal, aim to understand and organize history, Peter Cohen uses his photos to gain purchase on the Second World War: "I own a snapshot of a woman dressed nicely, like she's going out on an early evening in the summer, and it's just entitled, 'Summer 1945.' And she has this very pleasant smile on her face. I like to think that the smile is because the war's almost over. It's the unfinished story." The part of the story that's hard for him to access because it's absent from an event-based history—the *feel* of V-E day, of Allies in Berlin, their leaders in Potsdam—now, for Cohen, is affectively expressed in a sweet, still somewhat guarded, summer smile.

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[2] Nigel Nicolson similarly recalls Virginia Woolf's first impression of Vita Sackville-West's home—she said the portraits on the walls "form[ed] a sort of second set of occupants of the house" (quoted in *Snapshots of Bloomsbury* 8).

These collectors, perhaps even now running fingers over these snapshots that are "theirs," are what I call witness-readers: people who, through textual encounters, allow for the intimate homecoming of historical events.[3] In the following chapters, I analyze women modernists' strategies for making witnesses of their readers: they both represent world war's impact on domestic life and *bring home* war for readers. But I open with present-day snapshot collectors to signal that, even as I characterize literary modernism through works by its prominent women, I see this project contributing to a broader discussion of how texts invite or foreclose readers' sense of responsibility for, and involvement in, crucial events happening in the past and right now. I investigate what might make readers like Leonie Branston feel accountable to strangers' ghosts—raised from the paper they're printed on—presences she hosts at home and heavy memories whose weight she helps bear, even though she's not sure why. Through an interactive popular genre—collecting and arranging snapshots, or, if you will, "scrapbooking"—she engages a participatory, interlineal history. In other words, Branston reads between the lines of "official" history: rather than a distanced, univocal, incontrovertible account of the past, she interacts with and perpetuates the stories of others where she lives and as part of her immediate experience. Women modernists' war writing similarly challenges readers to engage the history it represents, a history of homefronts past and present,

[3] I employ "witness-reader" to draw attention to the expanded and active role readers might play in narratives about historical violence and trauma. Such stories offer "alternatives to often depersonalized or institutionalized historiographies" and "engage [readers] in a meditation on individual distress, collective responsibilities and communal healing" (Viceroy 4,3). Dominick LeCapra explains that readers of these narratives put themselves "in the other's position while recognizing the difference of that position" and thereby open themselves to "empathetic unsettlement"—a "desirable affective dimension of inquiry which complements and supplements empirical research and analysis" (78).

powerfully imagined as sites where we learn to participate in public life like, and because, it matters to us.

A "book of scraps" serves as an illustrative opening to a project that brings together women modernists' letters, diary entries, news items, students writings, *and* canonical works; a project that—while men fought, euphemistically, in "scraps,"[4]—attends instead to Alice Toklas' leftover-less, waste-not wartime cooking; English war propaganda's call to women to defeat Germany by saving household scraps; and the "scraps, orts, and fragments" that are Virginia Woolf's metaphor for a people that must act together in, and against, war in *Between the Acts*. Moreover, scrapbooking—collecting and arranging photos, ephemera, and news clippings as a single text—is a model of interactive, domestic, many-voiced historiography, one diligently undertaken by Woolf, by the snapshot collectors, and, indeed, by contemporary "scrappers" who spend billions annually on decorative papers and "embellishments" (Wikipedia).[5] Historical forms, Woolf argued, must be re-imagined to capture lived experience:

> No one who has taken stock of his own impressions since 4 August 1914, can possibly believe that history as it is written closely resembles history as it is lived; but as we are for the most part quiescent, and, if skeptical ourselves, content to

[4] The "67th lost one pilot and was credited with 1 bomber in a scrap with 30 bombers" (Army Air Forces); Seaman T. was killed "when his ship was sank with all hands in a scrap with an E-Boat in September 1943" (532nd Bomb Squadron).

[5] Traumatic histories "put pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation, and commemoration," Ann Cvetkovich writes, demanding "unusual," archives including ephemera and material artifacts, "which can range from photographs to objects whose relation to trauma might seem arbitrary but for the fact that they are invested with emotional, and even sentimental value" (*An Archive of Feelings* 7-8). My attention to household archives, objects, and activities is in keeping with this insight.

> believe that the rest of mankind believes, we have no right to complain if we are fobbed off once more with historians' histories. (*Essays* 3.3)

In scrapbooks, "the public and the private, the material and the spiritual" are "inseparably connected" (*Three Guineas* 143). Rather than another historian's account, scrapbooks are Woolf's ideal history, claims John Whittier-Ferguson: her "pursuit and promotion of open-ended forms expresses her related conviction that political, aesthetic, or personal domination of a subject satisfies a destructive instead of a creative impulse. Appropriate forms should feel to the reader as though they are unfolding on the reader's terms—unfolding as they might if she or he were turning the pages of a scrapbook" (*Framing Pieces* 106).[6]

As if flipping through a scrapbook, readers of Woolf's polyvocal *Three Guineas*—an essay that answers the question "how are we to prevent war?"—are invited to move between the essay and the annotations that, rather than instate Woolf as singular authority, disperse her authority through lengthy quotations by other writers, Whittier-Ferguson claims. "Blandly titled 'Notes and References,'" the annotations amount to "an unexpected final chapter, a complex assembly so extensive that it calls for separate study even as it defies the possibility of sequential reading" (93). Tellingly, Woolf's final note, in French by George Sand, "closing words written by another author in another language," translates: "All lives are interdependent, and any human who would hold up his own life in isolation, without binding that life together with one of his fellows, would

[6] In addition to scrapbooks, Woolf cited children's games as a popular genre that models interactive reading. She tells schoolgirls, in a 1926 lecture called "How Should One Read a Book?": "Think of a book as a very dangerous and exciting game, which it takes two to play at" (Lee 368). In *Three Guineas*, she describes a photo of a bomb-ruined home (that also pictured bodies of children) as looking like "a bunch of

present us with nothing but an enigma to untangle" (107). Woolf depicts and challenges readers to recognize the interdependence of lives—"I" exchanged for a scrapbook patchwork "we"—throughout her wartime work. Whether in her scrapbooks or in the party guests' mingling in *Mrs. Dalloway*, her famous novel of hostessing in war's aftermath or in the mirror-displayed audience, momentarily "ensembled" as star of a country pageant in *Between the Acts*, Woolf imaginatively brings together a "rambling capricious but somehow unified whole" (*Diary* 5.135).[7]

Beyond indicating the diverse materials and perspectives that my project brings together, by invoking the "scrapbook" I also reclaim modernist "collage" as a more broadly participatory art; this "quintessential twentieth-century art form" is also a homely archive of everyday objects and activities (Hoffman 1). My terminological intervention—naming the scrapbook as a kind of collage—asserts as modern the interplay of public and private histories represented through a domestic genre typically created by women. Similarly, contemporary collage artist Miriam Shapiro provocatively renames her work "femmage" to emphasize women's longstanding practice of saving—and creating with—scraps (296). "It is only with this [the twentieth] century and the advent of modern art that this quondam delight of schoolgirl and housewife came to the attention of serious artists grappling with revolutionary ideas," Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh write of collage

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spilikins [pick-up sticks] suspended in mid-air" (11). Reading for Woolf is a pacifist, but never passive, practice.

[7] Her domestic photo albums also resound with an intertextual "we." They include shots by other photographers; the images are out of chronological sequence, some shots repeating at irregular intervals; shots of the dead re-enter the pictorial narrative, reflecting their continued imaginative presence and illustrating the "intertextuality of past and present," Humm writes (9). Moreover, the Woolfs grouped multiple images of dear friends, as if to reinforce their "solidity" against death, and photographed them very close, "displacing the gap between themselves and their friends by a marked lack of foreground space" (34, 37).

(297).[8] Rather than identify women as unselfconscious practitioners of the purposeful collage of, say, Picasso or Joyce, joining Janis and Blesh in reifying a divide between elite, even revolutionary (male) artists and housewives, I track women modernists' sophisticated compositing of (1) household objects (walls, paper, peaches, cakes), and (2) domestic activities (decorating, going to bed, cooking, hostessing), and (3) war (destruction, violence, invasion, occupation).[9] Their textual collage represents a complex relationship between daily life and historical violence and exploits readers' "familial gaze"—we encounter life-scraps seemingly interchangeable with our own only to find the familiar reconstituted by war—in order to perform and perpetuate involvement in this history.[10]

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[8] Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh in *Collage Personalities, Concepts, Techniques*, as quoted in Shapiro's essay "Femmage."

[9] Hailing a masculine high modernism, Michel Georg Conrad described popular artistic production and criticism as the work of "old wives" in the inaugural issue of *die Gesellschaft*. He separates "*die Moderne*" from work of a gendered "literary and artistic kitchen personnel" which offers 12 courses of potato, each served "in a different guise" (as quoted in Andreas Huyssen's "Mass Culture as Woman" 194-5). (Hannah Höch's "Cut with the Kitchen Knife: Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-belly Cultural Epoch of Germany," a photomontage thick with images of men—politicians, captains of industry, military figures—appropriated with a household utensil seems, three decades later, a fitting reply.) Extending an association between men and "serious" modernist collage, Andrew Clearfield cites Eliot's *Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Pound's *Cantos* as the apotheosis of the textual manifestation of the art (131). He traces its masculine lineage to Picasso: textual collage refuses coherent narrative and establishes "individual elements" that are at once "grammatical components and nongrammatical objects, in the same way that a fragment of *Le Figaro* in a Picasso collage is at once a newspaper and (at the same time) a collection of abstract shapes" (131, 63). "Collage had long been a technique in the crafts and popular arts in both Western and other cultural traditions when, in the second decade of the 20th century, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque turned to this technique […], using found materials and assembling fragmented elements through a method of juxtaposition. At that point, as art historians have declared and incessantly reiterate, collage became a 'fine art.'" (Raaberg). Continuing in this vein: "the gendering of an inferior mass culture as feminine goes hand in hand with the emergence of a male mystique in modernism," Huyssen writes (194).

[10] Marianne Hirsch coined "familial gaze" to describe the way we read family photographs, especially those of the families of others: "A familiarity is projected on the portrayed subjects and the viewer is drawn into a familial network of looking" (xviii). Essayists in her collection *The Familial Gaze* (1999) explore the tension between positive possibilities of this viewer identification, as in Lorie Novak's discussion of "Collected Visions," her online archive of snapshots (which viewers are encouraged to contribute to, and to draw from as illustrations of their *own* written and pictorial narratives), and negative possibilities, as in Ernst van Alphen's examination of Christian Bolanskis's photo-album exhibition of found images of Nazis.

Critics frequently associate this intense reader involvement with the collage form—"the assembled object must be read and interpreted […] and related to human feelings, experiences, and values" (Laliberté 11); collage works as a "collaboration between the artist and the world around them" (Hoffman 31). Moreover, active reader participation is *the* crucial measure for the ethical integrity of the modernist artwork more generally, Russell Berman claims. Works of modernist art may serve as sites of resistance to, or propound, the fascist politics of the first half of the 20th century in the way they position their audience: "fascist modernism presented an unbroken myth and produced the reader as victim, an immobile voyeur" (Chefdor 101-2); "unlike other modernisms, [fascist literature's] insistence on the priority of homogeneity bars it from the principled juxtaposition of heterogeneous material in the montage form" (99).[11] Though collage or montage forms also have been employed to undermine "principled" heterogeneity and active reading practices—Lawrence Rainey's discussion of a collage of Italian citizens

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Hirsch writes: Family photographs "trigger in their viewers an inclusive, affiliative look [….] But the familial look can also function as a screen; the identifications it engenders can be too easy" (xiii). Due to the familial gaze, "it becomes impossible to recognize criminal personalities, to distinguish between victims and perpetrators of the most heinous crimes" (xviii).

This over-identification that denies crucial difference is also Susan Sontag's concern in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), her book about images of war: "'We'—this 'we' is everyone who has never experienced anything like what they [the war dead] went through—don't understand. We don't get it. We truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how terrifying war is" (125). With each repetition of "we," Sontag puts pressure on the pronoun; she regards the pain of others only to conclude both that she can't really *see* it and that, even if she could, her witnessing means little: war dead are "supremely uninterested in the living: [...] in witnesses—or in us. Why should they seek our gaze?" she writes (98). And—inasmuch as dead people *can't* seek anybody's gaze, inasmuch a pain is incommunicable—Sontag's right. But I start from the position that witnessing matters; that witnessing is always necessarily a contact point between knowing and not knowing (Cathy Caruth's formulation); and that women modernists' war writings—exploiting the familial gaze in order to sting readers with the unhomely—make an important appeal to be part of a community, careful listeners, and bearers of responsibility. Simply, they insist that war is about "us" and "we," not just "them" and "they."

[11] Berman identifies a "fascist modernism" rather than fascist authors, considering not the expressed politics of individual authors but the institutional role they envisioned for their texts. Specifically, fascist modernism suppressed "activation" in favor of "regeneration": "the overcoming of sterility in *The Waste Land* or *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, the return to the land in *Growth of the Soil*, the images of utopian nature in the *Cantos*. […N]either the diversity of difference nor the transformation of history is tolerated."

forming the body beneath Mussolini's singular head in propaganda postcards is a striking example, and, as I've indicated, works by Pound and Eliot that Berman identifies with fascist myths of inevitable regeneration are often discussed in terms of the recombining of elements into an organic whole[12]—I am interested in placing women's domestic, varied wartime archives with Berman's positive modernisms and activated readers.

Tellingly, James McFarlane, in his influential essay "The Mind of Modernism," imagines an alternative archiving system—a different way to keep our papers—as a metaphor for the modernist project: modernism is a "repudiation of a filing system, where order derives as much from keeping thing separate as from holding them together, with dockets and folders and pigeon-holes to distinguish and hold things apart" (92). This new archive might well be *papier collés*, or collage, literally papers pasted, stuck, or glued into a new entity that "retains," and this is crucial, the "alterity" of its pieces (Perloff 46, 52). Similarly, Marjorie Perloff characterizes modern consciousness as a collage: "a process of graft and citation by means of which we make the public world our own" (77). Both critics suggest an active engagement with material documents, including pigeon-hole-pocket odds and ends, as part of the work of creators/writers and viewers/readers: part of being modern is making a home for our scraps. Despite being born of "disintegration, fragmentation, dislocation," McFarlane writes, the "Modernist mode is not so much that things fall *apart* but that they fall *together*." Collage as "a kind of positive fragmentation" and site of heterogeneous inclusivity is particularly important for women artists and critics, Lucy Lippard argues: the art "is born of interruption and the healing instinct to use political consciousness as a glue with which to get the pieces in

[12] See Frank Kermode's "The Modern Apocalypse" in *The Sense of an Ending*.

some sort of new order" (136, 168). Or, as Woolf hoped, the "loose, drifting material of life" might "attain to" a new "form" reminiscent of a "deep old desk, or capacious hold-all in which one flings a mass of odds & ends" (*Diary* 1:266). The connective potential of a pieced-together archive gains urgency in wartime—as war intrudes on their housekeeping, women modernists juxtapose its debris with the ephemera of daily living. Their house for, and of, scraps is capacious indeed.

This introduction briefly recounts the World War II experiences of Woolf, Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas, and Elizabeth Bowen, characterizing their written engagement with wartime as inclusive, participatory, and "at home." Their texts constitute a scrapbook history that includes and makes demands of a wider "we"—we moderns, we readers—a composite whole implicated in war's legacy and prevention. Woolf, frustrated with the lifelessness of academic criticism, wrote in her diary: "Is all lit. crit. that kind of exhausted air?—book dust, London Library, air" (5.322). By introducing these writers through interlaced portraits indicative of the intimate, interconnected conversations that this project identifies, builds toward, and ultimately performs through chapters arranged thematically rather than by isolating authors—an organizational choice that is itself an interactive re-presentation of the archive—I hope this project emerges as much about readers and writers as about dust and libraries. In this spirit, contemporary readers, students in my *Rhetoric of the Homefront* course, figure into my study in its final chapter, important contributors to a conversation about the lasting value of women modernists' wartime representation strategies.

Likewise, the scrapbook fashioning of the quotations that serve as epigraphs to *We Moderns: Women Modernists Writing on War and Home*—lines by Bowen, Stein and

Woolf about involved readers, active historiography, and a heterogeneous "we"—join an image of my own childhood home and a 1942 letter from my grandmother to my grandfather, officer-in-charge of a construction battalion in the Pacific. Her labeled drawing of the family's mantle, decorated for Christmas with a wreath, paper Santa Claus constructed by my Aunt Kay, cards, stockings for the three kids, and "green and red stuff," catalogues domestic ephemera—holiday ribbon and colored paper—with a care for detail that asserts itself alongside the very different catalogues of material that were my grandfather's constant concern. His wartime service and her service on the homefront are powerful, defining stories for my family. My grandmother's death at age 101 and the sale of the house I grew up in, both in the final month of this project's completion, have been much on my mind—in a twenty-first century marked by war and insistently, monolithically defined by war in the speeches and policy of heads of state, I argue that we must recognize our own family archives as embedded in the current and historical waging of war and ask if and how those very archives enable us to answer back. After the author portraits, I preview the four chapters that comprise my study.

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S HISTORY OF SCRAPS

Even as a girl, Woolf's inclinations were those of a scrapbooker-as-participatory-historian. Hermione Lee, in a provocative juxtaposition, recounts Virginia's German lessons—strictly taught by her father, Leslie Stephen—with her beginner's interest in bookmaking. Stephen wrote his son Thoby that "by insisting upon that tenses and genders have some meaning I hope that I am getting her into a little order" (141). Lee continues, "A less frustrating and more independent pursuit was bookbinding, in which she had a few lessons from a Miss Power [….] Her 1899 diary, in minute handwriting, was bound

into the jacket of Isaac Watt's *Logick: Or the Right to Use Reasons*." Woolf's letters to friends, Lee reports, were filled with details about lettering and covers. "Her sensual, fastidious, aesthetic interest in the making of books—the pens she wrote with, the quality of paper, the colours of end papers and bindings, the look of title pages and type-face and illustrations—would be life-long."[13] A girl's diary observations are made the unexpected companion pieces to a male-authored logic text; faced with her father's "getting her into order"—his privilege as her father, the family patriarch, and a Victorian intellectual—Woolf acquires the stuff and knowledge of the craft of bookmaking.[14] In Lee's account, Woolf finds pleasure in learning to "make" a book of her own.

Woolf developed her *Three Guineas* "Notes and References" from three scrapbooks she compiled throughout the 1930s prelude to war—montages of quotations, letters, photos, and news cuttings largely about gender, education, social mores, and politics (Humm 30). A few entries, as edited and indexed by Brenda Silver[15]: "'How disenchanting in the female character/is a manifestation of relish/for pleasures of the

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[13] To write that Woolf took a lifelong interest in making books understates the case: in addition to the albums and scrapbooks I mention here, she, along with her husband Leonard Woolf, started Hogarth Press, first housed in their dining room, in 1917. The Press grew from hand printing Virginia Woolf's texts with covers by her sister Vanessa, to a commercial enterprise, printing, among other works, Gertrude Stein's *Composition as Explanation*, Freud's *The Ego and the Id*, and various poems and criticism by T.S. Eliot (University of Delaware Special Collections). The Woolfs' attempts to move the Press from their Mecklenburgh Square home during the Blitz were thwarted; they were barred access because of unexploded ordinance in the Square. The Press was damaged when the bomb finally blew, 18 September 1940: "The Press—what remains—is to be moved to Letchworth" (*Diary* 5.323).

[14] In *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, H. Porter Abbott identifies Woolf's rebellion against patriarchal order in the "symbiosis" between her fiction and her diary, between public and privately occasioned writing. Rather than the Victorian construction of "a life"—a linear progress narrative mined from the raw material of a diary (exemplified in her father's Dictionary of National Biography)—Woolf's novels brook imposed order. Porter Abbott reads the *Night and Day* (Woolf's first novel after beginning her adult diary in 1915) protagonists' exchange of "a couple of curious documents: scrambled notes and doodles by Ralph, mathematical calculations by Katherine" as an important, if temporary, interruption of the marriage plot, and argues that Woolf's assertion of private forms becomes an increasingly recognizable characteristic of her oeuvre (Bunkers 236).

[15] Entry descriptions are Silver's; page references are to her work.

table!' Macreadys [sic] Diaries 363" (typed quotation 264); "Nature has decreed that the leadership/of physical strength and intellectual/achievement shall normally belong to men" (newspaper cutting); "'Certain it is that while men are gathering/knowledge and power with ever-increasing and mea/measurless [sic] speed, their virtues and their/wisdom have not shown any notable improvement/as the centuries have rolled' 279 Thoughts and Adventures/W. Churchill" (typed quotation); "'WOMAN APPOINTED LIBRARIAN/ELEVEN COMMITTEE MEMBERS RESIGN' Feb./12 1932" (newspaper cutting 265); "'But we had further seen how freedom in the/practice of our art, how the bare/opportunity to practice it at all,/depended, for the actress, on considerations/humiliatingly different from those that/confronted the actor' 29-30/Theatre & Friendship/Letters from H[enry] J[ames]. to E[lizabeth]. Robins" (quotation from Robins' commentary 268); "Valentine […] You dealt me, when you lost your honor,/The deepest wound of all./Now I will go to God through death,/A soldier answering the call" (penciled quotation, unidentified 271).

Even in this brief sample (the scrapbooks comprise 255 entries in Silver's compilation), Woolf brings together the powerful and the little (and un-) known; entries are on newsprint and in Woolf's type and in her hand. Reminiscent of Lechner's display of his family portraits alongside Nazis', Woolf undermines misogynist writers by including them both alongside women's words and within the gendered construction of a scrapbook. Rather than a repository of happy memories cutely arranged, this scrapbook is a site of cross-talk and a calling to account: Charles Macready's repugnance at women's capacity to enjoy food might have seemed unexceptional within the patriarchal context of his complete work and its male audience, as well as its library placement—standing

assuredly upright, supported by a shelf-length of books by men. But in the scrapbook, recontextualized, retyped by a woman author, and fitted to size, the observation is, to its shame, exposed for reconsideration. What have men done with their inheritance of power? Churchill asks; felt squeamish about table manners, Macready answers. Why are actresses hampered in their art while the actors they share the stage with are not? Elizabeth Robins asks; I'm squeamish about table manners, Macready answers. Woolf creates a conversation among men and women that reveals the perniciousness, or plain inanity, of certain contributors—their sentiments, as war looms, remarkably unequal to the times. For example, "Valentine" might have seemed a scrap of melodramatic foolishness, but on the eve of the Second World War, Woolf's hand-written entry is disturbing. By relating a woman's sexual fidelity to her soldier's, and by extension her nation's, physical intactness—the idea of her chastity a condition of peace, the idea of her dishonor an excuse for war—"Valentine" exemplifies and links unexamined chauvinism and reflexive militarism. Woolf includes clips that speak to social expectations about women, their educations, and their bodies—women are reported to have a "great taste for oysters, largely because of their slimming properties" (newspaper cutting 303); the virtues of nail polish are weighed (newspaper cutting 305). And these clips, this conversation they are part of, is still, and always, about war. By insisting that women's voices speak to their times and, indeed, might be able to transform the conversation, Woolf looks beyond imminent war to a future in which women's access to and transformation of public institutions and discourse might make moot the question "how are we to prevent war?"

Woolf also clipped images for the scrapbooks. For example, sharing page-space are Mussolini; Jesus; John Middleton Murry, Katherine Mansfield's often feckless husband who critiqued Woolf for neglecting plot and whose *Son of Woman, the Story of D.H. Lawrence* got Woolf thinking about "maleness" (Lee 450, 622); an academic in robes admiring an Abraham Lincoln statue (he's trod over landscaping to get a good view, harkening to *A Room of One's Own*, when Woolf's woman narrator is admonished to keep to the Oxbridge path); Emperor Wilhelm, also in regalia; Count Berchtold, Austrian Foreign Minister whose ultimatum to Serbia hastened the outbreak of the First World War; and English composer Frederic Delius, presented with an honorary diploma as his wife stands behind him. Their accoutrement, the acknowledgment they command, and their power to speak illustrate perhaps the most compelling lines of *Three Guineas*:

> [...A]nother picture has imposed itself upon the foreground. It is the figure of a man; some say, others deny, that he is Man himself, the quintessence of virility [….] His eyes are glazed; his eyes glare. His body, which is braced in an unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform. Upon the breast of that uniform are sewn several medals and other mystic symbols. His hand is upon a sword. He is called in German and Italian Führer or Duce; in our own language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined houses and dead bodies—men, women, and children. (142)

Woolf's singular "Man"—fascist, patriarch, "I"—dominates the conversation. But on Woolf's page, he is one of a number, cut and placed by a woman who has caught on to his pattern (Illustration I.1).

Britain entered World War II on 3 September 1939; Woolf drowned herself 28 March 1941. Her war years were spent mostly the Woolfs' country home, Monk's House, in Rodmell, with regular visits to their London flat, 37 Mecklenburgh Square, until a bomb blast rendered it uninhabitable on18 September 1940. Their previous place, which they still paid rent for while searching for new tenants, was destroyed October 16th: "I cd see a piece of my studio wall standing: otherwise rubble where I wrote so many books. Open air where we sat so many nights, gave so many parties" (*Diary* 5.331). The Woolfs rationed food and gasoline; Virginia sewed blackout curtains; the "thud" of exploding bombs and "sinister sawing" of aircraft became part of their everyday lives (318); they made careful suicide plans in case Germany invaded. Hilter's voice, carried on radio waves, had invaded already: "Jane Austen never heard the cannon roar at Waterloo [or] heard Napoleon's voice as we hear Hitler's voice as we sit home of an evening" ("The Leaning Tower" 164). Leonard performed fire watches and helped with air raid precautions in Rodmell (Lee 716). Virginia attended lectures for women on topics like how to escape buildings and, resentfully, rehearsals for community plays put on by the Women's Institute (perhaps inspiring the pageant in *Between the Acts* (first titled Pointz Hall), Lee suggests [717].)

Scraps were very much on her mind while she wrote that final novel. She wrote in her diary 31 May 1940:

> Scraps, orts & fragments, as I said in PH. which is now bubbling—I'm playing with words; & think I owe some dexterity to finger exercises here—but the scraps: Louise has seen Mr Westmacot's man: 'Its an eyesore'—his description of the fighting near Boulogne. Percy weeding: 'I shall conquer 'em in the end. If I

> was sure of winning the other battle…' Raid, said to be warned, last night. All of the searchlights in extreme antennal vibration. […] And to me it's the voice on the scent again. 'Any waste paper?' here I was interrupted by the jangling bell. Small boy in while sweater come, I suppose, for Scouts, & Mabel says they pester us daily at 37, & make off with the spoils. (5.290-91)

Scraps are the disparate characters who will, for a moment, come together to form "we" in the novel; scraps ("but the scraps") are the Rodmell community's ways of understanding and experiencing war; she must compete with the "war effort's" littlest uniformed embodiment—a Boy Scout participating in a paper drive—for scraps and, in the language of contestation, for "spoils." Even as Woolf works to bring together an alternative history, and model an alternative *to* history, no paper is safe from a war machine that would reform every scrap in its image.

GERTRUDE STEIN AND ALICE TOKLAS' HISTORY OF INCLUSION

Alice Toklas never let a scrap go to waste. In her memoir *Wars I Have Seen*, Gertrude Stein wrote of her capable partner, "Madame Roux [a housekeeper] had the habit of carrying off the dish water to give to a neighbor who was fattening a pig […]. Alice Toklas said to Madame Roux, no we will not give away our dish water, if the neighbor wants it she has in return to be willing to sell us a certain quantity of eggs" (115-6). Until the pig was slaughtered for the neighbor's Christmas dinner, Toklas cooked with eggs—her inspired meals prepared discreetly, as Stein "didn't like to see work being done" (*Cookbook* 40). When Stein died suddenly of cancer 27 July 1946—an event that ends Toklas' own autobiography, *What Is Remembered*, though she survived Stein by 20 years—Toklas prepared Stein's voluminous papers for their transatlantic trip

to Yale University, where they are housed at the Beinecke Library. She wrote Mrs. Charles Goodspeed 11 October 1946: "You know Gertrude left her manuscripts and correspondence (40 years) and her photographs to Yale and I've been going over them to label them—and there were so many you took and such excellent ones—and it brought back to me all those happy days so vividly—now they are off to Yale and I'm busy typing" (*Staying on Alone* 22). It was a considerable undertaking—as Stein's brother Leo had joked, Stein, convinced of her genius, "never thr[ew] away any piece of paper on which she ha[d] written" (*Autobiography* 52). Adding to the paper profusion, her letters indicate that Toklas retrospectively tried to fill gaps in her clip-collection of articles about Stein. She had subscribed to a clipping service before the publication of *Three Lives*, early in their relationship: "I asked her to let me subscribe to Romeike's clipping bureau, the advertisement for Romeike in the San Francisco Argonaut having been one of the romances of my childhood. Soon the clippings began coming in. […] The notice that pleased Gertrude Stein the most was from the Kansas City Star. She often asked in later years who might have written it but she never found out" (112). Typist, chef, archivist, inspiration, Toklas assembled and cherished even scraps of Stein's work as part of the everyday labor of a proud housekeeper: "I always say that you cannot tell what a picture really is or what an object really is until you dust it every day and you cannot tell what a book is until you type it or proof-read it" (113).[16]

[16] I originally typed "cherished every scrap," but, while I suspect that was true, Dydo speculates that self-effacing Toklas herself destroyed many of the pocket-sized notebooks in which Stein did her roughest writing because they contained intimate notes between the women (24); loose love notes accidentally included with the correspondence and domestic artifacts Toklas sent to Yale were not publicly available until 1981 at Toklas' insistence (Turner 7). I discuss Dydo's analysis of the surviving notebooks at Yale in paragraphs to come. Toklas did write, cherishing scraps as she typed Stein's incomplete fragments and meditations, "They stir me profoundly—are they not the pure essence of Baby—of her writing—they come so directly from her—her most precious gift to us" (*Staying* 20).

Stein scholar Ulla Dydo describes the Yale archive, prior to a two-year electronic cataloging project completed in 1996, as "so large, so various, and so wide in its scope—from literature to art, from America to France, from one place or person to another. […] And behind it all was the still, small voice of Alice B. Toklas. Even beyond her death, in an archive largely set up on her own terms, her voice can still be confused with Stein's own" (8). Dydo's description resonates with Janet Flanner's—in the documentary film *Paris Was a Woman* (1997)—of salons at Stein and Toklas' Paris home, 27 rue de Fleurus: "While Gertrude orated and made the pattern of the conversation, her great friend, Miss Alice B. Toklas, was sitting behind a tea tray. It was as if Gertrude were giving the address and Alice was supplying all of the corrective footnotes. And you had wonderful cucumber sandwiches, excellent homemade cookies, excellent Chinese tea, and then Alice's quite sly, swift, rather whispered conversation." These quotations conflate homemaking with the writing process—through dusting and typing, saving foodscraps and scrapbooking, hostessing and footnoting, two women's work becomes one. Indeed, Stein and Toklas describe Stein's writings themselves as babies, and sometimes as *houses*—"places created by two and for two to become one [.…] Stein makes houses from words" (Dydo 29).

Dydo uncovers sexy, charming, and sometimes pragmatic handwritten notes between the women in Stein's tiny composing notebooks, and she analyzes them as part of a discussion of the erotics of Stein's composing process: "They [the notebooks] contain, in addition to text, letter drafts, shopping lists, guest lists, addresses and telephone numbers, doodles and small drawings, drafts and dedications for books, titles, calculations of income or expenditures, contents for proposed books, notes and jingles to

Toklas, and so on" (27). For example, from Stein: "Dedicated to Baby … dedicated to she…." ; and a pleased reply from Toklas when she reads the notebook: "It is a nice thing to … to sit with a husband on the sand." Another entry indicates that the notebooks traveled around town with the couple: "If you can look *later* at the 3 people behind you. It's a Mrs. Belloc Lowndes." Dydo illustrates the depth of the collaboration between Stein and Toklas, down to coded language and paper folds.

These notes in Stein's composing notebooks and others that are filed (no one knows by whom) "under the intriguing tile 'Autrespondence'" in the Yale archive—scraps of various sizes and materials (graph paper, watercolor paper, dime novel frontispieces) apparently stowed around their house in bedrooms and bathrooms—"render in domestic ephemera an 'autobiography' of the union" between the women, Kay Turner writes in the introduction to her captivating *Baby Precious Always Shines: Selected Love Notes Between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas* (8,6,4). I draw from these notes not only to acknowledge their evidence of physical and writerly love and erotics, but also to underscore the connectedness between these women's writing and everyday housekeeping. Toklas types to Stein[17]: "I have just looked up to see if you were as beautiful as I rememvered and I found/that you were employed with a pencul and paper [….] Notes are a very beautiful form of literature; they/are never too frequent, do not fear to overwhelm me with the" (163). This silent exchange—each writing simultaneously to the other across the room, just another moment at home, captured as text—is, to Toklas, both literature and another "house" where they are present together.

[17] Turner leaves typos and irregularities uncorrected.

I want to interrogate what it means for Stein and Toklas to imagine a body of writing as an extension of their house, particularly in wartime: the women were famous hostesses, not only to art elites, but also to scores of French and American soldiers who they welcomed and wrote of and to, and to their French neighbors and refugees Stein met during the Occupation, whose stories suffuse *Wars I Have Seen*.[18] Toklas wrote Donald Gallup 29 November 1946:

> The correspondence Y.[ale] U.[niversity] L.[ibrary] will soon have is mostly from friends who were more distinguished in character than by achievement. If you remember her real interest was in the G.I.'s (not in their cause, but in themselves) you will know what I mean. She thought of it as important for the future—say 100 years hence—as expressing our time through various kinds of people from widely different milieu. (36-37)[19]

Stein, with Toklas managing her estate, ensures that many voices will be housed permanently with theirs. Unwieldy and inclusive—another patchwork "we"—Stein's

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[18] During the First World War, Stein and Toklas worked for the American Fund for French Wounded, visiting injured soldiers, including men exposed to nerve gas, and running supplies and men in the car Stein procured and learned to drive for this work. Both women corresponded with "a great many" military "god-sons": "The duty of a military god-mother was to write a letter as often as she received one and to send a package of comforts or dainties about once in ten days. They liked the packages but they really liked the letters even more. And they answered so promptly" (*Autobiography* 175). Several of the young men visited the women during and after the war. During World War Two, they fantasized about welcoming American soldiers into their home, tucking away black market treats for them. They would welcome many in their country house: "Gertrude and Alice fed, broadcast for, and conversed with as much of the American army as they could find" (Hobhouse 209). And back in Paris: "There were almost constant visits from American GIs. One day we had a call from seven of them all claiming to be poets" (*What Is Remembered* 170). Their notes continued too. Stein: "I love you so much more/every war more and more and more and/more" (Turner 13).

[19] In *Brewsie and Willie*, a dialogue among American GIs', Stein attempts to reproduce their cadences and slang: "And I say to myself, let's go home, and I say to myself, where is home, where you got a bellyful, where you got no cares, that's home" (23).

archive, like her home, hosts many people and stories that would otherwise have remained isolated and unrecorded.[20]

In *Wars I Have Seen*, Stein includes various voices and dilemmas and truisms—no quotation marks set them apart, they are not safely distanced as somebody else's story. For example, as rumors fly that French guardsmen are preparing to move against young men—the "mountain boys"—in hiding to avoid forced labor in Germany, many involved in the Resistance, "one of the Bilignin women cried to me what can I do, my boy was always so fond of you what can I do" (142). Stein's Swiss grocer, who has three sons, "says they just did not give him his naturalization papers before the war and now they are all Swiss and so comparatively safe and all the same he said to me, they must come the Americans must come and they must come soon to save the boys to save the boys." The "taxi-man said the other day, three of the guard mobile who are going up to the mountain missed their train and they asked me to drive them [….] the pigs who are going to shoot up our boys." Stein meets a woman on the road: "we were both walking carrying our baskets and intending to bring home something, and she told me of her two brothers and her husband who had all three escaped before the prisoners were taken to Germany" (134). She recounts a reunion with a "nice neighbor," now a compulsory laborer in Germany, doubly servile because his supervisor threatens harm to his imprisoned older brothers. He describes his life in Germany, where he will return imminently (135-7). Alongside his story, Stein includes two letters from other French boys working in Germany to their families back home: "this only son writes to his mother dear mother I

[20] Stein wrote enthusiastically to her friend W. G. Rogers in the spring of 1942 that she and Alive were preparing to host refugees and local artists for a vernissage and *salon de peinture*: "just like Paris we are all awfully xcited, it will last 1-15 of May" (Rogers 157-8).

am hungry, I was never hungry before but I am hungry now always hungry so hungry"; the other says the sky in Berlin "is sad, it is a cold sad sky" (137). Stein and Toklas' neighbor visits "to say that they had come. They knocked at the door, she was not dressed yet and she called out what is it and they said it was the German army so in fear and trembling she opened the door and they said are there any men here and she said no" (146). Later, Stein happens on children playing: "I saw a little girl of seven putting two little ones of two and three under a piece of tin and saying now that you are safe I will say good-bye. What are you playing I asked, we are playing abris, shelters, she said and that was that" (162).

The woman who desperately seeks Stein's advice about how to protect her son invokes his fondness for Stein, implicating her in his safety—like family. The episodes above model an extended family protecting, as best they can, "our boys," our children, our homes. Like the children experimenting with makeshift shelters—managing fears of the destruction of the home, separation from parents, and having no safe place to hide—Stein experiments with structures to enclose them, imaginatively, the only way she knows how. She and Toklas discontinued their routine of neatly recopying and typing this manuscript, leaving it as barely legible draft in case the Germans confiscated it (Hobhouse 202). The couple spent the war in provincial eastern France, first in Bilignin, then, when their lease expired, in Culoz, dangerously near a railway station important to the Germans. They were twice warned to flee France, the second time, chillingly, by a lawyer who had helped arrange their move to Culoz:

> I was in Vichy yesterday […] and Maurice Sivain [the regional sous-prefect] said to me, tell these ladies that they must leave at once for Switzerland, to-morrow if

> possible otherwise they will be put in a concentration camp. But I said we are just moving. I know he said. I felt very funny, quite completely funny. But how can we go, the frontier is closed, I said. That could be arranged [….] You mean pass by fraud I said, Yes he said, it could be arranged. (50)

Stein decided that their only protection was to stay among their neighbors and where they were known, not braving a mountain pass with forged documents—so they stayed: "it is disconcerting to know and it gives you a funny feeling, that any time not only that you can be told to go and you go but also that you can be taken. Nevertheless you stay" (26-7). In Culoz, they were forced to billet German troops.[21] Even as Stein textually sheltered their disparate stories, her neighbors provided her very real shelter: the mayor excised the couple from public records, their neighbors never tipped off the Germans to Americans in their midst, and their friend, collaborator and Nazi-appointed head of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Bernard Feÿ, used his influence to protect the women (205, 213).

That close friendship, Stein's mixed feelings about Vichy leader Maréchal Pétain—there were "so many points of view about him" and she held "lots of them"—and frank support for the armistice—"I always thought he was right to make the armistice, in the first place, it was more comfortable to us who were here and in the second place it was an important element in the ultimate defeat of the Germans" (*Wars* 82, 87)—and the deeply experimental nature of her wartime novel *Mrs. Reynolds* and, to a lesser degree, *Wars I Have Seen*, have led critics like Wanda Van Dusen to conclude that her writing "masks the realities of Vichy politics" (81). Van Dusen analyzes Stein's unpublished "Introduction to the Speeches of Maréchal Pétain": "The gender, class,

sexual, and racial composition of the 'new France' is the absent subject of the 'Introduction': the invisible face of a diverse population obscured by the unifying state mask of the Maréchal" (81). By erasing her own distinct identity as a Jewish woman and lesbian, and adding her voice to those unified by the Maréchal, Stein constructs him as a protective "fetish" and implicates herself in the collaborationist regime, Van Dusen claims.

In fact, Stein both recognizes and subverts Pétain as a totalizing figure. She juxtaposes collective discussion about the war—"we used to stand around on the country roads and discuss"—with Pétain's assertion that he, not the English or the Germans, would win it: "Moi I. Moi" ("Introduction" 95). Stein writes in *Wars* that she "did not like his way of saying I Philippe Pétain" (87). Just as she has varied opinions on him, so do her neighbors, even "one French one" has "four points of view" ("Introduction" 94). Stein's "Introduction" continues:

> And then gradually the Maréchal either did what any one and every one thought he ought to do or he did not, and whether he did or whether he did not and really nobody really knew there was one thing that was certain and that was that like Benjamin Franklin he never defended himself, he never explained himself, in short his character did not need any defense. (95)

Jean Gallagher observes that this passage "appears to defeat the announced discursive agenda of the texts as a whole by refusing to make any kind of assertion about the ostensible subject. What did Pétain do? Why did he do it? What did the French think

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21 "Although they were know to the invaders, for a colonel or two and more than a hundred soldiers were quartered on them at various times, they seem not to have been identified" (Rogers 153).

about it? None of these questions are answered" (125). She concludes, I think rightly, "The space created by Stein's representations of Pétain […] is populated and fragmented by the contesting discourses of French citizens in Vichy." As is typical of Stein's wartime work, many voices live in this house. When one of her American G.I. escorts on a post-war tourist trip to Germany for *Life* magazine complains that her writing is confusing, she responds, "but why shouldn't [your] minds be confused, goodness gracious, are we going to be like the Germans […] all having the same point of view" ("Off We All Went to See Germany" 58).

Stein disappoints any hopes for an early stand against fascism, which she regards as just another uninteresting position one might hold until war is upon her; after the war and bearing witness to (her words) the "awful atrocities" of the Germans and "the dictatorship or the oligarchy of Vichy," she is decisive: "I can tell you liberty is the most important thing in the world more important than food or clothes more important than any thing on this mortal earth, I who spent four years with the French under the German yoke tell you so" (*Wars* 228, 241, Hobhouse 209). Rather than continue to characterize and adjudicate Stein's expressed politics, I turn to the wartime work to argue, along with Phoebe Stein Davis, that Stein's experimental techniques and domestic settings are not an abdication of her role as witness, but are, in fact, central to an effort to represent "the pain, tedium, and terror" of daily life during war (2). I claim that Stein attempts to reproduce viscerally those sensations for readers, and also to model a community history—through gathered stories and direct challenges to a reader-witnesses—that is decidedly and lastingly oppositional to violence and war.

ELIZABETH BOWEN, HISTORY AT HOME

For his 17 September 1945 *Book Talk*, a British Broadcasting Company radio program, Henry Reed discussed Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover*—collected short stories Bowen called "the only diary I have kept" (Lassner 135).[22] "Miss Bowen has a great sense of houses; and what remains in this house is not what a house is meant to contain [….] Life seems to be curled up inside the curling shell of the house. This is what war has done; to houses, to people" (Reed 2). That Reed's review reached listeners in their homes, on radios that had, months before, brought them the wartime voices of Churchill, of Hitler, underscores his point: war penetrates domestic spaces literally and emotionally. Indeed, houses, for Bowen, are psychically infused structures: frames of identity at once reassuringly stable and precarious. A child of Anglo-Irish land-owners, she spent her girlhood frightened that the family home, Bowen's Court, would be burned (Austin 1). As a young woman, she wanted to become an architect: "I was always drawing elevations and modeling and thinking I'd like to build something" ("Why I Write" 6). And as a reader, she was most interested in houses and the alteration of houses:

> Few people questioning me about my novel, or my short stories, show curiosity as to the places in them. […] Why? Am I not manifestly a writer for whom places

[22] Bowen did not have keep a diary, but she figures in Woolf's. As the war news worsened, Woolf became paranoid that she hadn't heard from Bowen, and that perhaps "some gossip" had ruined their friendship. The events of her friendship reflected, even overshadowed, the events of war. On 11 June 1940, the day after Mussolini declared war on England and France, she wrote: "Today or yesterday Italy came in: French said to be holding most lines; Govt offices leaving Paris; no letter from Eth Bowen; plays rehearsed, working till eyes blind at Index. A slaty queasy feeling about E.B. discussed it with L. What a time to quarrel with friends. Wound to vanity & affection" (5.294). The imagined rift figures into Woolf's entries over four days. When Bowen finally gets in touch, Woolf writes that she would be having a good day, "if it weren't for—oh dear the retreat—Paris now almost besieged—20,000 of our men cut off—[….] Hearing from Elizabeth "warmed & consoled, for if one's friends are to die in the flesh now, what's left" (295).

> loom large? As a reader, it is to placement that I react most strongly [….] Were I to meet a writer, living or dead, whose work had so percolated into my own experience as to become part of it, his places would be what I should first want to discuss. How many—I should desire to ask him—were "actual," how many composed of fragmented memories […] organized into shape? How many (were such a thing possible) were "*imagined*" purely? How many structural alterations in a house, town or landscape otherwise "actual" had to be made, to meet some unforeseen exigency of the story's? And how often? Exactly where are, or were the original (partial or in entirety) of places in this writer's narrative to be found? (*Pictures* 34-5)

Representations of houses are places to enter and sites of interactivity between reader and writer, fiction and history. Bowen likens living in textual houses to living in real ones—intimate and part of her "experience." Thus, when she writes about houses during the Blitz—the foundation cracks and warped walls of Mrs. Drover's house in "The Demon Lover," the ivy "suckers" on neglected doors in "Folkstone, 1945," the shattered windows "In the Square"— she makes intense demands on readers to live in them with her, and with her characters.

Bowen writes in her Preface to *The Demon Lover*: "I see war (or should I say I feel war?) more as a territory than as a page of history" (Lassner 132). Bowen's alternative, domestic, "felt" history seeks to share space with readers, reproducing her own wartime feeling of "hardly kn[owing] where I stopped and somebody else began." She likens her wartime work as an air raid warden—unable to prevent the devastation of her own Regent's Park home—to her work as a writer. In a 1950 BBC interview, she said

she saw some of her fellow writers "reduced to absolute silence by the state of the world" at war, overcome by "a feeling that what they are creating is futile, and why go on?"

> Just as in an air raid, if you were a warden, which I was, you stomp up and down the streets making a clatter with the boots you are wearing, knowing you can't prevent a bomb falling, but thinking 'At any rate I'm taking part in this, I may be doing some good.' […] Just as, apart from the work I did during the war, I went on writing and writing away—not, I think, altogether wrongly, but feeling 'Well, this is the one thing I can do and what's the point of stopping it? If it's good at any time, it's some good now.' ("Why I Write" 9)

Part of the "good" Bowen did as warden was to bear witness to the destruction of homes and lives—that too is the work of her witness-reader. "People whose homes have been blown up went to infinite lengths to assemble bits of themselves—broken ornaments, odd shoes, torn scraps of the curtains that had hung in a room—from the wreckage," she writes (Lassner 134). Witness-readers too are charged to collect those precious scraps.

My inclusion of Bowen (and of Toklas' writing) alongside Stein and Woolf—women now firmly fixed in the modernist canon—indicates the ways serious attention to domestic sites, objects, and occupations necessitates ongoing reappraisal of that canon.[23] This project comes during burgeoning scholarly interest in Bowen's work: Rutgers University Press is preparing a "new critical perspectives" volume; *Modern Fiction*

[23] Such a reappraisal continues the crucial work of critics like Shari Benstock in *Women of the Left Bank* (1986) and Bonnie Kime Scott in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (1990)—critics who have insisted on women's contributions to "making" modernism and, through that insistence, on a re-indexing of the terms through which we approach literary modernism. "If [modernists] followed Pound's dictum to 'make it new,' we still must work on the project of identifying the process and the pronoun. The making, the formal experiment, no longer seems to suffice as a definition [with the inclusion of women-

Studies is accepting submissions for a special issue on Bowen, asserting that her "controversial and challenging fiction has become a site of undercharted potentiality and importance" (from 2 February 2006 call for papers). Recent critical engagements with Bowen situate her on the cusp between modernism and postmodernism (rather than as a social and domestic realist) because of her narrative renderings of "disjunction and opposition," and emphasize history in her work as a "shadowy" other—a ever-*presence* that intrudes on even the most intimate relationships, an "*n* + 1" (Caserio 271, Ellmann 22).

These acknowledgements of domestic sites and private relationships shot through with complex manifestations of history provocatively contrast published tributes occasioned by Bowen's death in 1973. Registering somewhere between winks and romantic paeans, these accounts lose sight of Bowen's writing as they describe her physical person and charm as a hostess: "Trying to picture her, it is her most beautifully shaped head and forehead which I first see. Her features were strong, yet completely feminine; she liked on occasion to dress superbly and to know that she had done so. […] Knowing her strength, she also knew always that she was a woman, and that she attracted by so being," Spencer Curtis Brown wrote (*Pictures* xix). And Howard Moss in the *New York Times*: "She was rare. A large-boned beauty [….] The combination of a wit so accurate and a warmth so pervasive led to mistaken impressions" (xiii). Despite their silliness, these ardent estimations speak to the imaginative power of the hostess and her open home—a "strength," I certainly agree, that Bowen knew and exploited, overlaying sentimental expectations with wartime refigurations. Curtis Brown and Moss' best-

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authored texts]. Mind, body, sexuality, family, reality, culture, religion, and history were all reconstrued"

dressed, large-boned beauty is also the woman clattering in warden's boots, "taking in" fragments, making a meeting point.[24]

UT's Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center houses a substantial archive of Bowen's papers: that collection has enabled me to gather, in keeping with the spirit of my project, more ephemeral texts, including unpublished letters, manuscripts, and radio broadcasts. I have focused on these materials, and her wartime diary—the short stories.

In chapters to follow, I analyze as war texts a remarkable archive: for example, the "Murder in the Kitchen" chapter of Toklas' cookbook, unpublished letters in which Bowen discusses Blitz damage to her London home, a *Life* magazine piece by Stein about her post-war visit to one of Hitler's empty houses, Woolf's famous novel about hostessing in war's aftermath, *Mrs. Dalloway*. "Housekeeping," my opening chapter, discusses representations of physical homes and household objects. As women modernists represent houses damaged in air raids and penetrated by traumatic Occupation and billeting of foreign troops, they figure the home as a sentient shell—an extension of the consciousness of the woman who lives inside. I include them alongside Freud, Georg Simmel, and Walter Benjamin as originary theorists of modernity and trauma, broadening a discussion that had been limited to male subjects and public sites.

In "Women Waiting," my second chapter, I read two novels—Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and Stein's *Mrs. Reynolds* (1952)—along with Stein's memoir *Wars I Have Seen* (1945) as modernist sensation texts. While nineteenth-century sensation

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(Scott 16).

[24] Woolf describes Clarissa Dalloway's hostessing as "making a meeting point"; I discuss playing host to traumatic history more fully in chapter three.

novels are deeply emplotted and packed with events, I introduce the designation "modernist sensation text" for depictions of the nerve-wracking, repetitive strain of daily living while waiting for the worst. I demonstrate the representational evolution from a domestic realm of relentlessly contained shocks in the nineteenth century to one of unbound trauma in works by women modernists in the twentieth, an evolution from discrete events to anxiety-producing eventlessness. Women modernists narrate in-betweens—the duration between history's shocks, headlines, and events. As their texts stall and fail to progress, they make readers uncomfortable by failing to meet our expectations, trap readers in anxiety-producing monotony, produce a sensation that captures the feeling of homefront life. Stein and Woolf participate in a modernist historiography that offers no solace of narrative containment for the violent events of war. On the contrary, these women writers resist the journalistic impulse to tell the who, what, why, and when of an event in order to record instead the ripples of trauma as they expand through space and time, implicating people on the homefront and intergenerational readers in the work of remembrance and mourning.

The sine qua non event of the nineteenth-century sensation novel is the solving of a mystery and the expulsion of guilty parties from intimacies of home and family—an event provocatively absent from both Toklas' "deadly" cookbook and Stein's singular detective novel. Chapter three, "Murder in the Kitchen, Blood on the Dining Room Floor," examines occurrences of violence—murder, rape, suicide—in domestic spaces and during everyday routines depicted in women modernists' war writing. I argue that Stein and Toklas, Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and Bowen in "The Demon Lover" (1941), present violence at a remove, establishing distance between violent acts and the

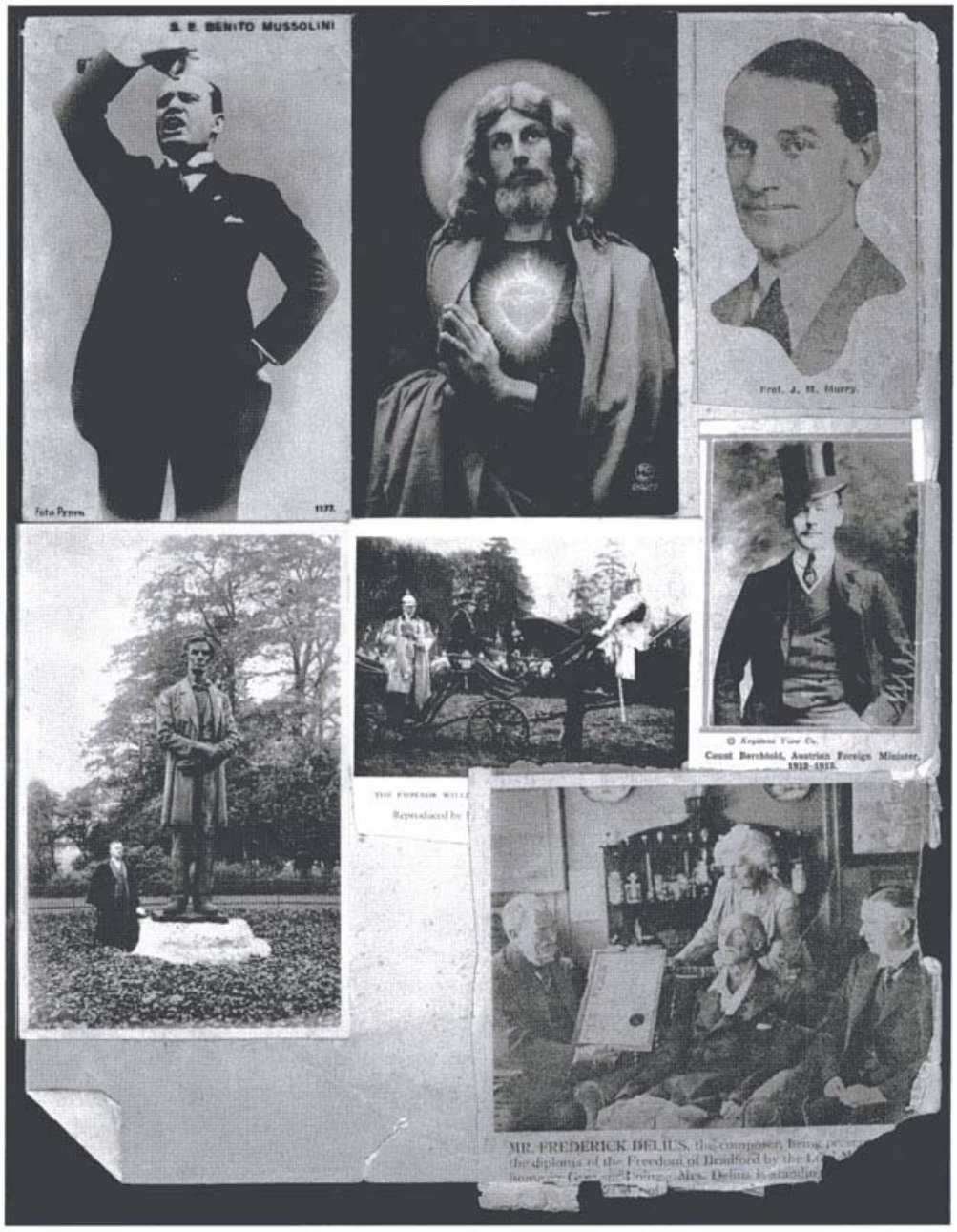
home, and in the process reproducing the distance between frontlines and homefront. For example, they do not depict murder—only blood on the dining room floor; they do not depict rape—only a character reading a news report about one. But these writers create this distance in order to cross it: they highlight the instability of boundaries between battlefield and home, public and private, combatant and noncombatant. War trauma is bloodstained into the carpets—and psyches—of these characters. It inflects their day-to-day lives and—as Elizabeth Bowen's housewife Mrs. Drover discovers—is impossible to escape.

Through my explorations of women modernists' representations of houses, sensation and violence at home, I discovered a pedagogical imperative to their writing. Thus, "Letters from Home," my fourth chapter, discusses my experience teaching literary modernism alongside contemporary homefront narratives like online memorials to those killed in the United States on 11 September 2001 and Web logs by Baghdad residents recounting everyday life during the ongoing U.S. war in Iraq as part of my *Rhetoric of the Homefront* critical reading and persuasive writing course. In the chapter, I analyze my students' written work and Stein's own marked papers from her freshman composition course at Radcliffe College. Provocatively, her first meditation on the ethics of recording and inflicting suffering through narrative was written for her freshman writing class; her professor complained that it was "marred by awkward and unidiomatic uses of language" and "wretched sentence structure" (*Form and Intelligibility* 109-10). His attempts to normalize her writing distill the concerns of my course and dissertation to their simplest, most pressing questions: what does a traumatic history sound like, who tells it, in what

unacknowledged sites and texts does it reside, how do we tell our own stories and bear witness to the stories of others?

Citing the return of Woolf's consummate hostess Clarissa Dalloway to her party after hearing of war veteran Septimus Smith's suicide, Karen DeMeester recently dismissed Clarissa and modernism more generally as witness to war. *We Moderns,* in its attention to wartime houses and housekeeping, takes seriously what it means to host—to bring others into one's home. By giving catastrophe an address, Occupation an alphabet of cigarette burns in the furniture, Blitz a chintz, women modernists register the unhomely at home and ask readers to feel its threat.

Illustration I.1. Page from Virginia Woolf's Scrapbooks



An image montage from Woolf's scrapbooks, as pictured in Maggie Humm's wonderful *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: The Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (Rutgers 2006). The scrapbooks are part of the Harvard Theatre Collection, the Houghton Library.

Chapter 1

Housekeeping

"It is more than a thing, your sterling silver teapot or bowl. It is a symbol. Of you, its owner, it says as clearly as though it could speak: This woman loves beauty, knows lasting values," begins an article entitled "Sterling Silver—Every Woman's Birthright," from the January 1942 issue of *House Beautiful* magazine. The magazine's other offerings include "Five Fresh Ways To Use Wallpaper," "What To Do with a Window You Can't Curtain," and "Dress To Complement Your Background." Its articles anatomize the beautiful house, enumerate the thousand labors that create "home," and imbue the inanimate structures and stuff of a household with the identity of the woman who lives there. *House Beautiful*'s table of contents gives no indication that the world is at war, but its cover art steals a glimpse: it depicts a hallway accent table appointed with red lamp, red book, red anthuriums in a vase. A soldier's hat rests on its elegant companion chair. The soldier himself is reflected in a gilt mirror above the table as he tilts up the chin of a woman—dressed, of course, in "background complementing" red—for a holiday kiss. The woman in red's attention to detail—the particulars of gardening, decorating, house management, "houses, building and modernizing," fashion and grooming, and cooking and entertaining, to rehearse *House Beautiful*'s departments—has made home and homecoming picture perfect.

On this cover is a universal, ideal House Beautiful—a "home" that demands the work of the woman in red even as it makes that work invisible. Thus, the magazine

moves between the particular and the universal—between the concrete labors of housekeeping and the abstraction of "home." "Home Is All That A Word Can Say," a short, unsigned piece in the same issue, reminds women readers of the high, wartime stakes of those labors: "We know that to the challenge of menacing events the answer lies not in fine words or learned theories but in the little houses and unhistoric rooms where people live [….] Men who are not dreamers dream of home. Men who love peace will fight and die for it. From love of home the love of country derives" (50). The soldier reflected in Woman in Red's mirror has something to protect at the cost of his life—and she, "rais[ing] the nap of mohair pile upholstery," "cur[ing] mild basement dampness," keeps faith with his answer, his dream, his love—keeps faith with home.

"Home," then, is a complex signifier: it may serve, simply, as a synonym for house or it may invoke a home-sweet-home, homefires-burning idea of domestic peace and continuity. In other words, it may be the place where a woman works, what she works on, and what she works to achieve. And, if she is successful, the individuality of her work, wants, self, disappears into tastefully papered walls, rubs into well-polished silver, blends, like her outfit, into the room. It is, perhaps, telling that throughout *Three Guineas*, essays about women's exclusion from full participation in public institutions, Virginia Woolf uses "private house" rather than simply "house" or "home." Her essays increase the visibility of women's experiences in part by more specifically naming the site of their labor. But, provocatively, Woolf suggests not only the problematics of "home," but also its potential as an "overcharged" signifier: women have "sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force," which has "overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar," she writes in "A

Room of One's Own" (59). "We live in things," explains Woolf's Mrs. Swithin in *Between the Acts* (70). When a woman writes of home—aware of her force in its walls, her life in its things—that representation may be powerfully valenced.

This chapter considers representations of physical houses and household objects, housekeeping, and the gendered site of "home" in women modernists' wartime stories: these representations illustrate the profound presence of war trauma beyond the space of the battlefield, beyond the time of the battle. I locate war's penetration of domestic spaces and these writers' narrative strategies for capturing and, to some degree, reproducing for readers the experience of living in those spaces: these writers use the universality of "home," its cliché, to invite readers' identification and ownership. Their texts ask readers to invest in the familiar and knowable only to introduce the unfamiliar, the unknowable—to introduce war violence into domestic spaces and everyday housekeeping. Woolf, Elizabeth Bowen, and Gertrude Stein produce a type of Freud's uncanny, or "*unheimlich*"—"that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar"—inasmuch as they exploit the simultaneous occurrence of and the ambiguity between the "homely" and the "unhomely," between the home we recognize and one reconstituted by catastrophe (220). In their representations, we curl into the easy shelter of "home" to find its walls collapsing around us: we more fully confront historical spaces by inhabiting these textual ones. In short, readers' assumptions of universalism lead to a confrontation with particular historical conflicts and, ultimately, a more difficult, challenging idea of what "home" means and contains. Elizabeth Bowen articulates this strategic synthesis of universalized associations and particular historic threats: "I have written about a home […] when all homes are threatened and hundreds of

thousands of them are being destroyed. I have taken the attachment of people to places as being generic to human life" (*Bowen's Court* 454). As if completing her thought in the Preface to *The Demon Lover*, she writes that her stories "spot-ligh[t] faces or cu[t] out gestures that are not even the faces or gestures of great sufferers [.…] But through the particular, in wartime, I felt the high voltage current of the general pass" (7).

In the upcoming pages, I analyze women modernists' references to homes and domestic goods that are marked by the trauma of Blitz and Occupation, that stand in for the women who live within and own them, that are metonymic of victory and defeat in war. In situating the home as a front in modern war, these writers reappraise what it means to be a citizen of a modern world and a participant in national narratives of war and peace. I turn to originary theorists of modernity and trauma, Freud, Georg Simmel, and Walter Benjamin—theorists for whom, in Ann Cvetkovich's words, trauma and modernity "can be understood as mutually constitutive categories" (17)—to argue that the settings and subjects they imagine are gendered. Modernity and its attendant traumas are experienced only by men as part of their public life, these theorists suggest. Modernist women writers correct this omission: in fact, in a 1926 lecture to Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates, Stein explicitly links "modern composition," exemplified by *her* work, and war, which is the determining crisis that modern writing represents, and the lingering trauma that enables its contemporaneous recognition. In other words, Stein tells the students that, rather than a neatly classified, past-tense aesthetic, the modern composition is deeply present, even "irritating annoying stimulating" ("Composition as Explanation" 11). "Everybody" enters it—and they do enter it" as a living phenomenon, rather than understand it retrospectively as a discrete category: war brought such rupture that people

immediately recognized their place in the composition of the twentieth century. "We who created the modern composition were to be recognized before we were dead some of us even quite a long time before we were dead. And so war may be said to have advanced a general recognition of the expression of the contemporary composition by almost thirty years" (26).[1] As women modernists represent houses absorbing shock and experiencing traumatic penetration—their modern compositions to be entered—they figure home as decidedly modern and as a locus of the social and individual, the public and private, the "universal" and particular violent events of the twentieth century.

DOES 'MODERNITY' ONLY HAPPEN AWAY FROM 'HOME'?

Woolf writes of women "watch[ing] from a curtained window" as men daily set out to work that is public and paid (*Three Guineas* 55). Away from home, these men could be jostled by crowds, take places in the mechanism of a capitalist economy, travel by train, fight in new-technology-facilitated wars: they would, in short, encounter the rush of stimuli—experienced as shock or trauma—characteristic of modernity. A threatening external world, wave-like, crashes against the modern man; that world and modern man's response to it are figured in remarkably similar terms in post-First World War analyses by sociologist Georg Simmel, psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and literary critic Walter Benjamin. All imagine assaults on a mind against which a surrounding, protective "organ," "shell," or "aura" guards; all respond to phenomena they label "modern" or specifically situate their analyses in response to extraordinary contemporary

[1] John Whittier-Ferguson rightly disputes Ulla Dydo's argument that war figures prominently in Stein's lecture as an attempt to close the generation gap between Stein and her audience. He writes: "It is more plausible to understand the introduction of the Great War […] as a carefully thought-out explanation for the shape of society and the domain of art in the years after 1919. For Stein, […] modernity derives from conflict" ("Liberation" 407).

events; all figure their modern subjects as male, separating the *very experience of modernity* from women's lives and the life of the home. As they delineate archetypal public sites of modernity—especially the city street—fraught with "penetrating" energies, where human value is measured in market value, they describe an atmosphere particularly hostile to women.[2] I briefly rehearse this trio of kindred, culturally prevalent arguments—as they set a modern stage for a modern man—ultimately to examine how women writers engage and refigure them within domestic spaces. In representing the home as a site of modernity, these writers insist on women as participants in their times, as part of the political present and future.

In "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Simmel writes that "the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions" assail the "metropolitan type of man" (410). Thus, the man of the city "develops an organ for protecting him[self] against threatening currents and discrepancies of his external environment [...]. He reacts with his head instead of his heart." Simmel claims that the intelligence is the mind's outer realm, shielding the "sensitive," "remote" matter that is the depth of personality from "shock" and "upheaval" (411). City man's "predominance of the intelligence" protects him from the overload of the city and the affront of a capitalist economy that "reduces all quality and individuality to the question: How much?"

Jarring, inhospitable, unhomely, Simmel's modern city requires a hard-edged, modern, expressly male mind. Men leave home to find what Freud describes as an

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[2] Deborah Epstein Nord's "The Urban Peripatetic: Spectator, Streetwalker, Woman Writer" usefully in establishes the different experiences the nineteenth-century street offered to men and to women. *Nineteenth Century Literature* 46 (1991): 351-375.

"external world charged with the most powerful energies" (30). Like Simmel, Freud figures normality as tough-skinned impenetrability in the face of the violent contingencies of the public sphere. Theorizing the psychological mechanics of railway neurosis and war trauma in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he offers what Cvetkovich calls a "melodramatic scenario of embattlement and self-sacrifice" (53): he likens consciousness to a tough rind of tissue—a cortical shell—protecting a tiny organism from a mean world of shocks. This good-soldier tissue takes a pounding, but "by its death, the outer layer has saved all the deeper ones from a similar fate," Freud imagines. But a traumatic experience can penetrate the cortical shell: the "protective shield" is breached, stimuli enter unchecked, leaving the mind to attempt to heal itself through reliving, particularly in dreams, the trauma in hopes of preparing for and deflecting it (35). Freud's inquiry, though not definitively gendered, responds to the experience of male combatants and traumatic disruptions in the easy public mobility afforded by trains; "hysterics," on the other hand, occupy their own diagnosis and suffer their own insular, intimate sufferings.

These atmospherics of modernity—sharp energies, crowded cityscapes—form the terrain Benjamin's quintessential modern poet navigates in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire." His essay, which cites Freud on shocks and shells and shares Simmel's vision of the inherent violence of the city, serves as an important basis for my chapter: again, it synthesizes an archetypal modern setting and a man's relationship to that setting. Moreover, Benjamin endorses a way of being for a modern *writer*: writer as shock troop, modernity's frontline soldier. Benjamin represents Baudelaire as a man engaged in a man's activity—man-about-towning—in the masculine public space of the street. But

more than that, Baudelaire, a *flaneur*, "stumbling," "colliding," "fencing" through the crowd, actually is engaged in a dangerous process of recording modernity as it impacts his psyche, Benjamin claims (164).[3] Baudelaire's pained, erratic movement results from exposing himself to modernity's frights—an exposure that makes Baudelaire himself frightening to others in his antic movement and behavior (163). Rather than allow his protective "aura" to deflect shocks, Baudelaire bears marks of modernity on his mind like so many craters on an atmosphere-less moon. "He indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock. He paid dearly for consenting to this disintegration," Benjamin writes (194). Baudelaire "witness[es]" the aura's "breakdown"—and testifies to that breakdown as his poetic "reason of state" (181, 162).

If, then, the modern subject is a head-over-heart tough-skin or a mean-streets combat-poet, Woolf's window woman is truly old-fashioned. She is protected not just by the defenses of her internal consciousness (or aura or shell), but also by the strong walls of her house. Certainly Woolf's reception by her contemporaries paints her as a delicate, sheltered writer—more a writer of ephemera than of the street. In fact, they actively distance her novels from war and from politics beyond those of the drawing room; in their florid reviews, beauty is Woolf's *materia prima*, and she herself is otherworldly. "She culls exotic flowers in the half-light of her private mysticism along with common earthgrown varieties and distills them into new essences. In rarefied strata of pure sensation, ephemeral beauty, celestial imaginings, she flies with skill and daring," waxes

[3] "Stumbling," "colliding," and "fencing" are from the opening stanza of Baudelaire's "Le Soleil." Benjamin cites this stanza, "the only place in *Les Fleurs du Mal* that shows the poet at work," to stress the "fantastic combat" in which Baudelaire saw himself engaged (164).

Hudson Strode in a 1941 *New York Times* review of *Between the Acts*. The *Times Literary Supplement* calls the same text a "rarified beauty" (346). Its anonymous reviewer speculates about Woolf's personality as he or she sees it—classic, detached—reflected in the text: "her aloofness, no doubt, owed something to the classic mould of her thought, something to the cultivation of mind and the graces of manner on which she evidently set so much store." Not only is Woolf presented as disconnected from the mess and mass of humanity, but war is actually read out of her war novels. The *TLS* reviewer goes on to claim that the "undercurrent" of Woolf's last novel—which takes place in June 1939—is the demand for intelligibility any audience places on any artist/creator. This mild claim might be unobjectionable if it weren't for the reviewer's stunning failure to mention looming world war—the novel's true "undercurrent." Similarly, *Mrs. Dalloway*, a powerful statement of the permeable boundaries between home and battlefront, is dubbed a manners drama in a *New York Times* review by Louis Kronenberger. By reading the transcendent rather than the timely in Woolf's writing, her reviewers would—to engage in something of their style—keep her eternally home, embroidering graceful, light-hued threads of "beauty," dispassionately stitching patterns of private interactions.[4] She is not modern: she is off the street; she is outside of time.

But Woolf sees violence and contact at the heart of her work. Sounding very much like a shock-troop herself, she writes in her autobiographical "A Sketch of the Past" that she receives and records the world's "sledge-hammer" blows (*Moments of*

[4] The short-sightedness of Kronenberger's and Strode's reviews is strikingly apparent in their contrast with the very headlines that screamed alongside them: "Across Nazi-Conquered Europe the Tide of Revolt Is Rising," "British Fliers Raid Southern Italy," "Battle of the Pacific May Precede Atlantic Battle," among many others. Critics like Jane Marcus and Naomi Black have powerfully rebutted apolitical readings of

Being 73): "And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer." She calls violent, jarring experiences "moments of being" and claims that these moments connect all human beings, proving that "one's life is not confined to one's body." She too picks up the idea of a protective shell, not as an internal consciousness, but as the external-to-her, yet psychically infused structure of the home. In her essay "Street Haunting: A London Adventure," which details a walk through the city that is both threatening and thrilling for the walker, she describes the home and the things one lives with as a safe shell: "The shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves, to make for themselves a shape distinct from others, is broken [when one leaves home], and there is left of all these wrinkles and roughness a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye" (*Death of the Moth* 22). At the end of the walk, the shell is restored, the walker once again is "sheltered and enclosed. Here again is the usual door; here the chair turned as we left it and the china bowl and the brown ring on the carpet" (36). A roof and four walls, in the texts by women modernists I consider in the following pages, are a sentient shell—a counterpart to Simmel's, Freud's, and Benjamin's metaphors for consciousness—that absorbs or is broken by the shock of air raids, penetrated by traumatic Occupation and the billeting of foreign troops. In short, these writers represent women's experience of war and modernity through the home as trope, figuring the house as alive, not inert, and as the extended consciousness of the woman who lives inside.

Woolf; the collected essays of *Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Myth, Reality* (1991) read Woolf foremost as a war writer.

A ROOF AND FOUR WALLS

> The habitat, whether large or small, is the container of the essential elements of life: what goes on within its four walls has a continuous and creative effect, whether good or bad, on the inner being. Here it is that we allow ourselves to be sheathed in the mystery of sleep […]. Here proceeds the routine to which we nail our sense of reality–the very monotony, the certainty that certain hours will bring with them familiar happenings and acts keeps the anxious, nervous infant in us secure. The dependence on home is one of the few dependencies which is not weakening: on the contrary, this is an origin of strength. We not only require, we as humans are completed by what the home gives us—location. Identity would be nothing without its frame.
>
> —Elizabeth Bowen, "The Idea of Home," undated manuscript

Bowen's "home" is strong-walled; stable and stabilizing, it "frames," "contains," and "completes" us, makes us ourselves. Through our experience with home, she claims, we are put into the context of our world—given an "address," an identity and place. If, then, homes are at risk, their inhabitants are in danger—not just physical danger, but psychic danger. If humans are "completed" by the home, then war-damage to houses is a serious matter: a breach not only of walls but also of the psyche's shell. For example, Bowen conflates the cracked walls of a house with the psychic paralysis of the woman inside in her Blitz-time short story, "In the Square." The first paragraph of "In the Square" makes of its title a misnomer: "three houses had been bombed away," transforming the onetime "square" into an open figure (*Collected Stories* 609). And, to varying degrees, each house is a microcosm of its block—a square made incomplete by "glassless windows" or missing exterior walls.

The story describes a visit to one of the corner houses by Rupert, who had been a frequent guest there before the Second World War. A stranger—the deployed man-of-the-house's military secretary and mistress, who cohabits with man-of-the-house's wife,

Magdela—answers his doorbell ring. Magdela awkwardly greets him from the top of the stairs, directing him to join her in the drawing room, where her nephew immediately interrupts them. Rupert mentions that he is glad she is not alone:

> 'Well, I never am. This is my only room in the house—and, even so, as you see, Bennet comes in. The house seems to belong to everyone now. That was Gina who opened the front door,'
>
> 'Yes,' he said, 'who is she?'
>
> 'She used to be Anthony's secretary, but she wanted to come to London to drive a car for the war, so he told her she could live in this house, because it was shut up at that time. So it seemed to be quite hers when I came back. She is supposed to sit in the back dining-room; that was why I couldn't ask you to dinner. But also there is nobody who can cook—there is a couple down in the basement, but they are independent; they are only supposed to be caretakers. They have a son who is a policeman, and I know he sometimes sleeps somewhere at the top of the house—but caretakers are so hard to get. They have a schoolgirl daughter who comes in here when she thinks I am not about.' (612)

Wartime fear shuts down Magdela so completely that she is unable to open her own front door and frozen by the ring of her telephone. She responds to the broken polygons of her neighborhood and home by partitioning her house into its rooms: though the place is crowded with people, she attempts to enforce separate homes-within-a-home for each occupant, and is affronted by invasions of what she perceives as her last safe space. In other words, Bowen depicts three squares, nested like Chinese boxes—the neighborhood,

the house, and the drawing room. Magdela responds to structural damage to the squares of her block and home by retreating into the still smaller square of a single room, her last intact frame. This ceiling and four walls—the drawing room—once securely located her pre-war identity as capable hostess and singular woman of the house; Magdela withdraws inside it, clings to it.

Virginia Woolf's diary from 1940 presents a similar series of nested frames—she too first describes damage to the square of her neighborhood, Mecklenburgh Square, then to her home, then to her body, as she imagines her own incineration. The Woolfs, who had taken refuge at Monk's House, just outside London, return to check on their city home to find Mecklenburgh Square roped off:

> The house about 30 yards from ours struck this morning by a bomb. Completely ruined. Another bomb in the square still unexploded. We walked round the back. Stood by Jane Harrison's house. The house was still smoldering. That is a great pile of bricks. Underneath all the people who had gone down to their shelter. Scraps of cloth hanging to the bare walls at the side still standing. A looking glass I think swinging. Like a tooth knocked out—a clean cut. (316)

Human remains are entombed in the debris of a house; a broken façade reminds Woolf of a human mouth, gaping and damaged. Woolf, shaken, admonishes herself to have courage when their own house, spared eight days earlier, is hit: "All our windows are broken, ceilings down, & most of our china smashed at Meck. Sq. The bomb exploded" (322). Then, days later, she writes:

> Oh I try to imagine how one's killed by a bomb. I've got it fairly vivid—the sensation: but cant see anything suffocating nonentity following after. I shall think—oh I wanted another 10 years—not this—& shant, for once, be able to describe it. It—I mean death; no, the scrunching & scrambling, the crushing of my bone shade in on my very active eye & brain: the process of putting out the light,—painful? Yes. Terrifying. I suppose so—Then a swoon; a drum; two or three gulps attempting consciousness—& then, dot dot dot. (327)

War comes closer and closer, ripping through each of Woolf's protective layers, including, finally, her human frame. For readers, too, distance from war diminishes—war spills past its battlefields and historical end, into the familiar sites and stuff of home, and, finally, in Woolf's "sensationally" violent passage of sight and sound, crush and panic, onto the body. In other words, by depicting war's inexorable advance on private frames of reference, these writers model for readers a traversal from psychic distance to personal involvement—the walls between one person and another and between life and death dissolve. "The walls, the protecting & reflecting walls, wear so terribly thin in this war," Woolf entered in her diary 24 July 1940; "The wall between the living and the living became less solid as the wall between the living and the dead thinned," Bowen wrote (*Heat of the Day* 99-100).

Thus, to write about war, Bowen, Woolf, and Stein cross private thresholds, "opening up" houses and domestic habits for readers. Bowen's London home—her primary residence—sustained serious damage during the Blitz. She wrote to her publisher's wife, Mrs. Spencer Curtis Brown, on 24 July 1944:

> I feel I owe both you and Jonathan Cape an explanation as to my slowness in producing the collection of short stories. Clarence Terrace has been twice blasted within the last fortnight; the second time was really very serious, and I have not yet caught up with any of the effects (on the home, I mean, not, fortunately, on ourselves!).

And on 18 October 1944:

> Yes, we are back again in Clarence Terrace though existence is slightly cumbrous and working is impaired by shoals of workmen doing the second degree repairs. However, all this is really a blessing and one looks forward to having the house straight.

Her friend Virginia Woolf faced similar housekeeping problems as she worked on "A Sketch of the Past." In 1939 and 1940, Blitz and the threat of German invasion are "Past's" present. The Luftwaffe flies over England "closer to this house daily," Woolf writes (100). Two months later, five German raiders pass so close to the Woolf home that "they brushed the tree at the gate" (124). In her diary, Woolf seamlessly weaves the sound of aircraft into her daily homelife: "A bomb dropped so close I cursed L. [her husband Leonard Woolf] for slamming the window"; "L. & I walking on the marsh first look at a bomb crater: then listen to the German drone above: then I take 2 paces nearer L., prudently deciding that 2 birds had better be killed with one stone"; "'They're at it again' we say as we sit, I doing my work, L. making cigarettes. Now and then there's a thud" (325, 327, 318).

Taken inside Woolf's bedroom in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," we lie, minds' eyes with hers, staring through the roof to skies full of enemy aircraft: "The

Germans were over this house last night and the night before that. Here they are again" (*Death* 243). She continues, "All the search lights are erect. They point at a spot exactly over this roof. At any second a bomb may fall on this very room. One, two, three, four, five, six … the seconds pass" (247). She names seconds, claims them—literally marks time. She asks that our seconds become hers: Woolf's number sequence stalls our reading, takes up our time (one, two, three…). A series of seconds from 1940 would be a series of seconds in 2006. We all wait. "Peace" in her essay title invokes both an end of war and the "peace" of silence and home—a peace that we may know, a peace that enables our reading, a peace that, under threat, is counted by writer and reader in anxious seconds.

Gertrude Stein also takes readers into the intimate recesses of her home—to her bathroom—as Germans bomb France after the liberation of Paris. "I was in my bath, bang and the house shook I got out of my bath and another big bang … and there down in the valley were volumes of smoke, they were trying to hit the bridges over the Rhone, the cook was screaming and the people flocking into the grounds," Stein writes in *Wars I Have Seen* (239). War threatens bedrooms and bathrooms and the sanctuary of home; challenges the power of roofs, the strength of walls, and the very possibility of private domestic space. It is fitting, then, that Stein describes "ruined" Cologne, which she saw from an American carrier plane in 1945, as a destroyed house: "[I]t is natural to speak of one's roof, roofs are in a way the most important thing in a house, between four walls, under a roof, and here was a whole spread out city without a roof" (*Life* 56).

Houses themselves are "characters" in Woolf's work: the Ramsays' Hebrides vacation home in *To the Lighthouse*, in fact, becomes the central character after the death

of Mrs. Ramsay. Deaths of Mrs. Ramsay's children are related parenthetically; the Great War is merely part of the atmospherics surrounding the house. Woolf devotes the middle section of her novel to the daily life of the house itself as it experiences nights and days, tumult and peace, dissolution and cleaning.[5] Similarly, Clarissa Dalloway, standing on her landing, knows "the very moment, the very temper of her house!" (40). Hostess Clarissa, symbiote of her home, feels its making-ready for her party in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In Bowen's World War II short story "Ivy Gripped the Steps," ivy—symbol of war, sign of wartime neglect—attacks the Nicholson home: "one could have convinced oneself that the ivy must be feeding on something inside the house. The process of strangulation could be felt: one wondered how many years of war would be necessary for this to complete itself" (686). Here, the very life of the home is threatened by asphyxiating tendrils of war.

For Stein, war is encapsulated in the occupation of the French home she shares with Alice Toklas by 15 German soldiers they are forced to billet and who steal from them. Indeed, in *Wars I Have Seen*, she favorably recounts a radio interview with an American general who claims that his country entered the war to protect the autonomy of the home. He says Americans are fighting so that "you can be in your home and nobody can force their way in and authoritatively frighten you"—"that," she writes, "is the horrible thing about an occupied country" (156). Stein narrates the intrusion of German

[5] In drafts of the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse*, the housekeeper, Mrs. McNab (who emerges as a barely distinct character in the final text), is "a break to the destructive power of war," writes James Haule in his study of the three extant versions of the text. To "keep house" has profound, social meaning as Mrs. McNab, a housekeeper writ large, "rescues the things of the world from human destruction" (Hussey 169). In this way, the housekeeper and the hostesses, as I discuss in chapter four, are kindred figures. A line from the *Lighthouse* holograph draft, very much in keeping with my discussion of Woolf's scrapbook history in the introduction to this project: "She was not among the ~~haters of life; not~~ among the skeleton

soldiers, unstoppable as bombs, who pierce their domestic frame and "authoritatively frighten" them:

> It was almost nine o'clock of summer night just a little later and Basket [Stein's poodle] barked and I looked out and there was a German officer and a soldier and they said in French they wanted to sleep and I said have you a paper from the mayor because they are always supposed to have and he said like an old time German officer I must see the house, certainly I said, you go around back and they will open, and I called the servants and told them to attend to them, I thought with that kind of German it was just as well to keep our American accents out of it, and then they were at it, the German said he wanted two rooms for officers and mattresses for six men and he did not want any answering back and he did not care how much he upset the ladies of the house, and the servants said very well sir and he left and as soon as he left the soldiers were amiable and they carried around mattresses and they had three dogs and we locked up as much as we could and took Basket upstairs and went to bed, finally there were fifteen men sleeping on six mattresses and the two dogs the third one would not come in and in the morning after they all left we could not find my umbrella it turned out that it was used by a poor devil of an Italian whom they kept outside all night in the rain to sit with the horses, and they took away a new pair of slippers of one of the servants and they broke the lock and stole all our peaches and they took away

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lovers; not among those who voluntarily surrender ~~their~~, make abstract, & ~~find in some~~ reduce ~~th mul~~ the multiplicity of the world to unity & its volume & conflict & anguish to one voice piping clear" (Dick 166).

> with them why nobody knows except to be disagreeable the two keys of the front and back doors. (211)

As Americans, Jews, lesbians, and civilian women, Stein and Toklas are staggeringly vulnerable as they sleep upstairs, German soldiers below. But the story she tells—a bark, a forced entry, a stolen umbrella and slippers and peaches and keys—is primarily a story of a violated home. The Germans have literally taken the keys to Stein's household, an act not so much practical as symbolic of their power to enter at will. War's nations (France, America, Germany, Italy), its transgressiveness, and its crimes are not abstract, but intimately material in Stein's story—concrete both for Stein and for her readers. Stein attempts to safeguard her identity and, subtly, the integrity of her hostesssing by sending the German officer to a back door opened by another hand. Weeks later, American troops sweep the French countryside and the scene is replayed, this time with American soldiers, whom Stein welcomes by name as her guests: "Lieutenant Colonel William O. Perry Headquarters 47th Infantry Division and private John Schmaltz, wonderful that is all I can say about it wonderful, and I said you are going to sleep in beds where German officers slept six weeks ago, wonderful my gracious perfectly wonderful" (246). To win the war, Stein suggests, is to be able to open your front door to whomever you choose.

Even still, traces of war persist in the physical home. Houses occupied by strangers as part of the mass upheaval of wartime migration, displacement, and occupation are the subject of an undated, unpublished post-war manuscript of Bowen's called "Opening Up the House." "All over Europe, people are going home. Rooms breathe again," she begins, as if houses themselves had held their breaths, waiting for their rightful inhabitants to return. But for those people and houses lucky enough to

survive and reunite, Bowen writes that “no armor” can protect from the shock of finding their familiar things marked by war:

> Those unnumbered human beings who came and went kept in motion by the clockwork of wartime, using the furniture, opening and shutting the doors, neglecting or at random cultivating the gardens to which their tenancy gave them passing right—have left something behind them, something that will not evaporate so quickly as the smell of unfamiliar cigarettes. […] Rings left by glasses or burns left by cigarettes may mark those parts of the room in which they preferred to encamp. Dinges left in the springs of armchairs and sofas record their characteristic ways of sitting; and books displaced or upside down in the shelves indicate what they read—if they read! They preferred, apparently, to sleep in the dining room, dine in the sleeping porch? Blotters remain crisscrossed with their different writings; it is to be guessed from the ink on the mantelpiece that someone wrote his letters standing up; the ghostly indentations of someone’s doodlings are found on the telephone pad.

Like Stein’s inventory of petty thefts, Bowen chronicles small stains and indentations—a chronicle that reveals, in its quiet but insistent detail, a strong unease with any change to the house as shell. This shell that once perfectly fit and protected its inhabitants has been broken and reformed to match the habits of others. Its routines of waking and sleeping are disrupted, its things altered. The lingering “something” left by unfamiliar inhabitants is, of course, this list of small damages. But I close and open this section with Bowen to point out that war’s traces read in roofs, walls, ink blots, and ring stains are the cracks and curves of an alphabet—a wartime trauma narrative written, literally, on the home

front. Bowen sees written together on her home the story of her daily life and the story of war: narratives no longer and never again distinct, but instead materially connected in things, passed on as heirlooms.

LIVING WITH THINGS

Woolf writes that, though she feels compelled to learn to do "something useful" in the face of war, she decides, "by writing I am doing what is far more necessary than anything else" (*Moments* 73). But the stuff of her art—and its chance of remaining intact—is in short supply. London is so starved for paper that, in June 1943, a citywide book drive—a "literary massacre" described by Philip Ziegler—collected more than 5.5 million volumes to recycle for paper (256). Woolf's account, in letters and her diary, of bomb damage to her Mecklenburgh Square home also details a literary massacre: "bookcases had been blown off the walls and the books lay in enormous mounds on the floor covered in rubble and plaster. In the Press books, files, paper, the printing-machine and the type were in a horrible grimy mess […] Masses of letters and precious documents were reduced to sodden pulp and lost for ever" (Lee 731). In correspondence and personal notes, Bowen frequently mentions publication delays due to wartime paper shortages and writing projects backburner-ed as she works to "straight[en]" up her damaged home. She laments the unhealthy "slimness" of papers and magazines shrunken by lack of resources (2 October 1944).[6] Both women would have been implored by campaigns directed at housewives to help win the war by collecting paper, cardboard, magazines, rags, carpets and textile waste, bottles, jars, bones, and tin to be salvaged for

[6] In 1942, London newspapers received four thousand tons of newsprint weekly, down from 24 thousand tons before the war; they were reduced in size to between four and six pages, writes Ziegler (256).

the war effort. And both women make clear that, along with their homes and bodies, their bodies of work in their most material form are threatened by war. Bill Brown, in his "The Secret Life of Things (Virginia Woolf and the Matter of Modernism)," writes that art is threatened by the "misuse of material for martial ends, by the transposition of material into *materiel*" (5). He cites Woolf's writing to her sister, Vanessa Bell, a painter: "The difficulty about paints is that they're made with oil, 'Now you may not know [a merchant has explained to Woolf] that every gun when it's first cast has to be dipped in a bath of oil'" (Illustrations 1.1 a-b).

As I have claimed earlier in this chapter, representations of household objects damaged or recontextualized by war ask readers to encounter them both as familiar and as invested with particular historical violence. A simple point: Bowen's and Woolf's readers—all but those who have encountered full-text works on the Web—hold the leaves and ink and binding of material texts in their hands. When these writers tell us that they are denied raw materials to produce (a place to write, paper to write and print on) they testify to the wounding of their body of work, the only part of them with which we have a physical relationship. Bowen and Woolf find the most common of denominators to share with readers—roofs, quiet seconds, paper—and then show that these things are at risk. They make us anxious for what we know in order to make us feel what it is like to live with an anxiety we do not know. "A Sketch of the Past" contains a striking example of Woolf inviting readers to worry about a text at risk: in a brief-but-crucial interruption of her "Past" with present-tense goings-on, Woolf tells of mistakenly trashing her memoir along with notes for her biography of Roger Fry. She writes:

> I have just found this sheaf of notes, thrown away into my waste-paper basket. I had been tidying up; and had cast all my life of Roger into that large basket, and with it, these sheets too. (8 June 1940)

Here the whole body of writing is broken down to pages—Woolf makes readers hyper-aware that her text is, before anything else, a material thing, and a fragile paper good at that. Her pages live lives of their own, subject to accident, rescued by chance.[7] We know only incidentally that the trashcan is the least ominous threat to Woolf's pages, as German bombers fly overhead nightly. Critic Jeslyn Medoff remembers book casualties of the Blitz: "On book application forms at the British Library there occasionally appears this notation: 'It is regretted that this work was destroyed by bombing in the war; we have not been able to acquire a replacement'" (73). But the war appears only at the top of Woolf's dated entries before the story of her childhood swells, taking over the narrative until the next break. "I was forced to break off again, and rather suspect that these breaks will be the end of this memoir," Woolf begins one entry, without specifying what interrupted her (98). Readers experience anxiety for pages, for the increasingly fragmented memoir, and for the writer herself; as we are drawn into the memoir, the "present" war jars, interrupts. Woolf records, and to some degree reproduces, the violence of the age not by narrating it, but by showing its threat to the project of self-

[7] Woolf acknowledges that the resistant reader also poses a threat to her pages. If the male letter writer who, in *Three Guineas*, asked Woolf's narrator, "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?" expected her to accept his "we"—that he and she share the same opinions and values—then her reply "had better be torn up and thrown in the waste-paper basket" (9). If the reader of *A Room of One's Own* does not want to hear that women's writing is bound up with our material circumstances and access to institutions, then he can "throw the whole of it into the waste-paper basket" (16).

recovery we have undertaken with her. War trauma actually appears as breaks in memory—and, through reader involvement, these breaks persist into the future.[8]

Bowen, who wrote much of *Bowen's Court*, a history of her family's ancestral home in Ireland, during wartime, expresses a similar concern for her text as material thing: "Frightened of losing the manuscript in an air raid, I have lodged it about in my friends' homes: one draft went ahead to America. The current chapter was always in my overcoat pocket when we waited about on disturbed nights" (458).[9] It is remarkable to imagine the sheets of Bowen's manuscript tucked into her coat as she evacuated an at-risk home, woman—and pages—making their way into a threatening night.[10]

Woolf recounts discovering a young British soldier in her garden one September night; he manned the aircraft searchlight atop a nearby hill and was there in hopes of accessing a typewriter for personal use. "Sorry to break into your private life," he tells her (322). She quotes that line in her diary—a sentiment made ironic by the other entries, day after day, recording war's intrusion into her private life. But in bringing war home

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[8] The trauma survivor "is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, *remember* it as something belonging to the past," Freud writes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (19). "War makes things go backward as well as forward," writes Stein in *Wars I Have Seen*, "and so 1914 was the same as 1878 in a way." *Wars*—like Woolf's "A Sketch"—is, in part, dated diary entries: the dates of these entries jump backward and forward, creating a sense of traumatic memory unbounded by time.

[9] Gertrude Stein recounts being separated from her manuscripts while visiting Alfred and Evelyn Whitehead at their country home outside London as the Germans advanced on Paris during the First World War: "The germans were getting nearer and nearer Paris. One day Doctor Whitehead said to Gertrude Stein […] have you any copies of your writings or are they all in Paris. They are all in Paris, she said. I did not like to ask, said Doctor Whitehead, but I have been worrying" (*Autobiography* 149). After the German retreat and the women can return to Paris, they send copies to New York in case of Zeppelin bombings (156).

[10] UT's Harry Ransom Center houses the extensively revised typescript of *Bowen's Court*. Holding sheets that might have evacuated with Bowen in my own hands struck me as another occasion in which the archive can provide serendipitous, personal points of connection to works in progress—as the text as a

for readers women modernists allow for the possibility that private life could also break into war—that readers' affective investment in homes of the past and their own homes will encourage them to stand for peace, that homefront voices, particularly women's, will be heard and influential in national politics. Woolf wrote to her niece Judith Stephen 2 December 1939, "I'm more and more convinced that it is our duty to catch Hitler in his home haunts and prod him if even with only the end of an old inky pen" (Lee 683). Stein too writes of private life breaking into war, this time materially—she describes the occupation of *Hitler's* home by herself and Toklas. In "Off We All Went to See Germany," a post-war, first-person piece for *Life* magazine, Stein writes of visiting Hitler's Berchtesgaden retreat in the company of American GIs: "The other houses were bombed but Hitler's was not it was burned but not down and there we were in that big window where Hitler dominated the world a bunch of GIs just gay and happy" (57). While the GIs horse around, "Miss Toklas and I sat comfortably and at home on garden chairs on Hitler's balcony." The group gathered on the balcony "and pointed as Hitler had pointed but mostly we just sat." Admiring Hitler's radiators, Stein wants to take one back to her own terrace "and grow flowers over it," but it is too heavy for her to filch. The view, once of the horizon of Hitler's power, now is the expanse of his loss, his gestures mocked by American GIs and two tiny women in dresses and hats.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Stein's account is her being "at home," comfortably old-lady-ing in Hitler's garden chair, thinking she could make a good flowerpot of his "splendid" radiator. War victory and defeat are played out not on the

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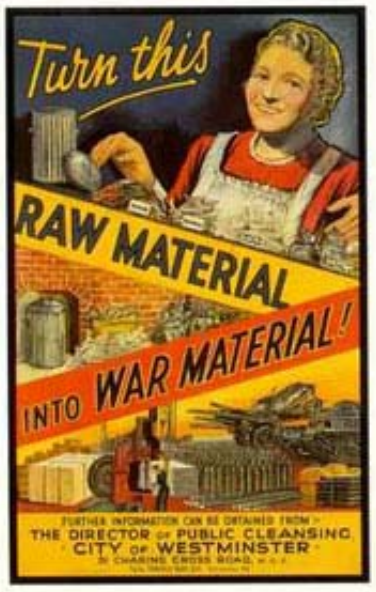
monolithic whole breaks down to pages, students may be able to find entry points into historical and literary narratives that seem closed to them. [See discussion in chapter 4 and Appendix A.]

battlefield, but at home.[11] The difference between them is the difference between keeping one's house—and the possibility of private, domestic life—and losing it. More than that, Stein asserts the comforts and concerns of her housekeeping—her life with Alice, the things of their home—as "breaking into" a seat of war: she reclaims Hitler's house, once a site of war planning, as a site of life.

[11] Stein cleared her own terrace so that American soldiers as her guests could enjoy it in *Wars I Have Seen*: "I am going on cleaning the weeds off the terrace so that when the American army gets here it can sit comfortably on it, Alice Toklas thinks the weeds may get a chance to grow again but I hope not, anyway I am making it nice and neat" (203).

Illustration 1.1 a-b. War Posters



a

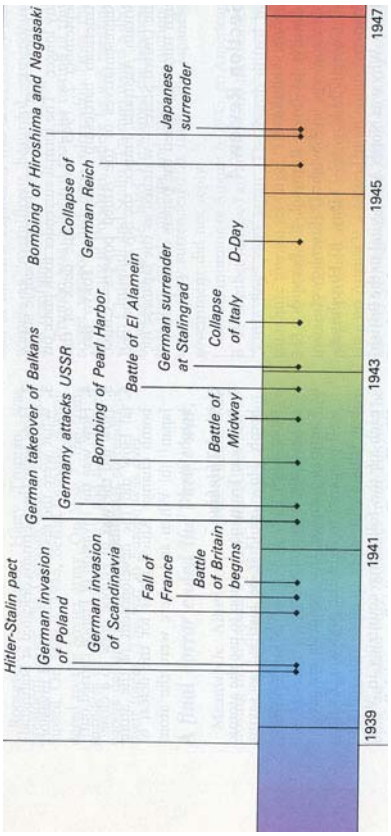
b

Recontextualizing the stuff of home: war propaganda posters call on women to turn household items, trash into war material.

Images: "Turn Raw Material into War Material" (printer W.E. Berry Ltd., Bradford; accessed from Rebecca Lewis' online poster collection); "It's Waste to Waste Waste" from Time-Life Books *The Battle of Britain*; Time-Life Books Inc. (1977).

Chapter 2

Women Waiting



FRANCE TO REVISE TEXTS IN SCHOOLS
Vichy Plans Especially to Have History Books Meet Ideas of New Order OPENING OF CLASSES SET But Difficulties Are Faced in Scattering of Teachers and Damage to Buildings
25 August 1940

REICH CURBS JEWS IN OCCUPIED FRANCE
Applies Measures Resembling Those at Home—Vichy Still Studying Its Project PEOPLE APPEAR IN DAZE With Country Cut in Two and Communications Haphazard, News Is a Precious Thing Predictions Untrustworthy New Arrests by Vichy
3 October 1940

FOOD IS PARAMOUNT IN VICHY PROBLEMS
Supply Issue Looms as Crux of All Politics as Scarcity Becomes More Marked MEAT RATION IS CUT AGAIN Vegetables Scant and Costly and Other Items Restricted—Hope Put in Big Crops
24 May 1941

RIOTS FOR BREAD BEGIN IN FRANCE
Vichy Increases Appeals for Young Men to Accept Work in Germany SOME POLICE ARRESTED Accused of 'Indulgence' to Fighting French in Paris— Crisis Seen Near
17 July 1943

WAVE OF ARRESTS SWEEPING FRANCE
Vichy Police and Nazi Troops Imprison All Suspected Likely to Aid Allies 200 HELD IN HAUTE SAVOIE Laval's Paper Derides United Nations' Invasion Plans, Says We Lack Means
19 July 1943

NAZI TROOPS BATTLE SABOTURS IN FRANCE
Germans Drawn Into Conflict Between Vichy and Opposition
19 December 1943

HOLD THE PRESSES

Timelines and headlines—these from wartime *New York Times* articles on the German occupation of France—offer history as a series of happenings, literally linear,

action (verb) packed. Today's news is tomorrow's history, the timeline its quintessential illustration: together they form an extraliterary genre of eventfulness written in seemingly "ordinary" language.[1] The timeline above, from the popular high school textbook *World History: Perspectives on the Past*, appears as part of a chapter summary—it is "World War II" distilled, the need-to-know information, a span of time neatly punctuated by crises. To master history, the text suggests, is to be able to reproduce it as timeline. This history is deeply emplotted—event, event, event; each plot point reassuringly finite, tagged, like news articles, to a dateline, and successive.

Gertrude Stein recognized the ordering of events, mastering of history in newspapers: "The newspaper reader wants to read the newspaper every day because he wants the idea of happenings happening every day and if there is a day without the happening of that day which is really the day before then the newspaper reader feels that it is like the sun standing still or any abnormal thing there is a day and nothing has happened on that day," she claimed in a 1935 lecture on narration (*Four Lectures* 36). There is something comforting, easy, she suggests, in being at once caught up in the action and already safely beyond it (after all, the newspaper reader, she points out, reads yesterday's news). The newspaper's use of present tense is belied by its layout, by its physical circumscription into articles, columns, pages. Simply, order is still being imposed—events are being spatially designated more and less important, no matter what the headlines may scream. Crisis is integrated, contained and, to a degree, closed. New

[1] In pages to come, I discuss the nineteenth-century sensation text as the *literary* genre of event. Stanley Fish questions the possibility of an ordinary language in *Is There a Text in This Class?*: a slyly "transparent" conveyor of information–the alleged stock-in-trade of journalists, scientists, historians and textbook writers–ordinary language can operate without scrutiny, Fish claims (29).

entries will find their way to the timeline of human history—a series of events safely enclosed in yesterday.

In this chapter, I consider wartime writings by Gertrude Stein and Virgina Woolf that reveal this integrity of history as a construction and, indeed, a construction at odds with the experience—and, potentially, the responsible representation of—cultural trauma. A neatly narrated history emplots in order to move beyond, or, as Eric Santer puts its, "fetishizes" trauma: narrative fetishism "is the way an inability or refusal to mourn emplots traumatic events; it is a strategy of undoing […] the need for mourning by simulating a condition of intactness" (144). Resisting this fetishization, Woolf and Stein offer an alternative historiography: what it might mean for "nothing" to happen, to refuse emplotment in the rendering of history—that "sun standing still," "abnormal thing," as Stein puts it—is a question both she and Woolf take up. Their depictions of the homefront show both the profound effects of war beyond the space of the battlefield and the time of the battle, and the experience of not being one of history's actors, but a participant all the same. Indeed, while "nothing" happens, people wait for the worst. Or, as Stein puts it, people had "all the nervousness the anxiety and the privations of war but they were not *in* it" (*Wars* 213; emphasis mine). A remarkable article in the 7 May 1941 issue of the *New York Times*, an article Stein might have noted, if not the sun itself standing still, offers a provocative place to start. Despite the conventions of news reporting—headline, dateline, newsmakers in action, a reporter's in-the-know tone—readers glimpse another story, a story not "*in* it," but *out*. Outside of power, outside of the know, outside of event—plot-less—the story suggests an alternative history homespun in rumor, thick with waiting:

Vichy Is Without News

> VICHY, France, May 9—Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain is in the south of France passing a few days on his estate Villenueve-Loubet, near Antibes. Vice Premier François Darlan is still in Paris, conferring with the German authority.That is the extent of the actual news today though rumors and conjectures abound. […] Regarding Admiral Darlan's conversations there is no information. The watchword tonight is: Wait and see.

"Women Waiting" tracks the representation of this "wait and see": specifically, I consider two novels, Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and Stein's *Mrs. Reynolds* (1952), and Stein's memoir *Wars I Have Seen* (1945). These texts concern themselves with people's daily domestic lives and the strained status of being *in* danger yet *out*side agency: because they are eventless, they are draining, demanding reads. They stall and fail to progress, making readers uncomfortable by failing to meet our expectations, trapping readers in anxiety-producing repetition. I term them modernist sensation texts. But where nineteenth-century sensation novels are relentlessly shocking and event-packed, their modernist successors painstakingly render history's in-betweens and in-the-meantimes, perhaps more nearly capturing the *feel* of homefront life. My work accepts a challenge Patrice Petro issues to feminist scholars in her *Aftershocks of the New: Feminism and Film History*. Petro claims that "time without event" characterizes much of the experience of modernity, the work of some women modernists and women's experiences generally (92). By theorizing these in-betweens—the duration between shocks, headlines, events—Petro attends to women's lives, suffering and "active

waiting," she writes (93).[2] Rather than reducing everyday experience to blank space between entries on history's timeline, she calls on feminist thinkers to read and represent it, and thus make public what's usually left unexamined as private and subjective.

For Petro, reading between the (time)lines produces an inclusive history; I argue that Woolf and Stein, too, are inclusive historiographers, both in the sites and people they represent and in the larger readership they gesture toward through "sensational" accounts. Theirs is not (just) a cerebral high modernism, but one that, *specifically because these texts are eventless*, plays to the bodies of readers by performing anxiety, waiting and disorientation. In my previous chapter, I argued that women modernists situate the home as a site of modernity by representing physical houses and household objects enduring the shock and traumatic penetration of bombardment and occupation. Their important corrective to masculinist views of modernity and history demands that the life of the home, and lives of the women within, be counted in national narratives of war and peace. Moreover, in invoking universalized ideas of home, they provide an intergenerational readership the means of imaginative investment in those narratives. Now I expand this argument to consider the representation of everyday rhythms of domestic life as they continue despite, and yet reflective of, war's significant impact. In other words, I move from the impact of war on the home, to the impact of the home—in its rhythms, routines and eventless-ness—on ways of narrating war.

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[2] Margaret and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet also initiate a crucial reconsideration of "time" and war: "Masculinist history has stressed the sharply defined event of war [….] A feminist re-vision of the *time* in wartime can make the history of war more sensitive to the full range of experience of both men and women. We must move beyond the exceptional marked event, which takes place on a specifically militarized front or in public and institutionally defined arenas, to include the private domain and the landscape of the mind" (46).

In the upcoming pages, I briefly trace what I see as the lineage of modernist sensation texts to their nineteenth-century kin, both noting their shared concerns with modernity and the status of the home, and speculating on how and why the form evolves, specifically around its approach to event. I then rehearse influential arguments about modernist representational techniques and their particular suitedness for depictions of trauma. Finally, I offer readings of *Mrs. Reynolds*, *Between the Acts* and *Wars I Have Seen* that accomplish three things:

> *(1)* I illustrate these texts' more-than-renderings of the rhythms of homefront life: their eventless narration sensationally reproduces those rhythms. Stein and Woolf resist narrating the who, what, why, when of events in order to record the ripples of trauma as they expand through space and time, implicating people on the homefront and intergenerational readers in the work of remembrance and mourning.
>
> *(2)* I analyze the tension in these texts between official history and an insurgent alternative history that includes both unacknowledged contemporaneous participants *and* makes demands on intergenerational readers to bear witness to the traumatic history they represent. In other words, these texts allow the far-reaching effects of trauma to work as a call both to witness and to radical reconsideration of boundaries between past and present, actor and audience, combatant and noncombatant, history maker and history survivor. Who is involved in war? To use Stein's parlance: "anybody." She captures the instability

of the boundary between near and far, involvement and disengagement in these lines from *Wars I Have Seen*:

> However near a war is it is always not very near. Even when it is here. It is very funny but it is true. Perhaps if one were a boy it would be different but I do not think so. I think even when men are in a war actually in a war it is not very near, it is here but not very near. (9)

And from *Mrs. Reynolds*:

> Mrs. Reynolds was certain that she would always be at home and bye and bye she was. Mrs. Reynolds said she was not interested in far away and yet far away may come very near. And if it does said Mrs. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds did not answer. (135)

War is uncontainable, defies cognitive and narrative assimilation, and is at "any" front door.

(3) Finally, I argue that Stein's Mrs. Reynolds and Stein herself, as she emerges in her memoir, serve as model witnesses and historians. In other words, these texts not only call on readers to bear witness, but use these "characters" who are linguistically agile and passionate, receptive readers and listeners to model that role for a larger readership. Stein's texts are very much about reading and listening, writing and telling. I contend that Stein is optimistic about the potential of narrative itself as a site of resistance and community, and is preoccupied with idiosyncratic history-telling and tellers, from women prophets to cooks.

"Everybody casually meeting anybody talks to anybody and everybody tells everybody the history of their lives, they are always telling me and I am always telling them and so is everybody," Stein writes (*Wars* 121). Stein walks miles daily on domestic errands; because Germans troops have requisitioned other modes of transport, roads becomes oddly public sites of housekeeping as women walkers forage, trade and talk. In her wanderings, she meets runaways and spies and the newly homeless, often carting, carrying or dragging the stuff of households lost to bombardment or occupation: she incorporates their stories without quotation marks into her memoir. This transient population is recorded, fittingly, in mobile prose—wordplay, multiple meanings and secret-filled silences mark Stein's text, which is itself, as I've indicated, home to many voices. While her form might be derided or celebrated—and Stein's writing has been both—as an experiment in linguistic play, during wartime, narrative fluidity becomes a survival strategy and a way to change history, narratively and, perhaps for her intergenerational readers, literally.[3]

SENSATION NOVELS AND THE CONTAINMENT OF EVENT

At the beginning of this chapter, I described news and history as an extraliterary genre of eventfulness; the event-packed nineteenth century sensation novel might serve as its surprising literary correlative. These texts are thought to "conjure up a corporeal

[3] In an unfavorable 20 May 1945 *New York Times* review of *Wars I Have Seen*, Libby Benedict seems so exasperated by Stein's idiosyncratic text that she entirely misses the many refugee narratives running through these on-the-road scenes. She says that Stein's blindness to the "ragged [war] refugee" population in France from 1933 is an example of Stein's detachment from the big stories of human history: "Where are Miss Stein's eyes, those eyes that can so unerringly discern the value of a Picasso?" Benedict demands. She claims that Stein abdicates responsibility for communicating the collective struggle of a civilization at war

rather than a cerebral response in the reader," to "address [themselves] to the sympathetic nervous system," and, simply, to "preach to the nerves."[4] Dismissed as low art and derided as cheap titillation by Victorian critics, sensation novels reflect a fear that changes in the public sphere would also impact the private: "When critics self-consciously referred to the 1860s as the 'age of sensation,' they meant […] that the word encapsulated the experience of modernity itself—the sense of continuous and rapid change, of shocks, thrills, intensity, excitement," Jenny Taylor writes in her book *In the Secret Theatre of Home*, on Wilkie Collins and nineteenth century psychology (3). Sensation novels "transpose the disruptive and disturbing elements of Gothic fiction into the homely setting of the family and the everyday, recognizable world, thus generating suspense and exploiting undercurrents of anxiety that lie behind the doors of the solid, recognizable, middle-class home" (1).

Bigamy, incest, murder, corrupt women-of-the-house are the stuff of the sensation novel—the uncertainty of a modern world is played out as domestic drama and threatens the home by destabilizing its institutions and figureheads. Some critics read this destabilization as inherently subversive. For example, here is how Ann Cvetkovich summarizes Elaine Showalter's "Subverting the Feminine Novel: Sensationalism and The Feminine Protest": the sensation novel "expresses women's discontent with marriage and with their social position, and furthermore that its conventions are specifically suited to expressing a female voice, since that genre's melodramatic incidents provide a language

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with tyranny. She finds in Stein's text "urbanity, culture, cleverness"—and a "cynical escap[e]" into individualism.

[4] Quotations from Nicholas Daly's "Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and the Modernization of the Senses (1999); D.A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (1988); and H.L. Mansel's "Sensation Novels" (1863).

for female fantasy that cannot be depicted in realistic terms" (*Mixed Feelings* 39). Women heroines were capable of harnessing both sexual and violent energies—but as mysteries are revealed, crimes solved, and transgressors punished, the sensation novel not only "expresses rebellious impulses" but "manages them," Cvetkovich argues. Or, to put it another way, these works "posit trauma (against its reality) as a discrete past event, locatable, representable and curable" (Kaplan 204). The sensation novel—plot moving from incident to incident—works to "fetishize," or delimit and contain, the forces it represents.

As a genre of event and event containment, nineteenth-century sensation novels contrast with women modernists' sensation texts, which do not "cure" and close but, rather, leave trauma resounding beyond war's acknowledged participants and dates. But sensation novels in which "everything" happens share ground with modernist texts in which "nothing" does. Both nineteenth and twentieth century sensation texts implicate the home in its times, its times in the home: in other words, they figure the home as a site of modernity, not an anachronistic bastion of the private. Moreover, both attempt what Nicholas Daly calls a "somatized" history writ on the bodies of characters and readers. "The body-made-nervous acts as a recording surface for the protagonist's experience," he writes of nineteenth-century sensation novels (462). Daly sees those texts as marked by modernity—specifically the late nineteenth-century's new ailment, railway neurosis—in characters' nervous tics and in the predominance of accidental encounters as a plot device. The events of the sensation novel physically "mark" *readers* by using shock to invest them bodily in the novel's content; women modernists' write not only in the exclamatory language of shock, but also in the plodding rhythm of waiting, physically

marking readers with the un-events of the novel. Thus, modernist sensation texts are, in a sense, negative images of their predecessors: what had been unilluminated—the shadows around events—women modernists make visible, and more than visible, palpable, and more than palpable, sensational.

Sensationalism, despite its bad press as the cheap thrills for the masses, can do important work, Cvetkovich argues. The sensation novel, she writes, "and sensationalism more generally, makes events emotionally vivid that would otherwise remain abstract. Sensationalism works by virtue of the link that is constructed between the concreteness of the 'sensation-al' event and the tangibility of the 'sensational' feelings it produces" (23). Cvetkovich asks if "sensationalism can be endorsed as a useful tactic for goading people into awareness of social problems" and "what political possibilities are overlooked when sensationalism is condemned?" I would answer that, in the case of women modernists' wartime work, sensationalism is, indeed, a tool for creating an inclusive and intergenerationally palpable homefront historiography; to ignore the visceral impact of these texts is to reify the distinction between modernism and mass culture, to miss women modernists' role in a feminist project of subverting this distinction, and to underestimate the role of women modernists as spokespeople for their time. My project joins a growing body of criticism that crosses the "great divide" Andreas Huyssen posits in his influential *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, in which he defines modernism in opposition to mass culture. The modernist artwork "avoid[s] any contamination with mass culture and with the signifying system of everyday life"; the modernist aesthetic "distance[s] itself and its products from the trivialities and banalities of everyday life," he writes (54, 47). Huyssen cites Nietzsche's

The Case of Wagner, and the accessibility of the theater, to suggest what modernism is not: "No one brings along the finest senses of his art to the theater, least of all the artist who works for the theater—solitude is lacking: whatever is perfect suffers no witness. In the theater one becomes people, herd, female, pharisee, voting cattle, patron, idiot—*Wagnerian*," Nietzsche claims (51). But inviolable and apart, the modernist artwork, in this "suffer-no-witness" figuring, is a dead and useless artifact. In tracking modernists' textual demands to bear witness and their concomitant use of sensation and domesticity, I reconnect literary modernism with everyday life, life writing, and a re-enlivened canon that serves as participatory community record.

MODERNISM AND THE DISSOLVING OF THE EVENT

Gertrude Stein suggests that a shift from event-based to eventless narrative might result from the accumulation of human catastrophes in the twentieth century. She writes, "Sometimes it is that history has a perfect outbreak of repetitions it always does of course repeat itself but sometimes it is that the repetitions are quite far apart but just now that is November 1943 it is just full of them full of repetitions nothing but repetitions" (*Wars* 96). Crises become—at least experientially—indistinguishable from one another and blend with everyday life. Indeed, it becomes impossible to imagine that the century ever offered a peaceful interstice between world wars (114). "And so what is the difference between life and war. There is none," Stein announces (15). The status of the historic event as a unique and circumscribed happening, then, is undermined. Moreover, science and civilization have failed to fulfill their promise, leaving meliorist narratives to die with the nineteenth century, Stein repeatedly claims: "it is rather ridiculous so much science so much civilization that is so much reading and writing and listening to the radio, and they

persecute anybody, and put books on the index, that and ban them publicly just like that" (63). When anybody can be persecuted, any book banned, "progress" is impossible: thus, Stein's narrative style problematizes progression, favoring repetition and an everyday marked more by the ordinariness of crisis than the extraordinariness.

Historian Hayden White offers an important insight into this "dissolution" of the event as a means of representing modern trauma:

> …the kind of anti-narrative non-stories produced by literary modernism offer the only prospect for adequate representation of the kind of "unnatural" events—including the Holocaust—that mark our era and distinguish it absolutely from all other "history" that has come before it. […] What I am suggesting is that the stylistic innovations of modernism, born as they were of an effort to come to terms with the anticipated loss of the peculiar "sense of history" which modernism is ritually criticized for not possessing, may provide better instruments for representing "modernist" events … than the storytelling techniques traditionally utilized by historians for the representation of those events of the past that are supposed to be crucial to the development of their community's identity. (32)

White claims, I believe convincingly, that, rather than define and master traumatic events, modernists—unlike "realist" narrators—convey the incomprehensibility and perpetuity of the experience of trauma. White turns to two selections from modernist writers. In the first, from Woolf's *Between the Acts*, Isa, a young wife, reads a newspaper account of a rape, an account that enters her consciousness and blends with her perception of her own domestic surroundings. In the second, Stein, in a lecture, posits a representable outside

and a meaning-filled inside to all "things which have really existed": "events," she says, are all outside and no inside (32-3). White sees these passages as dissolving the event as an intact whole and allowing a kind of free-floating meaning to appear and be dealt with in its various "spectral" or fragmentary incarnations (29). White identifies this dissolution as a necessary development in modern historiography, in which whispers of traumatic meaning recur in various "fictional" and "factual" forms.

White has served as a lightning rod for criticism and instigator of debate among historians, many of whom fear that his insistence on the situatedness of historical "events" in language and in representational techniques indistinct from those of fiction could lead to an immoral relativism. For White, "there is no 'objective' outside criterion to establish that one particular interpretation is more true than another," writes Saul Friedlander in his introduction to *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution,"* an essay collection that responds, in part, to White's ideas (6). Contributors to the collection advocate, for example, deeply meticulous description of historical events or the sharp power of a single witness' testimony as objectively true: the collection is passionately argued and thoughtful. As a literary critic, I don't wish to second White's claims about modernist techniques offering the "only prospect for adequate representation" for modern trauma. The first words of Stein's autobiography *Wars I Have Seen*—"I do not know"—imply the challenges of representing even one's own life, let alone the traumatic history of our time. But I do believe that women modernists' wartime writings are unique and important parts of the historical record largely because they are participatory—participatory both in the sites and the people they

represent (homes, women) and in the moves they make toward a larger readership, which they challenge, not edify, through their difficult presentation.[5]

Remarkably, White fails to note that his exemplar modernist historians are both women, and that their relationship to events may be informed by gender. Moreover, he leaves unremarked the status of the reader of these histories. The advent of literary modernism, White writes, "marks the end of storytelling—understood in Walter Benjamin's sense of 'the tale' by which the lore, wisdom, and commonplaces of a culture are transmitted from one generation to another in the form of a followable story" (24). White, pronouncing storytelling's death, identifies intergenerational community-building as its key (absent) vital sign. I argue, however, that this community building function is alive and well in modernist writing: modernism's "anti-narrative non stories" (White's phrase) correspond to the psychoanalytic understanding of survivor testimony—which necessarily is broken, repetitive and *to-be-witnessed* (32).

These texts, then, become sites of intergenerational community between witness-readers and survivor-writers. In fact, Walter Benjamin's "The Storyteller"—the essay White cites to different end—tells us that "assimilation" of a tale by a listener as if it were the *listener's own lived experience* is the storyteller's purpose (91). Moreover, Benjamin suggests a "sensory aspect" of storytelling that engages the reader in the rhythms and gestures and labors of a community—engages the reader in the shared

[5] For Stein, this challenge plays out even on the sentence level: "A comma by helping you along holding your coat for you and putting on your shoes keeps you from living your life as actively as you should lead it [….] The longer the more complicated the sentence the greater the number of the same kinds of words I had following one another, the more the very many more I had of them I felt the passionate need of their taking care of themselves by themselves and not helping them, and thereby enfeebling them by putting in a comma [….] A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make yourself know yourself knowing it" (*Four Lectures* vi).

bodily experience of the "household of humanity" (108,101). Benjamin imagines shared visceral understanding between storyteller and listener—an understanding strikingly like the one that enables what psychiatrist Dori Laub calls the "testimonial process" (70). "There needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other*—in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude," explains Laub. In representing the sensational experience inside wartime homes, Woolf and Stein are very much aware of the witness-reader: if something "happens" in these eventless texts, if they gesture toward action, it is in that trans-textual relationship.

KEPT WAITING: EVENTLESSNESS AND THE FEEL OF THE HOMEFRONT

Gertrude Stein's novel *Mrs. Reynolds* recounts the daily life of Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds during wartime. Stein's vocabulary is simple: Mrs. Reynolds is a "pretty woman"; Mr. Reynolds is a "nice man"; the actions she depicts are absolutely ordinary (9). But Angel Harper (Hitler) and Joseph Lane (Stalin) are main characters *in absentia*, looming over the Reynolds' housekeeping. A typical passage:

> It was a long dark way to wait and in the meantime every day there was a dark cloud, a very dark one. An Angel Harper cloud said Mrs. Reynolds and she said as long as Angel Harper lived there would be an afternoon and sometimes even in the morning and quite likely at noon a very big dark cloud in the sky even if it did not make any lightening nor any hail. (90)

Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds cook, talk to neighbors and relations, and occupy themselves with the everyday, but *every day* is "clouded" by war. Stein moves between relating the details of their lives and relating their ideas and anxieties about war, which

they make personal in the figure of Angel Harper: they contextualize him within simple, familiar frames of reference, noting townspeople who share his initials or his age. Moreover, the narrative flashes back to Harper as a child, cycling between the adult menace, who has largely lost his memory of childhood, and the very ordinary boy and young man "who had done his peepee under a walnut tree" (113). In other words, the Reynolds and the narrative itself deny Harper an extraordinary representation. As his war inflects their daily lives, so do their daily lives inflect his war and undermine his status as an event-maker: Hitler is woven, in bits and snatches, into their life fabric.

Stein's text reports the Reynolds' daily life for 330 sing-song, event-less pages. And it is safe to say that nothing in *Mrs. Reynolds* will find its way to a timeline: the only thing that's "historical" about *Mrs. Reynolds*, Stein writes in the epilogue, "is the state of mind." After all, "it was just as if nothing at all was happening nothing at all"; "life was just one spring offensive after another" (234, 237). If what's historical about these texts is their "state of mind," then, in Mrs. Reynolds' words, "how do you do is just as much news as anything" (88). How-do-you-do's "newsworthiness" suggests both the validity of non-combatant testimony and that even a rote pleasantry acquires new feeling during wartime: though rituals of ordinariness continue on the homefront, war is everywhere, inflects everything. Perhaps the most compelling thing about these texts is that, in telling how people "did," they *reproduce* for readers the strain of repetition and waiting: they are a sensational initiation into the state of mind they represent.

For example, Stein removes typical time and date markers—the key coordinates of traditional history—in her novel. She writes, "Mrs. Reynolds had always said she was not interested in years. Not much in months. Weeks were not so bad and days would do.

Indeed days did do, they did very well indeed, said Mr. Reynolds and then he added and if it is night tonight let us go to bed, and they did. They went to bed" (142). The Reynolds are interested only in measures of time as experienced in the instinctual rhythm of their lives, interested only in their waking days and sleeping nights. More abstract measures of time—imposed from without rather than sensed in the body—are suspect. Stein writes:

> Mrs. Reynolds is not all about roses, it is more about Tuesdays than about roses. Mrs. Reynolds had many kinds of Tuesdays. There were the Tuesdays that came after Mondays, there were the Tuesdays that came before Wednesdays, there were the Tuesdays that came after the first Sundays there were a great variety of Tuesdays and it all began with the Tuesday when Mrs. Reynolds was born. That was a Tuesday.
>
> That was the day they made peace from war and that was the day they made war from peace. And it was a Tuesday. (10)

Stein's repetition, her performance of a deeply personal and looped sense of time's passage and refusal to narrate events—here, the "news" of wartime—provide an alternative and demanding account of war and occupation, one that reimagines the possibilities of time and the effects of event, and makes clear that social trauma impacts even indirect participants. "They" who make peace and "they" who make war are now a part of Mrs. Reynolds and her Tuesdays. As are "we," intergenerational readers of the text, who find, not the removed, in-the-past events of 1940 to 1945, but the immediacy of any given Tuesday, any given sunrise.

Indeed, Stein narrates her own small battle for time—hers vs. the Germans'—in *Wars I Have Seen*:

> In all these years I had never had a wrist watch, watches to wear never particularly interested me, I like clocks and am always buying them any kind of clock any kind of fountain pen, but watches seemed kind of dull, I like to know what time it is in the house but out of doors it is less interesting to know about the passage of time and in a city particularly in France you see so many clocks you hear so many clocks to be sure they do not tell the same time and when you are going to an appointment sometimes you go quickly because you are late by one clock and then you go slowly because you are early by another clock, but now that the curfew is at six o'clock, and I am sure to be out on the road somewhere and they shoot you if you are out I thought it best to have a wrist watch and so out I went in our little village and asked the local jeweler lady whether she had a wrist watch, yes and a Swiss one and brand new and made for sport for women and men and I thought it perfectly lovely and I came home proudly and now I wear it with immense pride and joy and it seems to keep time and I get home in time and so not get shot by the Germans. (263-4)

Stein embeds the "event" of the Germans' violent imposition of curfew—and, with it, of an exacting awareness of official time—in a narrative "about" her idiosyncratic relationship to clocks, which is more an eccentric collector's than a keeper-of-time's. For her "little village" too, time is the sensual experience of "seeing" clocks, "hearing" bells, and good-humoredly adjusting the rhythm of one's steps: what binds the community is not time's precise calibrations, but the quirky ways they ignore them. Even the threat of

getting shot in Stein's story comes off as less significant than the treat of fashionable accessorizing.

Stein writes in *Wars I Have Seen* that "it is a queer life one leads in a modern war, every day so much can happen and every day is just the same and is mostly about food, food and in spite of all that is happening every day is food" (12). The monotony of wartime days in spite of their possibilities—either for disaster or, if people had outlets for meaningful action, other kinds of change—leaves mealtime as the pressing homefront activity. But meals, and all rituals of ordinariness, during times of risk, separation and shortage, have a different meaning. The Reynolds' anxieties about war are often expressed as anxieties about food: Mr. Reynolds, a war veteran, "could only eat what would agree with him"; when he is called up for service again, he is sent home "because he had to be so careful about what he ate" (169). A delicate stomach seems an odd war injury and certainly not one that would exempt a man from additional service: one wonders if Mr. Reynolds suffers from more serious post-traumatic stress of which a nervous stomach is merely symptomatic. Mrs. Reynolds claims, unconvincingly, that "what she is most anxious about is sugar" (248). And, "when Angel Harper is forty-seven, even cake gets to have another meaning"(141). Sugar is not just sugar, cake is not just cake, but rare—even impossible—commodities in wartime: the ordinary is dramatically recontextualized by war. Mrs. Reynolds imagines what she will eat when Angel Harper is defeated (268). Planning varied meals is an act of resistance and optimism: "Mrs. Reynolds said that when there was great difficulty in finding food and when found it was not very abundant that was the time to buy very expensive and detailed and complete cook books" (152).

So the Reynolds eat. And, every night, they go to bed:

> Mr. Reynolds was too ready to go to bed when it was time to go to bed to be depressed and now it was time to go to bed and he went to bed and Mrs. Reynolds went to bed too (301)
>
> they went to bed and it was raining the next day (302)
>
> they had their dinner and they were tired and they went to bed (303)
>
> they did go to bed and they both did sleep very well (307)
>
> Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds went to bed and they went to sleep early and woke up in the morning (311)
>
> they went to bed when everything was said they went to bed (315)
>
> Mr. Reynolds said better come to bed and Mrs. Reynolds said she was ready for bed and they went to bed (317)
>
> they warmed the house had dinner and went to bed nicely (318)
>
> the clocks had stopped and it might be time to go to bed, so they heated the hot water bottles […] and they went to bed and Mrs. Reynolds had a little trouble in falling asleep but she did fall asleep and she slept well (320)
>
> they went home and went to bed and Mrs. Reynolds dreamed of a broken tooth and she did not know whether that meant anything (320)
>
> and they did go to bed a little later (322)
>
> they were very quiet and it began to rain very pleasantly and they were neither too warm or too cold and then they went to bed (323)
>
> they went to bed and slept heavy as lead (325)

I note only 25-pages of goings-to-bed, though they are narrated throughout the novel: the reader grows acclimated to and begins to sense bedtime as the one of the very few available points of reference. Readers, explains Phoebe Stein Davis, can't "rely on dates or locations to ground themselves in this novel" (579). They experience "disorientation

[…] in keeping with" the "tedium, terror and uncertainty" experienced by noncombatants—these are the sensations of the text.

The reader also devotes a considerable amount of time to waiting with the Reynolds:

> Mrs. Reynolds was not late, she never was because she was always waiting. She knew it was not necessary not only to know but she knew that it was true that to wait now might make her wait then and to wait then might make her come again to wait now. Wait for what she said to herself but really she knew she knew that it was not only watchful to wait but careless to wait and pleasant to wait and ready to wait. She was ready to wait and indeed if Angel Harper was forty-eight there was nothing to do but wait. (150)

> And said Mrs. Reynolds wait and see, Angel Harper he is fifty, he will be fifty one, wait and see said Mrs. Reynolds and she meant wait and see, when she said wait and see, she really meant it. (198)

These passages are not only "about" waiting, they repeat "wait" until its utterances run together like a command—they enforce and perform waiting. We all wait wait wait. For what? Like the Reynolds, either for catastrophe or bedtime. Stein simulates noncombatant experience by repeating words and phrases in both *Mrs. Reynolds* and *Wars I Have Seen*, "stall[ing] readers in their efforts to move ahead," Davis writes, "giv[ing] the sense of being 'stuck' like a needle that skips repeatedly in a groove on a record" (593). Wartime, Stein writes, "is just full of them full of repetitions nothing but repetitions" (*W* 96). Stein uses this repetition, along with cliché—good riddance to bad

rubbish; if wishes were horses beggars would ride; early to bed and early to rise makes a man and a woman healthy wealthy and wise; irons in the fire; tomorrow is another day—and the regular invocation of "any" and "everybody" to produce a kind of freighted conventional wisdom (98, 153,167,232, 270). She writes:

> When Monday follows Sunday said Mrs. Reynolds then something else happens, and what she meant what she said she meant was this, even if it was enough anybody could feel that everybody had had more than enough of it. Mr. Reynolds said yes, a man had just told me that his wife had had enough and so thought it was all about ready to stop, and in a way yes in a way they were all reasonable about it, enough is enough. Mrs. Reynolds said that when Tuesday followed Monday it was almost enough and everybody knew that enough was enough. Well said Mrs. Reynolds there can be no mistake Wednesday follows Tuesday and Thursday follows Wednesday and so on said Mrs. Reynolds and she said she was still very much occupied with their all having had well completely having had enough, and said Mrs. Reynolds when Friday follows Thursday and Saturday follows Friday and then they were again at Sunday because Sunday follows Saturday and Monday follows Sunday and there they all were and enough is enough. Mr. Reynolds said it was true, everybody was through, and perhaps Mrs. Reynolds was right and enough was almost more than enough, but said Mr. Reynolds there is nothing to do about it […] and they began another day in their ordinary way and they both knew that although enough was enough they were not through. (285)

This passage tracks the Reynolds and friends concluding that "enough is enough," which, due to its status as cliché, is hardly red-letter news. This interminably rendered non-incident in which people come to consensus on that which they, presumably, already agree illustrates that war both goes against the wisdom of the community and that people are incapable of *doing* anything to correct course. "They both knew that although enough was enough they were not through," Stein poignantly concludes in rhyme—even sounds repeat, like a child's story, but an unhomely one.

"The funny part of it all is that relatively few people seem to go crazy, relatively few even a little crazy or even a little weird, relatively few because they have nothing to do that is to say they have nothing to do or they do not do anything that has anything to do with the war only with food and cold and little things like that," Stein writes in *Wars I Have Seen* (100). She acknowledges the remarkable strain both of homefront life and of being acted upon rather than acting.

A CALL TO ACTION: CHALLENGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN AUDIENCE AND ACTOR

What Phoebe Stein Davis calls a scratched record technique—this stalling of a text, and thus, its reader, on a word or sound—appears in Virginia Woolf's compellingly titled *Between the Acts* as the repetitive, irritating "chuffs" and "ticks" of a gramophone. Woolf proposes to narrate time without event—the time between the acts of, ostensibly, a country pageant her characters have gathered to see in June of 1939. Nineteen times in the novel, Woolf thrice repeats "tick" or "chuff"—sputterings of a gramophone meant to play musical accompaniment to the pageant's English history vignettes:

> Then the play began. Was it, or was it not, the play? Chuff, chuff, chuff sounded from the bushes. It was the noise a machine makes when something has gone wrong. Some sat down hastily; others stopped talking guiltily. All looked at the bushes. For the stage was empty. (76)

These sounds suggest "inattentive" operation: "the machine is kept running, with the needle set down, moving over the spiral groove at the center of the record," writes Bonnie Kime Scott (105). The ticks and chuffs "mark time," one character observes: they are the voice of interstices (82). Indeed, these sounds serve several functions. They are an uncomfortable reminder of the present—of the relentless countdown ("tick, tick, tick") to war, which England would declare less than three months later, on September 3rd, and of the audience's inability to *do anything* about it.[6] Giles Oliver, the young man of the "homely" country house that hosts the pageant, crushes a snake with his white-canvass-tennis-shoed foot and thinks: "But it was action. Action relieved him" (6, 99). Later, contemplating another extramarital affair, he thinks of his would-be lover: "And she was a thorough good sort, making him feel less of an audience, more of an actor" (108). The narrative supplies this description of the grounds of the main characters' home: "The repetition was senseless, hideous, stupefying" (67). The characters suffer from—and their home is thick with—the inability to take active roles in "history," the very subject of the play they watch acted out before them. Their lot is to wait to be acted for and upon; they endure what they're subjected to. Woolf identifies herself as part of this group, writing in her diary on September 3rd: "This is I suppose certainly the last hour of peace […] I

6 *The Guardian* reported 4 September 1939: "We are now at war and there is no further room for argument. Quiet living has ended; we are plunged into a new world of desperate hopes and fears."

argued [with Leonard Woolf] that its (sic) 'they' as usual who do this. We as usual remain outside" (233).

But ticks and chuffs also blur the pageant's beginnings and endings, acts and intervals, and, thus, actors and audience. Woolf's characters are relegated to "audience," yet they are still the "stars" of her narrative: "Our part," says one character, "is to be the audience. And a very important part too" (58). Or, as Woolf puts it, "silence ma[kes] its contribution to talk" (49). *Between the Acts* turns readers' attention to audience members—audience members who don't make history, but live through it. At the pageant's end, actors hold up mirrors to the audience: "hand glasses, harness room glass, and heavily embossed mirrors […]. And the audience saw themselves" (185). And at the novel's end, Giles and his wife Isa "become enormous" as they prepare to talk to each other about their marriage, their family, their home: "The curtain rose. They spoke" (219). Woolf's text emphasizes the audience's "part," detects the capacity for speech inside silence, and makes enormous the otherwise invisible "betweens" of daily life.

Between the Acts—written in large part and published during the Second World War—returns readers to the weeks *before* war: Woolf's war text, in a sense, isn't one. War is latent in the text—suggested by snippets of conversation about politics, fragments of newspaper articles, airplanes zipping overhead "in perfect formation" (193). *Between the Acts* imaginatively returns wartime readers to a day of peace—June 30th—within war. Peace within war, speech within silence, action within passivity: this is a text of latent potentialities: "You've stirred in me my unacted part," the pageant hostess says to its director (153). By stalling readers "between," Woolf invites us to share the frustration of inactivity, to expand our understanding of who does and *can* participate in history and to

speculate on alternatives to silence, passivity and war. Woolf diary-writes of the idea animating her text, which also serves as the epigraph to this project: "'I' rejected: 'We' substituted: to whom at the end there shall be an invocation? 'We'… composed of many different things… we all life, all art, all waifs & strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole" (135).

NARRATION AS AN ACT OF HOPE

Stein presents a specific alternative to silence, passivity, and war: a many-voiced, daring homefront historiography. Mrs. Reynolds reads and finds hope in what she says are the seventh-century prophesies of a woman saint, Odile, who predicts the rise of a violent, destructive German power, and its eventual defeat, in part because God answers the prayers of women (160-62). Odile's opening words are: "Listen to me my brother because I have seen frightfulness and terror in the forests and in the mountains where the Germans shall be called the Nation." Mrs. Reynolds reads St. Odile's prophesies to her husband and repeats them to neighbors, passers-by, and refugees, particularly other women. In fact, Mrs. Reynolds uses Odile's invocation: "Listen to me said Mrs. Reynolds to Mr. Reynolds the time has come to listen so you must listen to me" (221). Mrs. Reynolds reads in bed, offers an interpretation of a poem, takes pleasure in wordplay and multiple meanings, and notices words frequently transposed in print. (This is quite unlike Angel Harper who, we learn is a literalist with a phobia of the letter "f.") Stein uses Mrs. Reynolds, in her active relationship to language and narration, as a model for readers, particularly women readers, whose voices join together—"listen to me"—and whose prayers for peace can become calls to action.

Similarly, in *Wars I Have Seen*, Stein relates both the danger of narrating oneself according to official demands and the power being an author affords. Shortly after American troops land in France, American authorities attempt to aid U.S. citizens living abroad by repatriating them. "Naturally American authorities not really realizing what it is to live in an occupied country ask you to put down your religion your property and its value, as if anybody would as long as the Germans are in the country and in a position to take letters and read them if they want to," Stein writes (200). Forms, the "genre" of officially authorized narrative and government inscribed identity markers, constrict Stein's freedom to narrate herself: indeed, they are life-threatening. Yet, when Stein takes a railway trip to Chambery and finds herself under German surveillance, it is seeing and autographing her book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, in a trainstation newsstand, that provides an instant of liberation. She tells a couple of her fellow travelers, French women, that she is a writer and that "it just happens one of my books is for sale outside on the newsstand" (199-200). One woman rushes to buy it even as the Germans look on, and even asks Stein to sign it: "I wrote in it and we were all very pleased and Alice Toklas thought it was all very funny, with all the Germans coming in and out and all about." Stein delights in being more than a policed being: she is a writer, a storyteller, a secret-sharer.

Unable to stop the advance of armies, Woolf and Stein stall the march of plot, making room, in the absence of event, for other "presences"—for people living on the homefront whose sensations readers are challenged to share, whose stories and wisdom are given voice, and in whose hands, as actors and narrators, a different ending—an alternative to war—rests. These people are not just Stein's Reynolds, not just Woolf's

Olivers, but a wider “we” of readers, piqued and exhausted and reflected as we sit, full of anxious anticipation, in the audience.

Chapter 3

Murder in the Kitchen, Blood on the Dining Room Floor

"The Nutshell Studies are not presented as crimes to be solved," Frances Glessner Lee wrote of 18 dollhouse crime scenes she painstakingly created in the 1940s as training tools for police investigators (47). "The inspector may best examine them by imagining himself a trifle less than six inches tall," she writes, challenging policemen to enter these tiny worlds rather than tower above and outside them. Imaginatively "miniaturized," they would examine the intricate scenes, supposedly sharpening their observation skills as they took in these precious-made-macabre tableaux. A doll baby, shot in its tiny crib; a housewife, lying dead by her stove, fresh-baked bread resting on it; a young woman stiffly stuffed into her still-running bathroom sink. And all around them, the things of their households: toys and canned goods, candlesticks and lipsticks, magazines and cigarette butts.

Glessner Lee's wealthy parents refused to allow her to attend college; instead they installed her, even as a married woman, in homes they owned. She was an avid crime fiction reader and close friend of Suffolk County's chief medical examiner George Magrath. In her 50s, divorced and, after her parents' deaths, financially independent, she dedicated herself to improving crime detection in the United States, endowing a department of legal medicine at Harvard University. In 1945, Harvard began a series of twice-annual, week-long seminars on legal medicine, during which police from across the country would travel to Cambridge to learn how to investigate murders—everything from

"arrival on the scene," to packaging evidence, to interviewing witnesses. And they would analyze Glessner Lee's Nutshell Studies as she watched and prompted. She was named an honorary police chief and was the first woman member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

In the introduction to her new collection of photographs of the Nutshell Studies, Corinne May Botz points out several autobiographical details in the dollhouses: fabric from a suit of Glessner Lee's sewed into pants for one of the corpses, decorating details from her own pink bathroom transferred into "Pink Bathroom," the crime scene, the structure of "Log Cabin" identical to that of her childhood playhouse. Most suggestively, a tiny painting of one of Glessner Lee's homes, and reminiscent of a photograph that hung above the hearth in her parents' home, rests squarely above "Living Room." "The happy and secure house in the painting counterbalances the destroyed home. […] Glessner Lee made her house the symbol of the unattained ideal to which the family in 'Living Room' aspired," the photographer conjectures (36).

But Botz's untroubled reading is too mild: an ideal façade framed above a violent domestic interior seems less about failed hopes than about behind-closed-door realities. Glessner Lee and her corpses, mostly women, knew that violence doesn't stop at welcome mats, isn't warded off in the collecting of knickknacks or the baking of bread. Indeed, violence is perpetrated against women in the homes they keep and in confining them to housekeeping in the first place: worse still, male detectives untrained at how to look at domestic scenes often were unable to read acts of violence against women,

mistaking their murders for suicide or household accidents.[1] So Glessner Lee would teach them to do that reading.[2] For example, the morning Kate Judson is found dead, the kitchen table of "Three Room Dwelling" is already set for breakfast. Judson "was an organized housewife, and nothing deterred her from her customary habits on the night of October 31, 1937. She planned to wake up the next morning," Botz confidently concludes, reading murder in the place settings (62).

Glessner Lee's precise hands—she had wanted to be a doctor—had been left to busy themselves with arts and crafts; the dead dolls tell a story, that is also hers, of the systemic violence of enforced domesticity first introduced through playing/practicing house with cute miniatures. She wrote to her son after knitting with straight pins stockings for one of her corpses: "Today I finished the final black cotton stocking which has been such a bore and such a job" (90). And such a job—Glessner Lee uses this genre of ephemera, miniaturizing, as a subversive teaching tool, not to restore order through the solving of crime, nor to answer, simply, whodunit, but to teach others to look at the

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[1] "Innumerable murders went undetected because of mishandled evidence and a failure to perform autopsies, since, lacking medical knowledge, the coroners often missed subtle indications of violent death," Botz writes (26). For example, Jurgen Thorwald, in his *The Century of the Detective* (1965) recounts the story of three "bride murders"—women drowned in series by the same husband in their bathtubs—murders, each in turn, undetected by local authorities (187-200).

[2] Remarkably, Elizabeth Bowen also "taught" the criminal justice system to read the private. In a scratched-through section of an 11 September 1959 BBC transcript (perhaps the penned scratches indicate that much of this discussion was cut from the actual broadcast), Bowen describes her work on the 12-member Royal Commission on Capital Punishment: "they wanted to have one more woman on the commission, and a writer because otherwise every other profession as far as I know was represented." The commission toured "larger prisons in England and Scotland" and visited Sing-Sing. "In America we saw what to me was the most horrifying thing [….W]e saw how gallows work, we saw the traps, we saw the cells in which the condemned people are confined, and we saw the whole circumstance surrounding an execution." Bowen pushed the commission to recommend non-physical provocation and crimes of passion as actions that British courts might downgrade from a murder charge to manslaughter ("How I Write"). Her insights are in keeping with her Preface to *The Second Ghost Book*, in which she associates ghosts both with scenes of physical and, she stresses, *psychic* violence: "inflictions and endurances, exactions, injustices, infidelities—do not these wreak havoc, burn their histories, leave their mark?"

private. Glessner Lee collapses the distinction between the public, "manly" work of crime fighting and the private work of (doll)housekeeping. For the detective, there's no narcissistic payoff in his interaction with the Nutshells—they assume his ignorance, not his superior knowledge; ask him to be smaller, not larger, than life, to see, not to solve. Detectives stared at Glessner Lee's dollhouses for hours, as she taught them, room by room, place setting by place setting, household chore by chore, to detect. That Botz's collected photographs of the Nutshell Studies are hard-bound as a glossy, full-color "coffee table" book is fitting: Botz, like Glessner Lee, reappropriates domestic kitsch, exploiting its pervasiveness while making unhomely its preciousness. The commonplace object, a lovingly detailed doll, is bloody, bent; the familiar, inviting color shots of the coffee table book depict scenes of violent death. To put it another way, dollhouses and coffee table books are interactive popular genres born of the very insular, ordered, perfect domesticity that they, in Glessner Lee and Botz's work, reveal as a sham—a revelation made powerful because it comes through the participation of the viewer, the page-turner, the sofa-sitter, the person who plays with dolls. These works operate not, in fact, "in a nutshell"— not as closed histories—but in an expanded present perpetuated by many everyday interactions.

I open this chapter with the Nutshell Studies because they so tangibly introduce a pedagogy of domestic detection—a pedagogy they share with Gertrude Stein's detective story *Blood on the Dining Room Floor* (1948) and Alice Toklas' *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* (1954), texts that "teach" traumatic history through readers' interactions with familiar domestic sites and participatory genres. They are simultaneously records of violence at home and of world war. Like Glessner Lee's policemen, readers are prompted

to detect household mysteries and everyday victims, and challenged to see history written on the homefront and through women's lives. "Domestic violence" comes to signify triply: it means physical violence against women; it means the violence of a social order that limits women's mobility, agency, and access; and it means the lasting damage to all people of historical violence that extends far beyond war's acknowledged sites and participants to stay with us where we live. In other words, by representing war as (one kind of) domestic violence, Stein and Toklas depict what Margot Norris calls war's "uncontainability" and extend the network of people implicated in its active remembrance, mourning, and prevention.

I have argued throughout this project that women modernists' war writings invoke the familiarity of "home" and employ popular genres and techniques both to represent war's wide-ranging effects and to extend the network of people implicated in historical violence. This chapter, like those before it, considers authors' attempts to convey the experience of the homefront—war's penetration of all aspects of private life and the anxieties that attend this indirect, or noncombatant, participation. My discussion of Stein's detective story and Toklas' cookbook builds particularly on my work with sensation novels in the previous chapter: there I demonstrated the representational evolution from a domestic realm of relentlessly contained shocks in the nineteenth century, to one of unbound trauma in works by women modernists in the twentieth, an evolution from discrete events to anxiety-producing eventlessness. The sine qua non event of the sensation novel is the solving of a mystery and the expulsion of guilty parties from the home and its familial intimacies—an event provocatively absent in Stein's and Toklas' texts.

I theorize this absence in the upcoming pages, arguing that the roles of detective and criminal are strategically "dispersed" in these texts—everybody's a bit of a detective, everybody's a bit of a crook—thus destabilizing boundaries between audience and participant, "innocent" and "guilty."[3] Moreover, rather than crime being aberrational to home life, it is ever-present. In other words, Stein and Toklas draw on and ultimately disappoint genre conventions that demand clear and carefully policed roles and boundaries that keep private life safe, secure and *private*.

The significance of their choice is increasingly clear as I expand the discussion to other instances of violence in domestic spaces and during everyday routines in Elizabeth Bowen's "The Demon Lover" and, at length, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Again, violence would seem to be the province of some place other than the home—in these texts, specifically, battlefields and barracks—but it ultimately finds its way inside. Texts in "Murder in the Kitchen" present violent acts—murder, rape, suicide—at a remove from the home or through genres that would seem to expel them decisively from home and reaffirm peaceful domestic order. These authors, I argue, establish distance between violent acts and the home: they reproduce the distance between frontlines and homefront. For example, they don't depict murder, just blood on the dining room floor, don't depict rape, just a character reading a news report about one. But this distance is meant to be crossed: the writers highlight the instability of boundaries between battlefield and home, public and private, combatant and noncombatant. War trauma is bloodstained into the carpets—and psyches—of these characters. It inflects their day-to-day lives and—as

[3] D.A. Miller introduces this notion of dispersing the "function of detection" in *The Novel and the Police* (42). I engage Miller directly in the next section, building on his idea of a community of detectives, while

Bowen's housewife Mrs. Drover discovers—is impossible to escape. My analysis of *Mrs. Dalloway*, a novel fixed within the modernist canon, alongside Stein's more obscure detective story, Toklas' recipes, and Bowen's short ghost story, realizes the guiding ideas of this project: by approaching this novel as a subtle, yet decidedly instructive model of hostessing—as another interactive popular genre that allows for wider participation in institutionally closed texts and histories—I seek new entry into both. The domestic art of hostessing—assembling guests in one's home as a composite whole—is a kind of personal, human archive-making practiced by Clarissa (and by many women), and a way to gain private purchase on public events. While other critics have recognized that many characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, particularly women, are lastingly traumatized by war, and that Woolf's text critiques a social system that inflicts, then denies that trauma, the transformative potential of Clarissa's party as a private occasion to bear witness and the ongoing relevance of hostessing as itself a point of connection with, and working model for, readers go largely discounted or unremarked (Illustration 3.1 a-b).[4]

'DETECTIVE FEVER BURNT UP ALL MY DIGNITY ON THE SPOT'

In his *The Novel and the Police*, D.A. Miller posits Wilkie Collins' quintessential sensation novel *The Moonstone* as a landmark text in representing the integration of discipline in the private sphere. When a priceless gem disappears from the aristocratic

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reading against his presumption that this dispersal is necessarily the subtle yet all-encompassing work of repressive discipline.

[4] For example, Alex Zwerdling reads the party as "a kind of wake" and a commentary on the "solidity, rigidity, and stasis" of the governing class (71); J. Hillis Miller calls the party a perpetuation of a "moribund society" (194). Nancy Topping Bazin and Jane Hamovit Lauter recognize, rightly I think, the various and ongoing "ways war disrupts individual lives and the ways people cope with that disruption" while leaving the party and the fact that these various characters are ultimately brought together unremarked (Hussey 18). Most tellingly, Karen DeMeester argues that *Mrs. Dalloway* and modernism more generally are suited to representing trauma but not recovery. I engage her argument at length in pages to follow.

Verinder home, Sergeant Cuff's steely-eyed "super-vision," as Miller would say, is called upon to solve the crime: "his eyes, of a steely light grey, had a very disconcerting trick, when they encountered your eyes, of looking as if they expected something more from you than you were aware of yourself" (106). But, in a departure from detective fiction norms, Cuff fails to suss out the crook and restore the stone, leaving the detecting to the rest of the characters, who ultimately discover the culprit and restore harmony to the Verinder household. "In effect, the work of detection is carried forward by the novel's entire cast of characters, shifted not just from professional to amateur, but from an outsider to a whole community. Thus the move to discard the *role of the detective* is at the same time a move to disperse the *function of detection*," Miller writes (42). A longtime servant to the Verinders, Gabriel Betteredge, frequently refers to his interest in unraveling the mystery as "detective fever"; the family lawyer Matthew Bruff refers to himself and the novel's hero Franklin Blake as "amateur detectives"; the novel itself, Miller points out, is a composite of "everyday forms of writing (letters, journals, diaries)" by different characters, each of whom contributes to the detecting by being exactly themselves (48). Indeed, the great-but-superseded Cuff concludes, "It's only in books that the officers of the detective force are superior to the weaknesses of making a mistake" (437).

Miller's Foucauldian reading sees this dispersal as the triumph of power, distributed so completely, so "naturally," that the characters do its work—they keep the private sphere private. "If one were to speak of an ideology born in the form of the detective story, here would be one of its major sites: in the perception of everyday life as fundamentally 'outside' the network of policing power," Miller claims (37). In other

words, the detective serves as a necessary intrusion into the domestic space only to be tolerated inasmuch as he ultimately makes himself unnecessary, separating out as criminal anyone who would challenge private institutions. (Sergeant Cuff, in fact, is keenly aware of his mandate to preserve the privacy of the family: "I had a family scandal to deal with, which it was my business to keep within family limits"; "Don't be alarmed! I have put the muzzle on worse family difficulties than this in my time" [175,141]). How much more efficient, then, if the detective's function is internalized by everyone—if everyone helps preserve the status quo, Miller argues.

Like *The Moonstone*, Gertrude Stein's *Blood on the Dining Room Floor* disperses the detective function, but to very different ends from what her fellow modernist T.S. Eliot called "the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels."[5] Rather than safeguard the private against the scrutiny of the public in order to retain its conventions, Stein refuses a traditional restoration of order and gestures toward a different, demanding way of seeing the home. The story is a collage of "real" crimes that touched Stein's life during the summer of 1933, including the violent deaths of two women in her social circle, the mysterious appearance of dust scattered over her desk and blood on her dining-room floor, and the discovery of her and a guest's cars tampered with and her phone lines cut: all crimes perpetrated against women in the home and all shrugged off by authorities, who pronounce the death of Stein's friend Madame Pernollet (fall from a window) a sleepwalking accident and the death of a companion of Stein's

[5] Eliot quote printed on back cover of Penguin Classics' 1998 edition of *The Moonstone*.

friend Madame Caesar (two gunshots to the head) a suicide.[6] The text offers so many details and so few answers that everything is colored in violent cast and the reader is taxed to remember clues that never add up despite Stein's taunting: "How confused you all are but I, I am not confused," she writes. "It really is not confusing. How many houses and families do you know about now. One two three four five. And how many crimes. One two three. And how many possible crimes. Six" (33). These confident stats suggest that Stein might fulfill the role of hero-detective—the very expectations placed on Sergeant Cuff—whose preternaturally organized mind sorts chaos. But Stein offers no crime-solving tour de force; rather, she makes a detective of the reader as she exhorts, repeats, questions and backtracks. A sample of her direct addresses to the reader in chapter one:

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[6] Instead of examining the political potential of Stein's dispersal of the detective role in service of a pedagogy of domestic detection, critics frequently discuss her texts as "about" Stein herself as a writer in crisis. They contend that Stein experimented with a new genre to ease fame-induced writer's block in the summer of 1933 after the popular success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*: "Stein becomes her own detective, investigating her writing block, which can be called a crime for any writer" (Gygaz 96); Stein "propelled herself out of a creative stasis by writing a text about creativity" (Rohr 602); "her detective fiction "represents one of the major struggles of Stein's writing career—the attempt to reassert her identity as a writer rather than a famous personality" (Landon 490). Moreover, Brooks Landon subverts the political implications of Stein's text as he attempts to "spin" her passion for detective novels as a dignified pursuit for a literary great:

> Stein's love of these stories may have been something of an embarrassment for her critics. Among other things, her interest was hardly selective: she praised Dashiell Hammett, but her real favorites were much less notable British Writers such as Edgar Wallace and Joseph Smith Fletcher. However, neither the excess of some of Stein's pronouncements about detective stories, nor the literary poverty of her favorite detective writers should distract us from the larger significance detective stories held for her career and for her theory of writing. In the first place, her interest in this genre seemed to focus more on the idea of 'general' detecting than on the outcome or conventions of the stories. (488)

Landon reappraises Stein's interest as theoretical rather than concrete, intellectual rather than involved, elite rather than popular. But, in fact, these genius-at-work analyses of *Blood on the Dining-Room Floor* contradict Stein's own assertion: "It was a funny thing that summer so many things happened and they had nothing to do with me or writing" (*Everybody's Autobiography* 38). Unfortunately, by focusing on Stein herself, these critics under-examine the text as a response to violent and unsettling events that touch Stein's life during that same summer. In other words, if we approach this text as primarily a locus of Stein's

> Listen carefully; Do you see what I mean; Now I will try to tell; Listen; Do you really understand; Think of that; Now you see; What did you say; As I said; Read the beginning again; I feel I do not know anything if I cry; Do any of you know a disease that makes complete black rings all around the eyes; Do you remember what happened; I am sure I do not know. (13, 15, 15, 16, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29)

Moreover, Stein's narrative progresses erratically: instead of lining up evidence in service of a case ultimately and conclusively closed, she leaves traumatic events open. Her final chapter begins, "Once upon a time they began as it is begun"—*no* case closes; the effects of violence, Stein suggests, perpetually mark the everyday. Even "conclusions" Stein acts in accordance with are subverted. When her household and its visitors awaken to find their cars tampered with and phone lines cut—the text's opening crime—the seemingly motive-less servants are dismissed (though only after they serve a keep-up-appearances meal): "The man servant served the lunch very well and then he and his wife were sent away. The garage man said send them away and forget about them and this was done" (14). But the text ends with eerie last lines: "No one is amiss after servants are changed. Are they" (81). Stein accepts the most efficient solution at the novel's outset—framing the servants, powerless outsiders—rather than investigate the possibility that her familiars struck against her. But her final, weak "question"—are they—suggests that violence at the heart of home is not so easily purged. Stein's assertion that, after being introduced to five houses and families, the reader has been exposed to *six* potential

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genius, perception, and authorship, we may overlook her attempt to use her newly enlarged audience to "publicize" violence in the home and institutional failure to remedy that violence.

crimes implicitly argues that violence is endemic to homelife—every family has its crime, or two.

Because no crimes are solved, Stein realizes a latent potential in the detective story: that every detail might matter. In other words, no aspect of daily life would be rendered irrelevant by the unveiling of the truth. As Miller put it: "From the layout of the country house (frequently given in all the exactitude of a diagram) to the cigar ash found on the floor at the scene of the crime, no detail can be dismissed a priori. […But] at the moment of truth, the text winnows the grain from the chaff, separating the relevant signifiers from a much larger number of irrelevant ones" (33). Stein's detectives are never let off the hook: her often tedious renderings of housekeeping routines, household objects, family histories, pet care never distill to a punchline. Where a typical detective story relegates "everything and everybody" unrelated to closing the case to "bland, mute self-evidence," Stein's readers are left to consider it all (34). Of course, what is "self-evident" in the traditional detective story are the work and status of women and the home—ultimately only of interest inasmuch as they is seen through the eyes of the singular male detective, set again to right, and then forgotten.

But for Stein, violence, not order, is the status quo of the domestic—or, perhaps more to the point, the domestic order that is the status quo is itself violent; and the woman corpse, not the detective, is the "hero." In "Why I Like Detective Stories," Stein reveals her unusual take on the genre, explaining that detectives can't save the "hero," who begins the story as a corpse, or save future victims—who are still "com[ing] to be corpses" even beyond the story's confines. She writes, "the really important people come to be corpses sometime, but not necessarily while you are reading" (147, 149). That

murder is not circumscribed by the story, not a discrete emplotted event, suggests it is larger than an idiosyncratic criminal and crime—again, it is an institution. And so, in a violent, uncertain world, detecting the dead, looking long at their lives and habits, understanding the systems that made them vulnerable, becomes the job and the *service* of the detective and the detecting reader. Coincidentally, Stein's text opens soothingly with a country house, perhaps like the rural Glessner Lee home with its curving dirt road, lush foliage and quiet façade as pictured in miniature above her "Living Room" crime scene. "They had a country house. A house in the country is not the same as a country house. This was a country house," *Blood* opens, with what seems like home-sweet pride. But, as if it's a dollhouse, Stein lifts the roof, pulls away the front wall, to show the crime within.

COMING HOME TO WAR

Stein not only challenges the naturalness of a separate, sacrosanct private sphere, but also looks to the home as a site to record the historical violence of war. The domestic and the national are seamlessly woven and both are represented as suspect, male-dominated structures dangerous to women.[7] Stein writes:

> Helen was an orphan, that is to say her mother was put away and her father the major was killed in war. You all remember the war. Some can forget a war. It is not necessary to remember or forget a war. Who remembers a door. Anyone who

[7] In addition to the examples from Stein that I discuss at length, a line from Woolf's diary dated 20 July 1940 perfectly encapsulates this cohabitation of domestic and war violence at home. A list of "things to write about when I'm less sleepy" concludes with number "8 the photographs of the womans body in the abortionists cupboard: her dead face: long hair: legs trussed up. 9. Must be Hitler's speech: lets talk common sense and end the war—if not: […..] Oh 10 might be my new resolve of tidiness. Desk & table both clear" (5.302). In the same breath, Woolf notes photos of a murdered woman hidden in the kitchen closet, Hitler's speech calling for Britain to surrender or face invasion, and her own housekeeping routine.

> remembers a door can remember a war. He went to be killed in war because his wife was crazy. (47-8)

In Stein's formulation, war is as palpable as a part of the house (and parts of the house as palpable as war), rather than something removed that requires its own historicized processes of remembering and forgetting. War is part of the family story, of Helen's family, *and* assumed as part of the story of *readers'* families: "You all remember the war." The male head of household goes to war, the woman to an asylum. For Stein's neighbor, a woman who keeps her husband's small hotel, what's inside the "dollhouse" is an accumulation of systems that precipitate her violent death—the text's second major crime. She is married, as a "young girl," to a fifth-generation hotel keeper, and immediately takes responsibility for her extended hotel home:

> She would know about clean linen, about peaches and little cakes, as few as possible of each, and yet always enough. She would oversee the maids at work, she would push them gently forward to do what there was to do and there was always all of that to do. For them and for her. All day and every day. She was always very near perfect when she stood. She never sat. Except when it was late and she would dine. Think of that. Just think of that. (17)[8]

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[8] *Blood on the Dining Room Floor* remains, to my knowledge, unacknowledged outside of this project as a war text. But Stein's signifiers of everyday living—peaches and cake—also appear in *Mrs. Reynolds* and *Wars I Have Seen*. Stein, either by coincidence or design, invokes these simple foods until they are resonant. As I discussed in chapter one, German troops who commandeer Stein and Toklas' home steal their peaches, a seemingly petty theft that carries a big implication: the troops are staking their claim over all things, even small ones. Cake transforms from a simple comfort—"cake is certainly a comfort, cake certainly is a comfort" (*Wars* 168)—to another war spoil/another thing spoiled by Hitler—"when Angel Harper is forty-seven, even cake gets to have another meaning […] I do wish I did not have to say so" (*Mrs. Reynolds* 141). But cake also becomes a food of resistance: Stein's baker, planning to make victory cakes with American flags when the war ends, asks Stein "how many stars are there on your flag, well I said I do not know exactly how many now but certainly a lot, why, I said, well he said I am going to make

The woman's husband's going-to-war and her considerable housekeeping burdens are presented as twin tours of duty:

> When the war came he want away to the war. He was a little man and he went away to the war. Sometimes a little man does not go to the war, but he was a little man and he went to the war, and what is more, he did not go to cook at the war, as many a cook did, he went to the war, and he fought in the war, and what is more, he fought all the long years of the war until there was no more war. (18)

Meanwhile:

> Every day and every day she had to see that everything came out from where it was put away and that everything again was put away. That was their way. That had always been their way. Any way was that way. Any way, she came that way to be that way.[…] She was very gracious and smiled sweetly and every day everything was taken out and every day everything was put away; and sometimes several times during every day everything was taken out and everything was put away.

The husband survives long years of *military* service, the wife long years of smiling, standing *domestic* service: Stein repeats "war" and "every day"/"everything" in her recap of the early, separate years of their marriage, emphasizing monotony, the passage of time, and the parallelism between soldiering on the battlefront and on the homefront. Then the story picks up speed: he returns, they produce four children, he is

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you a wonderful kind of a wedding cake for the day and I am going to decorate the cakes with American and French flags, and I felt it was very pleasant that he was so certain […] and I came home and told Alice Toklas and she was very pleased too" (179).

routinely unfaithful to her in her home, she falls from a window and dies five days later. She's reported to have been a sleepwalker. That this woman was conscripted into marriage, motherhood and domestic service, only to be betrayed, perhaps murdered, and ultimately rendered completely and finally voiceless by the sleepwalking claim makes her the corpse-"hero" of Stein's story: a hero whose private miseries Stein, and readers, look and look at. Again, the crime isn't solved in some public performance of order restored: it is social order itself that is rendered suspect. Stein's attention to justice isn't on behalf of one homemaker, but more generally for all women confined to, and killed in action during, private life.

Alice Toklas opens her *Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* with the claim that cookbooks are to her what detective stories were to Gertrude Stein (37). "Murder and death seem as unnatural there [in the kitchen] as anywhere else. They can't, they can never become acceptable facts," she writes. But even if the violence that detective stories and cookbooks depict is unacceptable, it is ever-present in these women's daily lives—Stein and Toklas consumed the texts voraciously. Stein, in fact, read so many detective stories that she feared there were not "enough to go around"—"will there please will there be more of them" ("Why I Like Detective Stories" 148, 150). That detective stories and cookbooks "went around" so much, always at hand in so many households, blood on their pages, perhaps explains why the couple defamiliarized these particular genres, challenging readers to consider violence at home not just as a textual possibility—what happens only in their favorite books—but as a physical one.

In her cookbook, Toklas describes with relish (or with lobster sauce, or with mustard cream sauce, or with a light bordelaise) the various murders she's committed in

the name of mealtime. As Stein disperses the role of detective, so Toklas does the role of murderer, both by describing her own kills and by initiating other women into this bloody housekeeping. Toklas' language of violence and crime captures the gritty—usually invisible—labor absorbed by home. And, more than that, it is an indication of the private sphere's involvement in its times: in her "Murder in the Kitchen" chapter, Toklas writes that, during war and Occupation, she learned to cook "seriously." During wartime, murder becomes part of daily life as she learns, in times of shortage, to become resourceful about procuring and preparing meals.

Toklas describes her first crime, which ultimately becomes "Carp Stuffed with Chestnuts":

> Should I not dispatch my first victim with a blow on the head from a heavy mallet? After an appraising glance at the lively fish it was evident he would escape attempts aimed at his head. A heavy sharp knife come to my mind as the classic, the perfect choice, so grasping with my left hand well covered with a dishcloth, for the teeth might be sharp, the lower jaw of the carp, and the knife in my right, I carefully, deliberately found the base of its vertebral column and plunged the knife in. I let go my grasp and looked to see what had happened. Horror of horrors. The carp was dead, killed, assassinated, murdered in the first, second and third degree. Limp, I fell into a chair, with my hands still unwashed reached for a cigarette, lighted it, and waited for the police to come take me into custody. (37-8)

Of course, the police do not come; Toklas' violence is not anathema to domestic order, but necessary to sustain it. After the emotion of her first murder, Toklas begins to get

hold of herself—her everyday routine that of a serial killer and a soldier and a housekeeper. Her recipe for "Braised Pigeons on Croutons" begins:

> I carefully found the spot on the poor innocent Dove's throat where I was to press and I pressed. The realization had never come to me before that one saw with one's fingertips as well as with one's eyes. It was a most unpleasant experience, though as I laid out one by one the sweet young corpses there was no denying one could become accustomed to murdering. (40)

Tolkas' recipes, again, popular, interactive teaching tools—a how to detect, how to see, how to cook—aren't about attending to the suffering of innocent doves, floundering fish or, in one case, an unlucky duck. Rather, Toklas' kitchen crimes are metonymic of institutionalized domestic *and* militaristic violence/crimes of war. As she makes palpable the under-examined story of the diffusion of war violence into the home, Toklas also celebrates the ingenuity of the homemakers against war itself as an enemy. Indeed, that Toklas is resolved and steady-handed at crisis moments in her recipes suggests strength in the face of all domestic and wartime restriction—and in the face of, for her and Stein, "a possible danger one refused to face" (214). "Not one of the two hundred and fifty Germans and their officers stationed at Culoz suspected our nationality, the French authorities having destroyed our papers and done everything possible to protect us," Toklas notes, obliquely acknowledging the couple's vulnerability (213). In *Cook Book*, food stockpiles must be hidden from German troops, gelatin is a necessary ingredient both for "Raspberry Flummery" and for the making of counterfeit papers, and filched candied citrus for "Liberation Fruit Cake" is sweet like resistance. "Gertrude Stein had the habit of giving me for Christmas a very important cook-book—even during

the Occupation she would surprise me with one. When all communication with Paris was forbidden, the 1,479 pages of Montagne's and Salle's *The Great Book of the Kitchen* passed across the line with more intelligence than is usually credited to inanimate objects," Toklas writes (215). Recipes are specifically "about" women's work, exchange, and bodily understanding: Toklas doesn't just write about the systemic violence, but challenges readers to taste it—and to imagine the taste of liberation, even when "not one ingredient is obtainable."

'SO SHE SAW IT'

> For her generation, the newspaper was a book; and, as her father-in-law had dropped the *Times*, she took it and read: 'A horse with a green tail…' which was fantastic. Next, 'The guard at Whitehall…' which was romantic and then, building word upon word, she read: 'The troopers told her the horse had a green tail; but she found it was just an ordinary horse. And they dragged her up to the barrack room where she was thrown upon a bed. Then one of the troopers removed part of her clothing, and she screamed and hit him about the face.…'
>
> That was real; so real that on the mahogany door panels she saw the Arch of Whitehall; through the Arch the barrack room; in the barrack room the bed, and on the bed the girl was screaming and hitting him about the face.
>
> —Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*

Isa, the young wife and mother in Woolf's *Between the Acts,* reads about a rape in the newspaper: she is, of course, unable to *do* anything about the rape and is not a "participant" in it, but still finds that it mars her home. In this scene, Woolf offers what is, perhaps, a surprising incarnation of war violence: by making these assailants British soldiers, she collapses the distinction between "our" troops and foreign "enemies," between good guys and bad. "War," left without a friendly face, is *itself* a menace: its casualty, a woman. And despite its appearance in the newspaper—yesterday's news both literally and figuratively—the event remains unclosed by time, the effects of violence

endless. Isa—modeling the witness-reader role—imaginatively projects it like a film onto the wood paneling of her own home; she carries it into the present and, thinking of it through the day, into the future. This scene powerfully illustrates Margot Norris' claim that war is "uncontrollable and uncontainable"—even by temporal boundaries (506-7). Stein, Toklas, Virginia Woolf and Elizabeth Bowen all depict this unboundedness, refusing to maintain a divide between private and public life, between home and front. Both Woolf and Bowen's wartime texts begin with these spheres seemingly separate, nut then represent distinct moments of their conflation. I consider this phenomenon in detail in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Bowen's short stories "In the Square" and "The Demon Lover," arguing that these writers create boundaries in order to cross them and challenge the witness-reader, who necessarily has an indirect, at-a-remove relationship with events represented in any text, to make a similar traversal from distance to involvement.

Woolf distances war violence only to bring it home in *Mrs. Dalloway*. This novel spans one June 1923 day in Clarissa Dalloway's life; it is also the last day in the life of Septimus Smith, a shell-shocked veteran of the First World War. Septimus haunts Mrs. Dalloway's story: as she readies for her party, he hallucinates, steadies, faces the cruel incomprehension of doctors and commits suicide. They don't know each other, they do not meet; he is a "scapegoat," dying so that Clarissa will live (26). But Woolf doesn't let Clarissa off scot free. Septimus' Dr. Bradshaw comes to her party, bringing talk of Septimus with him:

> A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party—the Bradshaws talked of death. He had killed himself—but how? Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly of an accident; her dress

> flames, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocating blackness. So she saw it. (201)

Again, a past-tense violent act replays in the present and within the home. Though Woolf seems to go to lengths to distance Clarissa from war violence—to make it the province of somebody and some place else—those lengths, that distance, collapses.

That these characters—elegant socialite, titular heroine of Woolf's text, and war vet in his shabby coat—are connected and, as I will argue, complete a circuit of communication, conveys both the uncontrollable, uncontainable-ness of war and, more than that, indirect participants' responsibility to witness war trauma. War in Woolf's novel spills past its soldiers and sites and historical end: "The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favorite, killed; but it was over; thank heaven—over," Woolf writes (3). In other words, the war was "thank heaven over"—except for *every* one. Though this declaration—the war is over—begins and ends Woolf's sentence, details of two women's grief rise, swell against its levee walls. (In a 63-word sentence, only 11 speak to the war's end—the rest belie it.) On timelines, in history texts, the war began in 1914 and ended in 1918; 65 million fought; 8.5 million died.[9] In a novel set five years later, Woolf registers that

[9] United States War Department statistics from February 1924. United States casualties revised 7 November 1957 by the Statistical Services Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense. "World War I." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica

official history *and* gathers scraps of an unofficial history of sustained grief and damage. For example, Big Ben's authoritative strike begins, ends each hour. But then, a chorus of tardy clocks add their chimes. Woolf writes:

> But here was the other clock, the clock which always struck two minutes after Big Ben, came shuffling in with its lap full of odds and ends, which it dumped down as if Big Ben were all very well with his majesty laying down all the law, so solemn, so just, but she must remember all sorts of things besides—Mrs. Marsham, Ellie Henderson, glasses for ices [….] (139)

The expressly male Big Ben clean-cuts past from present, but another, "female" clock, carrying her "lapful" of the past, blurs his clear distinction: again, a war is over, but not. Woolf also builds official and unofficial written narratives into her London cityscape, suggesting a story of England written in stone, flesh, landmark—but also one in smoke. Peter Walsh sees etched in the faces of uniformed boys the stone letters like "a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England": he sees a permanent, precise official history written in the ridges and recesses of what might otherwise have been the deeply individual human face (54). "There they go, thought Peter Walsh, pausing at the edge of the pavement; and all the exalted statues, Nelson, Gordon, Havelock, the black, the spectacular images great soldiers stood looking ahead of them" (55). Here, Woolf triangulates living "boys in uniform" with national landmarks (the Great Soldier statues) with national narrative, written both on statues' bases and, again, on English boys' faces.

Online. 30 August 2005 <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-53172>.

But, just as Big Ben's voice is "blent with that of other clocks," so does this official history have a correlative: the puff-letters formed above London by a skywriter (102). Woolf writes:

> The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd. There it was coming over the trees, letting out white smoke from behind, which curled and twisted, actually writing something! making letters in the sky! Everyone looked up. […]
>
> Dropping dead down the aeroplane soared straight up, curved in a loop, raced, sank, rose, and whatever it did, wherever it went, out fluttered behind it a thick ruffled bar of white smoke which curled and wreathed upon the sky in letters. But what letters? A C was it? an E, then an L? Only for a moment did they lie still; then they moved and melted and were rubbed out up in the sky, and the aeroplane shot further away and again, in a fresh space of sky, began writing a K, an E, a Y perhaps? (20)

Rather than the statue-soldiers' perfect congruity of national narrative, landmark and citizen, the story of the skywriter produces a range of responses: "Glaxo," says Mrs. Coats; "Kreemo," says Mrs. Bletchley; "It's toffee," says Mr. Bowely; "They're signaling to me," thinks Septimus (20-2). The letters melt and shift—"the clouds to which the letters E, G, or L had attached themselves moved freely"—and are identified only provisionally (21). Londoners have shared an event, the shock of the airplane "boring" into their ears, "writing something!" (The plane's arrival is heralded by two exclamation marks.) But both the medium—smoke—and the fact that each person

interprets the smoke signals differently undermines the very possibility of finite, monolithic narrative.

The perfect hostess

It is between registers of stone and smoke, irrevocable and fleeting, official and unofficial, public and private that *Mrs. Dalloway* is most provocative: Clarissa Dalloway's home, opened by her as hostess, encapsulates a larger program of granting others' stories intimate access to the frames inside which we define ourselves. *Mrs. Dalloway* models the possibility of incorporating the jagged edges of another's story into one's own, of an absent stranger being the most important "guest" at the party, of hostessing as an act not an activity. To put it another way, hostessing connotes a gendered, precious, domestic activity that, for Clarissa Dalloway, is a key part of her upperclass housekeeping; when Peter Walsh insults her by dubbing her "the perfect hostess," he means to diminish her, make her irrelevant (66). (Rejected in love, "he would have done anything to hurt her.") But, as I've argued throughout this project, "to receive (any one) into one's house" is more than a lady's frivolity: it is a politics of responsibility—and, as presented in this text, hostessing joins Glessner Lee's doll-housekeeping, Stein's detecting and Toklas's cooking as interactive popular genres, texts we *do something* with. [10] Clarissa interrogates why she is driven to host: "And she felt quite continuously a sense of their [other people's separate] existence; and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it" (132).

[10] To "host" definition from *Oxford English Dictionary*

In parallel passages that have received little critical comment, Woolf extends the province of the home; ultimately, she will use the trope of the party to expand its possibilities. By describing characters walking through the London streets as houseguests in need of hosts, these passages prepare readers for hostessing to figure more prominently than as an insular, domestic activity. She writes of Septimus and his wife Rezia:

> Perhaps they walked more slowly than other people, and there was something hesitating, trailing, in the man's walk, but what more natural for a clerk, who has not been in the West End on a weekday at this hour for years, than to keep looking at the sky, looking at this, that and the other, as if Portland Place were a room he had come into when the family was away, the chandeliers being hung in Holland bags, and the caretaker, as she lets in long shafts of dusty light upon deserted, queer-looking armchairs, lifting one corner of the long blinds, explains to the visitors what a wonderful place it is; how wonderful, but at the same time, he thinks, as he looks at the chairs and tables, how strange. (90-1)

And of Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth, who is uncomfortably situated between girlhood and womanhood, between being defined by the Dalloways and defined by a would-be husband:

> She looked up Fleet Street. She walked a little way toward St. Paul's, shyly, like someone penetrating on tiptoe, exploring a strange house by night with a candle, on edge lest the owner should suddenly fling wide his bedroom door and ask her business, nor did she dare wander off in queer alleys, tempting bye-streets, any

> more than in a strange house open doors which might be bedroom doors, or sitting room doors, or lead straight to the larder. (150)

Rather than maintain a divide between public and private, Woolf superimposes home on metropolitan London. For Septimus and Elizabeth, alienation from institutions and social expectations makes them interlopers in a national home, one that surrounds them and which they navigate awkwardly. Peter Walsh, too, walks the streets "past a shindy of brawling women, drunken women; here only a policeman and looming houses, high houses, domed houses, churches, parliaments, and the hoot of a steamer on the river, a hollow misty cry" (179). The cityscape, like stone statues and their stone legends, like the regular pacing of Big Ben's weighty chime, are markers of public officialdom. But, at the end of the day, Walsh, Elizabeth, and Septimus' ghost travel past those public markers toward a single destination—a private house. Walsh's walk continues: "But it was her street, this, Clarissa's; cabs were rushing round the corner, like water round the piers of a bridge, drawn together, it seemed to him because they bore people going to her party, Clarissa's party." Walsh finds her house "lighted"; the "door stood open." He enters and is announced. At this home, people are gathered, hosted by Clarissa: "It was her gift" (133). Woolf invests the private space of the home with power to do public work, makes this one home a microcosm, however imperfect, of a peopled city, a peopled history, a peopled novel, coming together: "That was her self—pointed; dartlike; definite. That was herself when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing room and made a meeting point" (39).

Message from an uninvited guest

In "Trauma and Recovery in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*," Karen DeMeester reads the novel's end and Clarissa's party as proof of Septimus Smith's profound isolation and, ultimately, the failure of modernist art both to bear witness and to imagine social change. "Though writers like Eliot and Woolf defined the postwar age, they seemed to contribute little to its healing. The rain never comes to revitalize the Waste Land, and though Clarissa recommits herself to life and returns to her party, that life lacks meaning and vitality," she claims (667). DeMeester argues that "Woolf's form is particularly well-suited for depicting trauma" but "ill-suited to depicting recovery" (652). Septimus "epitomizes, embodies the essential characteristics of the modernist man": the war alienates him from his past and his pre-war assumptions about the world, shatters and fragments his consciousness, DeMeester writes (653). Instead of providing a witness for Septimus—someone with whom to communicate his war experience and, in so doing, integrate it into his history and the history of his country—DeMeester argues that the text gives him only doctors who silence him and Clarissa, who returns to her party, which DeMeester views as merely an homage to the status quo.

Indeed, Septimus suffers from the horrors of war, from his firsthand knowledge of human cruelty in its destruction of men and the natural world; he perceives a need to seize blissful instants in an uncertain world. But he is able to communicate neither beauty nor apocalypse, mostly because no willing witness presents itself. Septimus thinks: "The supreme secret must be told to the Cabinet; first that trees are alive; next that there is no crime; next love, universal love, he muttered, gasping, trembling, painfully drawing out these profound truths which needed, so deep were they, so difficult. An immense effort to

speak out, but the world was entirely changed by them forever" (73). Septimus' will to speak, and belief that communication could be world-changing, produces only a stammer. He meets with the renowned Dr. Bradshaw:

> "And you have a brilliant career before you," said Sir William. There was Mr. Brewer's letter on the table. 'An exceptionally brilliant career."
>
> But if he confessed? If he communicated? Would they let him off then, his torturers?
>
> "I—I—" he stammered.
>
> But what was his crime? He could not remember it.
>
> "Yes" Sir William encouraged him. (But it was growing late.)
>
> Love, trees, there is no crime—what was his message?
>
> He could not remember it.
>
> "I—I—" Septimus stammered.
>
> "Try to think as little about yourself as possible," said Sir William kindly. (106-7)

Septimus is confronted with the triple authority of a medical professional (Bradshaw), a boss (Brewer's letter) and time itself, as Bradshaw notes the hour and Septimus' chance to speak ticks away. Septimus' stutter could also be read as a quadruple assertion of "I"—of a distinct self and perspective, of the very possibility that one has something to say.

But, along with his "eye"-witness testimony to war, his very "I" is rejected: "Try to think as little about yourself as possible," Bradshaw says. That Septimus might have something to say in the face of authority is as impossible for Bradshaw to imagine as one of the statues Peter Walsh admires leaning down to re-write the legend at its base. Septimus as soldier and citizen is to be interpolated by history and nation, not by his own assertion.

DeMeester quotes Septimus murmuring that "communication is health; communication is happiness, communication—" but leaves out the devastating next line: "'What are you saying Septimus?'" Rezia asked, wild with terror, for he was talking to himself" (101). Talking to himself—Rezia never considers that he could be talking to *her*, nor what it might mean for her to listen regardless. But most critically, DeMeester also ignores that Woolf puts an *answer* to Septimus in the mind of Clarissa, at her party, after she hears of his suicide: "Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate" (210). Septimus' testimony will go largely untold, but Clarissa, stopped in her tracks, recognizes a desperate speech-act and perceives a kindred "I," someone with something to say. Woolf gives her an immediate, powerful vision not just of *someone* falling to death, but of Septimus' specific fall: Clarissa, clairvoyant for an instant, sees even the specific detail of the "rusty spikes" of "Mrs. Filmer's area railings" as Septimus lands on them (163, 210). In other words, Clarissa doesn't just imagine a fall, she witnesses it, picking up the story from where Septimus himself left it off almost 50 pages earlier, when he "flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings […]" (163). "Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocating blackness. So she saw it" (210). In his last instant, Septimus and Clarissa are "we."

Woolf offers no perfect solutions for the acknowledgment and reintegration of war trauma into national history—Clarissa's party is fleeting, studded with snobbery; her home open, but not to everyone. Septimus speaks to her, but only through his death. And she, despite having "twice" her husband's "wits," creates a social network through small considerations and kindnesses, while Richard Dalloway makes law. But Woolf everywhere insists on the essential connectedness of people and their shared world: Clarissa is part "of all the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she has seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (8). She:

> felt herself everywhere; not 'here, here, here'; and she tapped the back of the seat; but everywhere. She waved her hand, going up Shaftesbury Avenure, She was all that. So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter—even trees, or barns. (166)

Septimus, too, lay like a "coverlet" over society; was "spread like a veil on a rock"; was "connected by millions of fibres" to the very leaves, and stretched with tree branches in order to make "a statement." (26, 73, 23). How innate then, the urgency of communication across boundaries of class, gender, even time. How important the work, in Clarissa's time and ours, of making a "meeting point." Woolf envisions history that is

idiosyncratic, inclusive *and* lasting; a type of living that strives for communication; a type of reading that bears witness.[11]

'THERE WERE SOME CRACKS IN THE STRUCTURE'

Open houses and ghostly guests also bring war home in Elizabeth Bowen's World War II short stories "In the Square" and "The Demon Lover." Both stories present London houses literally and figuratively made permeable by war. In chapter one, I discussed "In the Square" and Magdela's panicked attempt to maintain some semblance of private space even as people assembled by the war fill her cracked house. I return to that story to consider it, also, as a missed opportunity for hostessing: Bowen critiques her character as "a hostess who has not learned how with grace to open her own front door" (*Mulberry Tree* 132).[12] Though the house teems with people, its drawing room, the epicenter of pre-war hostessing, is derelict—parquet dull, lightbulbs dusty, decorations packed away—and palpably empty —"dead" (610). Bowen writes, "This had been the room of a hostess; the replica of so many others that you could not count. […] The chairs remained so many, and their pattern was now so completely without focus that, had

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[11] Woolf's meeting point is a dense one, a nexus of family and war trauma, autobiography and fiction. Not only does Woolf psychically unite Clarissa and Septimus through Clarissa's recognition of his need to communicate and their shared vision of his fall, they are also connected because Clarissa is herself a trauma survivor, who watched her sister die when they were girls. Peter Walsh thinks: "To see your own sister killed by a falling tree (all Justin Parry's fault—all his carelessness) before your very eyes, a girl too on the verge of life, the most gifted of them, Clarissa always said, was enough to turn one bitter" (84). Moreover, Woolf herself, describing her childhood visit to her mother's deathbed, shared Septimus' fear that she could not feel. Septimus: "The last shells had missed him, he watched them explode with indifference. […] And to Lucrezia, the youngest daughter, he became engaged one evening when the panic was on him—that he could not feel" (94); "But he could not taste, he could not feel" (95). "But he felt nothing. His wife was crying, and he felt nothing" (98). Woolf: "I remember very clearly how even as I was taken to the bedside I noticed that one nurse was sobbing, and a desire to laugh came over me, and I said to myself as I have often said in moments of crisis since, 'I feel nothing whatever.' Then I stooped to kiss my mother's face" (*Moments of Being* 92). Throughout her life, Woolf feels her mother as an "invisible presence," as Clarissa senses Septimus (80).

[12] from Preface to *The Demon Lover*, collected wartime short stories

Magdela not sat down where she did sit, he would not have known which direction to turn" (610).[13]

The new geometry of her seating, like the new, war-damaged formations of her neighborhood and home, subverts hierarchy and exclusivity—the seats could allow different combinations and focal points, but Magdela denies the implications of her own observation that "the house seems to belong to everyone now." Like Clarissa, Magdela's role of hostess is transformed by war: she, however, resists Clarissa's "sitting in her drawing room and making a meeting point," preferring to maintain sham separations belied by the realities of domestic intimacy and shared danger. To put it another way, war brings uninvited guests to Magdela's home; she responds by partitioning the house into its rooms; and she sits, most days, alone. It is immediately obvious to Rupert, her single, ill-welcomed guest, that the residents of this house share the bodily experience of home life: "From the basement came up a smell of basement cooking, a confident voice and the sound of a shutting door. At the top of the house a bath was being run out. A tray of glasses was moved, so inexpertly that everything on it tinkled, somewhere in the drawing room over his head." The sounds and smells of the house are boundless, blended. Indeed, the house's very power to separate and contain is compromised by nearby bomb blasts that "shocked" its fittings "from their place." Bowen fills the text with intrusions, overheard conversations, the free-floating steam of baths, shared house keys, even a shared husband: war has overturned the privacy of the home, but Magdela, once an

[13] Bowen herself was a frequent and accomplished hostess. While many social gatherings discontinued during the war, she continued to invite people to Clarrence Terrace. Elizabeth Jenkis called her "the last *salonnière*" (Glendinning 127).

invitation-giver, does not accept an invitation to recognize herself as part of a community of suffering or a politics of connectedness.

Bowen leaves Magdela to her drawing-room denial, but another housewife, Mrs. Drover, violently and irrefutably crosses the distance she would maintain between battlefront and home. The trio of texts—*Mrs. Dalloway*, "In the Square," and "The Demon Lover"—emphasizes war's pervasiveness and establishes models of response to that pervasiveness. Clarissa and Magdela as hostesses are models for readers (positive and negative, respectively), as they accept, reject war's demands on their intimate understanding. I complete this chapter by adding haunted-ness to hostessing as a model of response for readers, by adding ghost stories to dollhouses, detective stories, cookbooks and accounts of hostessing as interactive popular genres. In "The Demon Lover," Mrs. Drover returns to her Blitz-boarded, "shut-up" London house to complete errands before returning to her family and new residence in the country, only to discover that the shelter of time, of a husband and children, of domesticity and housekeeping, cannot ultimately separate her from war (661). She finds an eerie letter inside informing her that the hour for her reunion with her own dead soldier—her fiancé who left to fight in the First World War and never returned—has come. As she leaves her home—cracked and crumbling from German bombs (the shelter of home is dissolving)—her "demon lover" scoops her up, unmoved by her screams.

When Mrs. Drover enters the house, she is, Bowen writes, "more perplexed than she knew by everything she saw." What's perplexing are the markings of her "former habit of life" alongside the damage of war: "the yellow smoke stain up the white marble mantelpiece, the ring left by a vase on the top of the escritoire; the bruise in the wallpaper

where, on the door being thrown open widely, the china handle had always hit the wall. The piano, having gone away to be stored, had left what looked like claw-marks on the parquet." But also, her front door is "warped"; not dust but "a film of another kind"—presumably produced by the house's shaking from the impact of nearby explosions—covers everything; and there are bomb-made "cracks in the structure" of the house. Mrs. Drover cannot connect the traces of her daily life and the evidence of war. After she reads the letter awaiting her on her hall table, she thinks back to her last meeting with her soldier-lover:

> It was August 1916. Being not kissed, being drawn away from and looked at intimidated Kathleen till she imagined spectral glitters in the place of his eyes. Turning away and looking back up the lawn she saw, through branches of trees, the drawing room window alight: she caught a breath for the moment when she could go running back there into the safe arms of her mother and sister and cry: 'What shall I do, what shall I do? He has gone.' (663)

Again, the realities of war—and her connection to those realities embodied in the soldier—are distinct in her mind from the peace and domestic comfort of home, where she imagines her own clichéd performance of left-behind lover. The familiar response in the familiar place before the familial audience. Looking at her face in the mirror in 1941, Mrs. Drover sees, not her unique features, but the accoutrement of ordered domestic life, noting the tilt of her hat, that she needs to reapply powder, her wedding pearls around her neck, the pink jumper her sister knitted for her "as they sat round the fire"; conversely, when she thinks of her young lover's face, she sees only "one white burning blank as where acid has dropped on a photograph: *under no conditions* could she remember his

face" (662, 665). In other words, she can read the face of home, but rejects and denies knowledge of the face of war—it is excised from her mental album. When she flees into the street and enters the presumed safety of a waiting cab, she is jolted forward, inches from the glass, face to face with the driver, her demon lover: they "remained for an eternity eye to eye" (666). The story ends with her screaming as the cab races off. Home and front, woman and war-maker, living and dead are at last, fatefully, forcibly connected.

"Haunting is nothing other than the destabilization of the domestic scene, as that place where we apparently confirm our identity, our sense of being, where we feel most at home with ourselves," Julian Wolfreys writes (5). For ghost-story characters and readers, that which is denied—here, being implicated in and sharing responsibility for war—returns to haunt our houses.[14] In closing, I return to Clarissa Dalloway who, as host to Septimus' ghost, provides a positive model of both hostessing and haunted-ness as responses to war trauma. She imagines connections among people and things remaining after death: "Since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might

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[14] Ghosts are fulcrums between the private—they haunt private houses—and the public. Avery Gordon helps define the public ghost in her *Ghostly Matters*:

> The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life. [...] Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as transformative recognition. (8)

Thus, the ghosts that haunt Clarissa, Mrs. Drover, even Leonie Branston (the snapshot collector who opens my introduction) occasion deeply personal purchase on histories beyond their own. Alan Friedman argues that literary modernism is particularly crowded with ghostly presences because of death's pervasiveness *and* absence in the first half of the twentieth century: pervasive due to war, absent due to deaths far from home and the attenuation of mourning rituals.

survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting perhaps certain places after death… perhaps—perhaps" (166). The dual meaning of apparition in Woolf's sentence is itself poignant—our visible selves in life, our ghost selves in death, always still strive toward others. To be haunted, then, need not be to come under the power of vengeful cab-driving demons—that violent return reflects the violence of Mrs. Drover's denial. Woolf suggests, rather, that haunting is to perceive absent others striving toward us, to acknowledge absent others' need to be recognized and taken into account.

Illustration 3.1 a-b. Dollhouse Crime Scenes

Images from Frances Glessner Lee's Nutshell Studies. "Kitchen" and baby's room from "Three-Room Dwelling," as photographed by Corinne May Botz in her remarkable *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* The Monacelli Press (2004).

Chapter 4

Letters from Home

> Your theme begins very abruptly and runs in a rather rambling fashion. Your sentences are sometimes incoherent, and often awkwardly phrased; this hampers the reader and spoils the effect. You are careless too about punctuation and do not always express yourself clearly.
>
> Since the narrator is all quotation, the quotation marks that occur within as on page 3, 4, & 5 (please number your pages) should be single—not double.
>
> Your paragraphing is uncertain—particularly with reference to dialogue. It will pay you to review those parts of the textbook which treat of sentences and paragraphs.
>
> Rewrite.
>
> —comments on Gertrude Stein's November 7, 1894 theme for her freshman composition course at Radcliffe College

After a night at the opera and finding herself "otherwise engrossed" on a "lovely spring day," Gertrude Stein was in no mood for her philosophy final at Radcliffe College (*Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* 79). "She sat down with the examination paper before her and she just could not. Dear Professor James, she wrote at the top of her paper. I am so sorry but I really do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day, and left." Luckily for her undergraduate grade-points, Stein's professor and mentor William James replied, "Dear Miss Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself. And underneath it he gave her the highest mark in his course." Later, as a medical student specializing in psychology at Johns Hopkins University, Stein continued to respond enthusiastically to professors with open, non-prescriptive pedagogies:

> She delighted in Doctor Mall, professor of anatomy, who directed her work. […] Dr. Mall believed in everybody developing their own techniques. He also remarked, nobody teaches anybody anything, at first every student's scalpel is

> dull and then later every student's scalpel is sharp, and nobody has taught anybody anything. (81)

But, pushed by other instructors to conform as a student and young intellect, Stein bristled. When they questioned her, she laughed aloud: "What could she do, she did not know the answers and they did not believe she did not know them, they thought that she did not answer because she did not consider the questions worth answering" (82). Never humble, Stein challenged her professors' sense of authority—a clash that ultimately led to her dropping out, one passing grade shy of a medical degree. The professor who failed her "intended that she should be given a lesson" by retaking his course in summer school, her graduation delayed until the fall. Instead, she walked out. "And that was the end of the medical education of Gertrude Stein" (83).

Virginia Woolf had no formal education from which to walk away—she made private study of her father's library and took lessons in classics with a series of tutors, mostly women. She writes in *Three Guineas*, "You, who have read *Pendennis*, will remember how the mysterious letters A.E.F. figured in the household ledgers. Ever since the thirteenth century English families have been paying into that account. […] It is a voracious receptacle (4). Arthur's Education Fund—built up, sacrificed for, by the families of generations of "Arthurs"—educated England's sons at the expense of her daughters. Woolf's father, brothers, husband, attended Cambridge; she read at home. Excited by *Cymbeline*, 21-year-old Woolf writes her brother Thoby:

> Imogen says—Think that you are upon a rock, and now throw me again! And Posthumous answers—Hang there like fruit, my Soul, till the tree dies! Now if that doesn't send a shiver down your spine, even if you are in the middle of cold

> grouse and coffee—you are no true Shakespearean! Oh dear oh dear—just as I feel in the mood to talk about these things, you go and plant yourself in Cambridge. (Lee 143)

A year and a half later: "I dont get anyone to argue with me now, and feel the want. I have to delve from books, painfully and alone, while you get every evening sitting over your fire and smoking your pipe with [Lytton] Strachey etc. No wonder my knowledge is but scant. Theres nothing like talk as an educator I'm sure."

Faced with closed, conformity-demanding pedagogies, Gertrude Stein ended her formal education; for Virginia Woolf, closed doors are metonymic of the academy: "Such is the effect that Arthur's Education Fund has had upon us. So magically does it change the landscape that the noble courts and quadrangles of Oxford and Cambridge often appear to educated men's daughters like petticoats with holes in them, cold legs of mutton, and the boat train starting for abroad while the guard door slams in their faces (*Three Guineas* 5).[1] Doubly vexed, Woolf's woman narrator in *A Room of One's Own* is barred repeatedly from "Oxbridge's" sites of learning and, analogously, jarred from her reflections with each refusal of entry: her intellectual pursuits are physically and psychically disrupted. Deep in thought about "women and fiction," Woolf's narrator finds herself:

> walking with extreme rapidity across a grass plot. Instantly a man's figure rose to intercept me. His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than

[1] Perhaps the institutional access granted to Stein but denied Woolf allowed her to be more cavalier about it. She writes in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* that a women's rights activist pushed her to complete her medical degree: "Not, as Gertrude Stein explained to Marion Walker, that she at all minds the cause of women or any other cause but it does not happen to be her business" (83).

> reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me. […] What idea it had been that had sent me so audaciously trespassing I could not now remember. (17)

Moments later, considering the importance of access to manuscripts in order for a student/critic to discern the trajectory and impact of an author's revisions, she winds up:

> actually at the door of the library itself. I must have opened it, for instantly there issued, like a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings, a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman, who regretted in a low voice as he waved me back that ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction. (18)

Woolf describes the library as a closed vault—"treasures safe locked within its breast, it sleeps complacently" (18); when her narrator leaves campus, "Gate after gate seemed to close with gentle finality behind me. Innumerable beadles were fitting innumerable keys into well-oiled locks; the treasure-house was being made secure for another night" (21).[2]

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[2] Though the final section of this chapter addresses issues of modernism in the classroom today at length—including suggesting how students might be encouraged to make their own archives in which they believe valuable stories reside—Woolf's account of a would-be student barred at the rare books library door suggests a more direct way of "opening" literary modernism to contemporary students: by helping them access the rich body of archival material surrounding these texts. Before she's interrupted with her hand on the library door, Woolf's narrator thinks of Charles Lamb:

> Certainly he wrote an essay—the name escapes me—about the manuscript of one of Milton's poems which he saw here. It was *Lycidas* perhaps, and Lamb wrote how it shocked him to think it possible that any word in *Lycidas* could have been different from what it is. To think of Milton changing the words in that poem seemes to him some sort of sacrilege. This led me to remember what I could of *Lycidas* and to amuse myself with guessing which word it could have been that Milton had altered, and why. It then occurred to me that the very manuscript itself which Lamb had looked at was only a few hundred yards away, so that one could follow Lamb's footsteps across the quadrangle to that famous library where the treasure is kept. Moreover, I recollected, as

Throughout this dissertation, I have acknowledged Stein's and Woolf's strategies for countering closed authoritative discourse: their unique wartime historiography—relentlessly plot-less, homebound stories—implicates readers in war violence by refusing to distance it or consign it to the past. I argued that, by engaging reader participation in homefront life, women modernists "teach" readers to witness war. Now I expand that discussion to consider actual classroom practice, first examining Stein's and Virginia Woolf's accounts of the academy as women students, then analyzing imaginative histories of the Blitz authored by students in my *Rhetoric of the Homefront* critical reading and persuasive writing course. I link "official" histories and closed pedagogies—monolithic narratives that rely on regulation and exclusion in order to maintain their status—in order to advocate alternative teaching practices that encourage students' participatory reading and writing. In other words, this chapter steps beyond identifying women modernists' wartime pedagogical project to ask how we might continue that project in the classroom today, particularly in the context of another homefront—the United States during an ongoing war on terrorism. Can women modernists, both in their

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> I put this plan into recollection, it is in this famous library that the manuscript of Thackeray's *Esmond* is also preserved. The critics often say that *Esmond* is Thackeray's most perfect novel. But the affectation of the style, with its imitation of the eighteenth century, hampers one, so far as I can remember; unless indeed the eighteenth-century style was natural for Thackeray—a fact that one might prove by looking at the manuscript and seeing whether the alterations were for the benefit of the style or of the sense. But then one would have to decide what is style and what is meaning, a question which—but [….] (18)

I've attached as "Appendix A" a course synopsis for *Modern Literature in Progress*, a speculative course I designed that seeks to answer similar research questions to those posed by Woolf's narrator—and to give current students the access she's denied. The course reads messy manuscripts, writers' attempts to gloss their work by providing their own footnotes and appendices, and readers' responses to literary modernism. These materials illustrate the writing process, revealing texts throughout the span of their production and reception. Rather than reify the canon, archival study in this course productively undermines texts as "aloof" artifacts—texts, even famous ones, are revealed to reside not only between book covers, but also on napkins and in diaries and discarded drafts; one can engage them through critical reading not only of completed works, but also of marketing materials, marginalia, and accidental fingerprints.

approach to the academy as students and to war as writers, help us form a curriculum that enables our students to engage, challenge, and imagine alternatives to official history? Virginia Woolf's narrator critiques the academy as "a miraculous glass cabinet through which no sound could penetrate," where "the roughness of the present seemed smoothed away" and the mind is "freed from any contact with facts" (*Room* 17). In the pages that follow, I take Woolf's lead to advocate bolder possibilities for post-September 11th reading and writing classrooms—classrooms where "rough" facts might remain unsmoothed and history and the literary canon are approached not as "glass cabinet" artifacts, but as working materials in which students as contemporary citizens have a stake.

Scholars regularly raise pedagogical questions at the annual convention of the Modernist Studies Association (founded in 1999 and now the premier convention in the field), though typically as part of multi-participant, discussion-based "seminars" rather than formal panels. Seminars like "Teaching Modernisms," "Modernist Pedagogies," and "Poetics, Poetry, and Pedagogy" ask participants to interrogate which writers and editions of texts they teach, how they "communicate modernism's imperatives to students" without also communicating a "monolithic view of the period and its writers," how they might best contextualize modernism in its times, and in what ways modernists themselves asked readers to approach their texts. MSA's journal *Modernism/Modernity*, however, has yet to run an article on "modern" teaching; thus it marginalizes pedagogical concerns while highlighting more traditional scholarship. And these seminars, while worthy, lack urgency beyond raising the perennial questions of period-based literary study: how do we best initiate literature students into modernism's often obscure arts. In other words, they

ask how we teach the characteristics and context of early twentieth-century literature in order to describe what "modernism" "was," rather than asking how modernism might inform and enable our students as readers and writers today.

It is, perhaps, telling that writing instructor and composition theorist Linda Brodkey presents the values and "iconography" of modernism as a barrier for students and for writing instructors, particularly those with backgrounds in literature. In "Modernism and the Scene(s) of Writing" she identifies the icon of "a solitary writer alone in a cold garret working into the small hours of the morning by the thin light of the candle. […] The writer is an Author and the writing is Literature" (396). Brodkey claims that instructors' investment in this iconographic "scene of writing"—an "artifact of literary modernism" in which, she claims, writing is born of social and historical alienation and denial—leads instructors to "subvert" writing curricula that rely on collaborative revision and response, and to undervalue the many real scenes and occasions for writing in students' lives (397). (Brodky does acknowledge Virginia Woolf's interest in writing that is both social and process-based, if, she stipulates, we read Woolf as a feminist rather than as a modernist [407].) However reductive Brodsky's reading of literary modernism, many of us who teach composition and who teach literature will agree with her conclusion:

> [C]urriculum or research that denies, out of hand, the value of describing and examining the subjective experience and the relevance of that experience to the intellectual activity of writing (not simply how to write, but why people write and under what circumstances) condemns students and their teachers to do the work of writing—skills and techniques—in isolation from the very conditions that justify

> writing and learning to write. […] To experience, and imagine, writing as a social as well as a cognitive act is in itself a form of resistance, in that it allows an individual to learn that the world is not only read, but written […]. (414)

To put it another way, reading and writing should be taught as entry points to the world, rather than activities that take place on the other side of closed doors—as public acts rather than quiet arts for quiet corners. To do otherwise undermines the practical value of the subjects we teach and students' sense of themselves as stakeholders in those subjects. Far from foreclosing writing as a key mode of social participation, instruction in literary modernism can challenge students to write history from the sites and in the voices that are their own.

'NOBODY IN THEIR SENSES COULD FAIL TO DETECT THE DOMINANCE OF THE PROFESSOR'

"Mr. Oscar Browning [Fellow of Kings College, Cambridge, who administered exams at Cambridge's two new women's colleges] was wont to declare 'that the impression left on his mind, after looking over any set of examination papers, was that, irrespective of the marks he might give, the best woman was intellectually inferior to the worst man,'" Woolf writes in *A Room of One's Own* (41). Browning's colleagues across the Atlantic seem to have drawn similar conclusions: in "Controlling Voices: The Legacy of English A at Radcliffe College 1883-1917," JoAnne Campbell discovers papers routinely criticized for "femininity" in archives from the required composition course at Harvard's women's annex. She offers selected professor comments: "You write 'with a good deal of sentiment'; Your words are 'far too colloquial, your sentences are halting and confused'; your paragraphs 'lack definitiveness [….] It is clear, it has some force, but

no elegance'; 'Avoid the strained exaggeration of the feminine style'; 'Your tone of personal injury detracts a little, possibly, from the success of your work'" (479). And, to student Annie Winsor Allen, "Your reasoning, if you will permit me to say so, is charmingly feminine. That is, you base it upon the notion of the world which exists in a well-brought up feminine mind, and not upon the world as it is. […] Finally, I hate to dispel illusion, but your argument from family examples is a terribly weak kind of thing." Campbell also recounts the paper-topic troubles of Dorothea Crawford Seidler, who—told that her writings "about the importance of mothers in a girl's college education, a first love, and short fiction about a mother in France who came to America to stay with her son were simply 'weak' and 'no good'"—decides to compare the relative merits of electricity and gas for lighting because it's a topic she's heard men dispute. "For the instructor such public topics may have been familiar, easier to engage, more comfortable to grade, but the message was that the student's experience and ideas had no place in the academy and were not legitimate sites of knowledge," Campbell concludes (479-80).

Perhaps, then, it's unsurprising that Annie and Dorothea's contemporary, Gertrude Stein, rhetorically distanced herself from the "feminine" in some of her own daily writings for English A. In "Woman," a theme dated November 20, 1894, Stein writes:

> Never again will I try to reason with a woman. She immediately gets hysterical and thinks she is calm. She acknowledges that you are right half a dozen times and then deliberately repeats the statement thinking she has got hold of a new point of view. At last in despair you either smile or frown according to your

> temperament and she goes home convinced of her rhetorical powers. The eternal feminine is nice to be sure but it's painfully illogical. (*Form* 115)

Her professor remarks: "Point of view nobly remote." Stein forestalls the patronizing sexism—"charmingly feminine"—of Annie's professor, usurping the power to assess with either a smile or frown. (Here, she and her professor cohabit "you.") Unprepared to find irony in a freshman woman's writing—and, if he shares his colleagues' opinions, unlikely to dispute the substance of the piece—Stein's professor does not register her barbs. He responds only with a question mark a week later when Stein writes in "A Conference":

> English Prof. 'Yes that is a very good stroke. Twittering birds always remind me of spring. Ah but let me see your description is of autumn, yes birds do twitter in autumn too not so much perhaps.'
>
> Meek girl student. 'But excuse me sir my description is mid-summer.'
>
> Professor undaunted. 'Mid-summer, why yes, yes of course birds always twitter in mid-summer.' (116)

The professor's assessment that spring—correction, autumn—birdsong serves as a "good" scene-setting detail is, of course, inane and reveals lazy misreading; but, more damningly, his expert advice, the value of his conferencing time, and, ultimately, the scope of his curriculum are, in this episode, reduced to useless observations on the seasonal twittering patterns of birds: one wonders what, in fact, would make a compelling "daily theme" for English A when women students' personal experiences and daily lives were off-limits topics. But, again, Stein's professor appears to take no offence—after all,

surely a “meek girl student” isn’t purposefully critiquing his pedagogy. Perhaps student Stein sought to challenge her professor to abandon teaching practices that appear irrelevant to them both. (To some degree she may have succeeded: Campbell reports finding few comments other than corrections on women’s writing, but Stein’s professor frequently offers positive feedback like “perspicacious,” “shows acumen,” “has atmosphere,” and “well massed” [127, 131, 144, 145].) She, with sharp wit, virtuously performs applying herself to the irrelevant, writing on February 16, 1895, “Argument is to me as the air I breathe. […] But I would be virtuous and would rather make a dismal failure of a description than revel in argument. The one I get all the time; the other in English […]” (130).

DISCIPLINING DAILY LIFE

English A students wrote themes daily and fortnightly and kept correction notebooks to record their mechanical mistakes and re-write these flawed sentences, citing grammar texts to indicate the rule they’d broken (Campbell 477). As I’ve indicated, the “daily theme” was a contradictory genre: though its name seems to indicate an informality of topic—an invitation to shape the ordinary, the personal, the everyday into prose—it appears to have invited only daily discipline, an encroachment of constraint on the everyday rather than of the everyday on the academy. Stein wrote, resentfully, on November 16, 1894: “Avaunt thou valeful spectre! What! Shall I submit to losing all my joy in living? Can I endure having all pleasure blasted by that eternal refrain ‘Wouldn’t it make a good Daily?’ Never” (115). And on February 20, 1895: “Not many years ago, my self-analysis ended in heroics, but now it simply turns into mild meditation, with a flavor of cynicism, and contents itself with inventing wise saws to garnish a daily theme” (130).

Stein suggests that the assignment required an exchange of individual joy and pleasure in living (and, presumably, writing) for general cynicism and the performance of critically distanced wisdom—for the rather pompous knowing of the "saw." Campbell includes in her study a selection by freshman Mary Lee in which the young student, Campbell writes, sarcastically expresses ignorance: "Because I could write entertaining letters, I thought I could write good themes. I cannot write good themes, I cannot punctuate them correctly, I use slang habitually in talking [to] my youthful friends and relations, I do not even think in a logical way. In the words of Disraeli, 'I now know that I know nothing' and I am ready to learn" (474).

Stein too offers an ironic "conversion" theme—a seeming avowal of her readiness to learn, belief in her professor's superior understanding, and an answer to the call for critical distance:

> It is a very painful fact in human experience that each of us must go over the same old ground of mental struggle and development. To be sure it is a reflection old as the hills but it is still new for I have just rediscovered it. The worst of it is, that the recognition of it as a fact is of no value.
>
> I know perfectly well that I will hold some time in the future the same opinion in large measure that I have just been combating. I know perfectly well that when my opponent was my age he held mine and yet I cannot spare myself the intervening pain and struggle.
>
> I know I will believe, but as I don't believe there is no help in that. Sometimes I fiercely and defiantly declare that I won't believe neither now nor in

> the future. ‘Be still you fool’ then says my mocking other self, ‘why struggle, you must submit sooner or later to be ground in the same mill with your fellows. The path is straight before you can choose to follow. Why waste your strength in useless cries? Be still, it is inevitable. (122)

Mary Lee and Stein contextualize their learning as part of “human experience,” asserting themselves within a tradition of *all* students (rather than incorrigible girls). Mill-ground alongside their “fellows”—each of them, from Stein to Disraeli to the men of Harvard, required to relinquish one way of knowing in favor of another. But for their female writers, these themes work double duty, performing academic trainability equal to professors’ expectations of male students, while hinting at an alternative approach to knowing and to writing. Student Stein “knows,” “rediscovers,” recognizes facts, holds and combats opinions, makes declarations: her short theme is verb-packed with indications of an active, discerning mind at work—the language of an ace student. Still, her declaration—“I know I will believe, but as I don’t believe there is no help in that”—subverts linear development and is doubly voiced. Rather than “I don’t believe, but know I will,” Stein weights her unbelief at the sentence’s end. She both gets with the program and doesn’t: the path to acceptance may be straight ahead, but her sentence turns at the comma. Stein is an apt pupil, writing to please her professor, while still inhabiting an alternative position worth crying out, fighting fiercely, for—the idiosyncratic unbeliever.

Similarly, Mary Lee’s “I know that I know nothing” theme characterizes (and, perhaps, leaves readers wishing for) an alternative style, even as she rejects it: her slangy, in-“correctly” punctuated, alive and lively way of writing and knowing, traded in chat and letters, in daily life and rough drafts. In fact, in a theme she never submitted to her

professor, she reveals herself to be another unbeliever and specifically identifies fostering stylistic individuality as key to writing pedagogy:

> In English A, we sink our individuality into a sea of criticism. […] Whatever idea, whatever individuality of style we may naturally possess, we must drop under the red pencil of the section man. […] English A does not teach us to write, it teaches us not to write. (475)

In short, Radcliffe students faced sexist disciplining of their writing and of their daily lives through the vehicle of "daily themes," which simultaneously devalued and institutionally intruded into those lives. But even as they used rhetoric of universal/ungendered tractability to foreclose criticism, women students' irony and allusions to topics they *aren't* writing about, styles they *aren't* using, beliefs they *don't* hold, pedagogies they *aren't* trained with, gesture again and again toward very different possibilities for what it might mean to write and to learn to write—toward a different training that might enable student writers to test ideas by working them, in the words of Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* narrator, "in and out of my daily life" (16).

DOODLES, ELISIONS, ELLIPSES, AND OTHER WRITINGS BETWEEN THE LINES

A university education, according to the *A Room of One's Own* narrator, means the difference between shepherding one's questions neatly into pens and watching them fly "like a frightened flock hither and thither, helter-skelter, pursued by a whole pack of hounds"; between a notebook ordered under headings A, B, and C, and one "riot[ing] with the wildest scribble and contradictory jottings"; between forming a conclusion, and "doodling" between the lines (28-30). Woolf writes:

> But while I pondered I had unconsciously, in my listlessness, in my desperation, been drawing a picture where I should, like my neighbor, have been writing a conclusion. It was the face and the figure of Professor von X engaged in writing his monumental work entitled *The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex*. He was not in my picture a man attractive to women. [… I] "began drawing cart-wheels and circles over the angry professor's face till he looked like a burning bush or a flaming comet. (30)

Woolf's narrator—call her "Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please"—has pursued her women-and-fiction research question from the closed doors of Oxbridge to the British Library. A composite of women—many Marys—her disorderly notes and limning, as if unconsciously, of Professor von X at his writing, indicate what Pamela Annas calls the "complex political act in which the self and the world struggle in and through the medium of language" that occurs "whenever a woman sits down to write" ("Style as Politics" 63). "Mary's" writing necessarily takes place in the unwelcome company of the professor: by drawing him she makes visible his felt presence. By picking up a pen, she has engaged him. Indeed, he crowds her page: his efforts undermine and oppose hers; hers will be used to illustrate or to refute the points that he has already made. But Mary does not write the outlines and conclusions that characterize the professor's writing or that of the male student physically seated beside her. She ignores their neat lines, forming von X out of scribble, a figure of fun—first he's vaguely undesirable in a way only women can discern; then his vaguely undesirable visage is cart-wheeled, circled, over; then he's inked out entirely. Her doodling in the

library both materializes his specter and serves as an analogy for what might happen when women write irreverently, out of line, and a lot.

It's no wonder, then, that Mary suggests a research project for other women as she goes about her own. She prods women students:

> But these contributions [her own ruminations that men need to define themselves against an inferior other] to the dangerous and fascinating psychology of the other sex—it is one, *I hope, that you will investigate* when you have five hundred a year of your own—were interrupted by the necessity of paying the bill.
>
> […] the life of the average Elizabethan woman must be scattered about somewhere, could one collect it and make a book of it. It would be ambitious beyond my daring, I thought, looking about the shelves for books that were not there, to suggest to the *students of those famous colleges [Newnham and Girton] that they should re-write history*, though I own that it often seems a little queer as it is, unreal, lop-sides; but why should they not add a supplement to history? Calling it, of course, by some inconspicuous name so that women might figure there without impropriety?
>
> The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself. *An amusing book might be made of it if some young student at Girton or Newnham would collect examples and deduce a theory*—but she would need thick gloves on her hands, and bars to protect her of solid gold. (33, 37, 42, emphases mine)

As herself a composite of women, as a writer who cites the writing of women (from Lady Winchilsea to Aphra Behn and Jane Austen), as a student calling on her female peers to investigate, collect examples, deduce theories, re-write history, "Mary" thickens the network of women whose words, cart-wheeling across time and page, together write out Professor von X and his angry face.

To conclude my discussion of Woolf and Stein as students, I will consider together a passage by Woolf spaced with ellipses and one by Stein that also reproduces an elision—a significant blank space in which a woman's story goes untold. I have tracked their resistance to the "section man's" and "Professor von X's" closed, conformity-demanding pedagogies: their ironic double talk, allusions to daily lives greater than and unrepresentable by daily themes, even an embrace of the genre of the disaffected student, doodling, as scribble-writing with its own performative impact. In these final passages, Woolf and Stein leave space for other women both as writers and as reader-witnesses. Woolf indexes "great" events that "constitute the historian's view of the past," listing the chapter headings "Professor Trevelyan's" *History of England*:

> 'The Manor House Court and the Methods of Open-field Agriculture… The Cistercians and Sheep-farming…The Crusades…The University… The House of Commons… The Hundred Years' War… The War of the Roses… The Renaissance Scholars … The Dissolution of the Monasteries… Agrarian and Religious Strife… The Origin of English Sea Power… The Armada…' and so on. (*Room* 37)

Her ellipses make these events and movements—a series in which men's wars (The Crusades) and men's scholarship (The University) figure heavily—visually stand out

from the rest of human history, which remains untold, the mnemonic province of mute dots rather than emphatic capital letters. She again uses the title "professor," emphasizing both that Trevelyan's is a voice institutionally endorsed and that his ideas are not just stuff for reading and discussion, but for teaching and *learning*: though "Mary" has no place at Cambridge, Trevelyan's cultural status makes him, sadly, her "professor" too. Mary opens his text in search of women's history, but finds women accounted for only in marriage practices that give fathers and husbands mastery over their exchange. But Woolf's ellipses mark their absence: the stories between discrete events are missing, but space for their inclusion is saved. Again, an illustrative writing practice (…) —kin to Mary's marginalia—un-closes history and defies (time)linearity both figuratively and literally. The ellipses call for women's participation in a recuperative history and, further, in writing and history-telling more generally.

As Woolf calls for writers, so does student Stein call for reader-witnesses. "In the Red Deeps," a theme dated October 10, 1894, meditates on the infliction of suffering both through physical acts and through narrative: Stein's narrator reads about tortures with relish, but in time begins to fear causing pain, physically and psychically.[3] Her conclusion is below, reproduced as printed in Rosalind Miller's *Gertrude Stein: Form and Intelligibility*, with her professor's additions in double parentheses, words and phrases he has struck in parentheses and italics, and extra words Stein herself included but decided against in single parenthesis:

[3] Like Woolf's allusions to women writers in *Room*, Stein's invocation of George Eliot thickens the network of women writers.

> One night I was alone down-stairs reading (*a practice*) (.) I loved ((to read)) in spite of the fact that often when thus engaged there came suddenly into my consciousness ((without my being able to explain why)) a (*sudden*) fear of something unknown (,) intangible (,) that seemed to be around me everywhere. This night it was the Cenci of Shelley that I was reading. I went on and on until I came to (pa) the passage where Beatrice having just left her father returns to her mother and (*brother fear*), horror, almost madness in her face; I dropped the book ((,)) for before my eyes ((,)) shrinking toward the wall was the veritable Beatrice in her flowing white robes. This was truly the most horrid of the deeps. Oh her beautiful face! I can never lose sight of it as I saw it that night and none can paint the look with which she gazed on me. Gazed, no gazes on me now. Enough enough! I cannot tell you more. I fear it, I fear it still. (109)

Stein has written an unspoken story—I cannot tell you more—of an unspoken story: Percy Shelley's *The Cenci: A Tragedy in Five Acts* is "about" an unnamed injury inflicted on beautiful Beatrice by her father, which, because of its unspeakability (she cannot accuse him), cannot be remedied by law. The offense against Beatrice is not dramatized and she cannot name it "without a name" (Act III l.15); she wishes that she "could find a word that might make known/The crime of my destroyer" (ln.154-155); the crime is "unimaginable, wrapped/In hideous hints" (l.165-166). Beatrice, with her mother's help, commits parricide—a crime that, of course, *does* have a name, and punishment to match. Rather than occasion mercy, Beatrice incites patriarchal fear so strong that she and her mother are executed. Cardinal Camillo ruminates on why she must be killed: "Parricide grows so rife,/That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young/Will strangle us all,

dozing in our chairs./Authority, and power, and hoary hair/Are grown crimes capital" (Act V l.20-24). Though Camillo suspects Beatrice to have had "just cause," he must strike her down to preserve the authority of men.

I end with this theme because Stein depicts palpable, even frighteningly intense connections formed among women who are real and imagined, past and present, through writing and reading; women who are, shockingly, "around me everywhere"—a striking, powerful, and unintended consequence of her education. Moreover, Stein too preserves a blank space for what cannot yet be said in an institutional setting, as if holding Beatrice's silence in trust. Finally, Stein's own institutional patriarch exerts his authority over the piece, both in an endnote that, while acknowledging its "imaginative force," concludes that the theme is "marred by awkward and unidiomatic uses of language; by wretched sentence structure; and by occasional patches of melodramatic writing which give a jarring effect of pathos. Rewrite" (109-10). Perhaps more compelling, though, are his line edits: he forces his presence into the text, ordering and correcting it, intruding on its silences. This theme is Stein's first in English A: her struggle for her writing has begun.

ASSIGNING THE ELLIPSIS

Earlier in this chapter, I linked official histories and closed pedagogies as exclusive, monolithic narratives; my student studies of Stein and Woolf's *Room of One's Own* narrator reveal these women's use of unsanctioned learning spaces and frames of reference—often private sites and personal and everyday experiences—and ironic and performative write-arounds, scribble, and elisions. It is telling that both "students" are acutely aware of institutional authority in its global and local dimensions (from the architectural to the lines on the page); the official has a place in their texts if only so these

students can emphasize as alternatives their strategies for writing and learning, very much like Woolf contrasts the official and the alternative in *Mrs. Dalloway*—Big Ben's chime alongside another, tardy clock "with its lapful of odds and ends," the stone etching around statues' bases, landlocked, while the puff-letters of skywriting float above.

Similarly, these women write about war, the defining catastrophe of their time, but always through the personal and the domestic, the accessible rather than the untouchable. This choice is important because it does not remove history from our ordinary hands, does not cordon off an archive or elevate a historian, or a teacher, to relate a finished story; does not "manage" a crisis, but cedes space for people to live through one, and collect our many voices against yet another. Because I teach courses in rhetoric and writing in which instructors are encouraged to incorporate "current events" both to sharpen students' critical reading and persuasive writing skills in ways that seem to them relevant, and to demonstrate that these skills enable them to engage in public life, I have tried to allow women modernists' strategies for teaching readers to witness war to inform my teaching during years dramatically marked by terrorism and conflict. Thus, I have sought ways to enable students to find personal entry points into history, past and present, that insistently, sometimes quietly, always idiosyncratically, participate in narratives that might otherwise speak for them. Alyssa Harad compelling expresses a similar aim:

> the claim of feminist teachers has been that we are teaching students to see, to read, to think and to act for themselves. In the midst of our urgent need to bear witness to the ongoing events of the day, it is good to remember that the commitment to mediating hierarchy, which so often feels like a loss of control,

> may in the end be the most efficient methodology. (*The Scholar and Feminist Online*)

In other words, part of wartime teaching might be to replace a singular, authorized speaker with the various voices of our students.

Specifically, I teach a lower-division course in critical reading and persuasive writing at the University of Texas at Austin called *Rhetoric of the Homefront*. The course is grouped around three homefronts: Baghdad during the 2003 Iraq war, London during the Blitz, and the United States during an ongoing "war on terror." We read "official" and "homefront" texts alongside one another: Winston Churchill's speeches next to Virginia Woolf's "Thoughts on Peace During an Air Raid"; George W. Bush's speeches alongside "Baghdad Blogger" Salam Pax's online diary. Indeed, while Churchill and Bush speak of good and evil, war and nation, Pax and Woolf stare at the ceilings of their houses, together, though separated by decades and continents. Pax, 2003: "There are no waving masses of people welcoming the Americans nor are they surrendering by the thousands. People are doing what all of us are, sitting in their homes hoping that a bomb doesn't fall on them and keeping their doors shut." Woolf, 1940: "All the search lights are erect. They point to a spot exactly above this roof. At any second a bomb may fall on this very room. One, two, three, four, five, six…." My course offers lessons in identifying and understanding rhetorical strategy. But beyond that, I want to engage extraordinary events happening both in the past and right now in order to give students a chance to find voices in them. For example, for their final papers, students have the option to write and analyze their own homefront narrative:

> After September 11th, the United States became a homefront in a war on terror—homeland security alerts, duct tape, anxiety, and waiting have, to some degree, become part of our American experience. You may tell your own homefront story as part of your final project, then offer a rhetorical analysis identifying a central message at the heart of your narrative and the content, formal, and stylistic decisions you've made to convey that message effectively.

But before students offer their own histories, I ask them to dedicate their growing rhetorical skills to the stories of others: in other words, I ask students to add stories where Woolf left ellipses, to use their writing to thicken a network of historical participants, to become witness-readers. During our unit on the Second World War, they imagine a person living in London during the Blitz, write a character sketch of that person, and research what life might have been like for that person. They then design a multimedia exhibition—narrative; photographs that they take or find; music—about their character's life. Ultimately, they write a rhetorical analysis that identifies what they wanted to convey about their character, and how they did it across the variety of materials they gathered—their critical and creative texts inform and enable one another. Woolf used a similar writing process in *The Pargiters*, her novel-essay about three generations of the Pargiter family that attends to their daily lives and the historical events that impact those lives. John Whittier-Ferguson writes: "So extensive, so various are these essays that run beside the fictional episodes describing the Pargiters' lives, and so regularly do those fictional episodes openly anticipate or repeat points made in the essays, that […] these categories do not remain segregated." By interlacing imagination and empathy with research and argument, idiosyncratic and official history, the project differently

constructs the basis on which one speaks authoritatively: students' private and public voices work together rather than oppositionally.[4] Moreover, the project allows students to be involved in textual production; to establish archives of materials in which they believe valuable histories reside; and to see through their own creative efforts the way arguments are made not only through linear narrative, but also in idiosyncratic style, color, light, and sound. [See Appendix B for assignment.]

I turn to their fine work—undertaken after readings from Woolf's wartime diaries; Stein's *Mrs. Reynolds*, which they read selections of aloud; and Bowen's "The Demon Lover"; among other texts—to illustrate what I perceive as the value of jointly expanding our definitions of war stories and of academic writing. I advocate introducing students—both as basic readers and as basic writers—to idiosyncratic histories and to unacknowledged historical sites and participants. Such a curriculum seeks to provide institutional sanction for, rather than foreclose, students' developing skills and voices, and to raise the stakes of the materials we teach rather than lower them: writing and recovering history become, at least for a semester, their work rather than Professor von X's. Moreover, I am pleased to include three of their studies, if briefly, as part my own. It's their efforts that, I believe, best make a case for the continuing relevance of the subject of my dissertation project.

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[4] In "Experience as Evidence: Teaching Students to Write Honestly and Knowledgeably about Public Issues," Carolyn Matalene urges writing instructors to value students' life experiences, which she believes empowers them as writers keeps them from resorting to "disembodied public voice[s]" and "abstract agents" (Corbett 182, 185).

Physics major Jiyeon Choi imagines the Blitz from a dark apartment, its windows blackened as a mandatory air raid precaution.[5] Despite the blind view, Choi's character, Abigale Stanhope, looks outward for the first time during the Blitz: she is an artist who, Choi explains, painted with fanciful color flourishes before the war, but now has changed her palette to black and white. Along with her color scheme, her subjects change—from flowers to the human face—as she comes to see political and historical import for her work. Choi writes:

> Sitting next to the window my brother painted black. […] I am au fait with my dark room. Without natural sunlight. Without flowers. […]A lot of neighbors moved to Air Raid Shelters near Tube stations or to relatives' houses more than 100 kilometers from London. But I love my city. More and more. Barrage balloons hovering over the Thames became landmarks. From my waterfront home in Millbank, I check every morning if they are still there. The air raid siren is the weak background cantata of my life now. When I draw, the siren sound makes me focus. My eyes follow the tip of my brush. […]Following other surrealist artists, Mondrian decided to leave London. For New York. At the end of September, he told The London Times; 'For art it is too difficult in London.' But art should exist everywhere. Art and goodness should not surrender under weapons.

Choi describes her character as an art-world "follower," a "dilettante" and "name-dropper" before the war: indeed, early in the character sketch, famous names pepper her wordy prose. ("During my years in The Slade School of Fine Art, I met Ben Nicholson

[5] Jiyeon Choi was accepted into UT's Normandy Scholars program this fall; she will travel to Europe to learn about the Second World War firsthand and cited this project in her application materials.

who introduced me to Henry Moore and Piet Mondrian in coming years.") But, she writes, "I depict changes in her character through the transformation of sentence structure in my character profile—her voice grows more distinct and direct as she pursues historically relevant work." Choi describes the artist's work, "Her drawing is not dramatic or gory, but it contains hope for a bold visual protest against German attack" (Illustration 4.1).

Engineering major and pre-medical student Daniel Yang tries to reproduce the feeling of precious time passing in the sketch of his character, "Air Raid Warden," an uneasy immigrant to England who downplays his personal history to fit into a narrative of national heroism that, he hopes, will erase difference and finally integrate his story with "England's":

> As i rushed to my post at the Kingsbury Tavern as the Air Raid Warden for District 11, the sky grew dark with a thick metallic cloud of bombers stretching for miles. Each London district had its own ARP (Air Raid Precautions) base that monitored bombed sites and coordinated rescue missions. The old abandoned Kingsbury Tavern housed the ARP headquarters in District 11, south of London. Soon after i arrived at the tavern, the first calls of distress came through. i watched as the lads plotted on the oversized street maps the locations of the areas hit in the district. Slowly, the phone calls died down and then—nothing. We knew this meant that power lines and telephone lines had been hit because the whistle of the bombs continued as they plummeted from the sky. With the disposal of the AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) under my command, i dispatched fire engines to the first sites hit. […] Frequently keeping tabs with the lads at the map, i discovered a

> huge fire forming around the area surrounding St. Paul's Cathedral. […]" i had more fire engines at my disposal [….] i grabbed the rest of my staff, the lads at the table, and even some of the ladies of the WVS, and ventured out to St. Paul's with the remaining fire trucks. […] In the future, by responding faster to emergencies, destruction and casualties can be minimized. Therefore, i plan on placing fire engines every 700 meters in my district….

Yang writes that his warden aims to "shatter the traditional notion of a 'delayed' reaction time." The sketch opens with his responding to distress calls, then shifts to his anticipating them. Yang explains that the "narrative consists entirely of [the warden's] actions. 'i rushed… i dispatched… i ordered… i raced.'" Yang explains:

> His use of the lowercase 'i' shifts emphasis to the action verb. He is constantly responding to a series of events outside of his control. Time is of the essence […] and he strives to shorten his 'reaction time' by predicting future events and acting proactively. His placement of 'fire engines every 700 meters' for the next day [reflects a] transform[ation] from a passive, to an active, to finally a *proactive* individual.

In his visual representations of Air Raid Warden, Yang blurs the man's face, suggesting, perhaps, both the benefits and costs of the man's successful assimilation. But Yang insists that Air Raid Warden's indistinct visage on a World War II memorial—at once making him a part of both London's history and its landscape—indicates the potential of people, under crisis, to overcome "social barriers."

It is, on the other hand, a powerful longing for a distinct identity that animates humanities major Jacklyn Nemunaitis' profile of "James Edward Lambert." James takes

on the likes and dislikes of an older boy, Mick, and "falls into the group of Jimmy's, disposable child thieves, who from an outsider's perspective, are one shade of grungy-faced punks." To assert himself, he illuminates his name with doodles and elevates his title to "Sir James, Master Thief" in Nemunaitis' visual materials. She writes, "Being 12 years old, James is still a child, despite his claims otherwise, and still thinks as such. The character analysis is overrun with *I*'s, and this is to be expected as James is the most important thing in James's life." She notes that, as a thief who takes advantage of Blitz destruction and transience, James steals both for cash and for "himself" more literally—he seeks to "materialize" a unique self through unique swag. Again, he falters, his things always already someone else's and, she writes, his imaginings of a distinct future limited to what he hopes will be a distinguished career on the battlefield (Illustration 4.2 a-b).

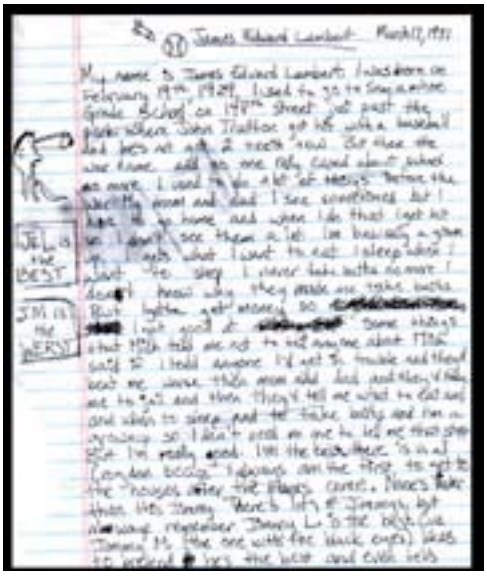
In their assignments, Choi, Yang, and Nemunaitis all attended carefully and complexly to their characters, asking, "What would Abigale Stanhope's studio look like?" "How would Air Raid Warden map his adoptive city in his attempt to protect its landmarks? What music would thunder in his head as he worked?" (Yang selects strains from an English composer, Gustav Holst, whose parents were immigrants.) "What would James steal? How would his handwriting look on a page?" Their efforts to elbow a place for their characters in a long-written history—filling the space of the ellipsis, pushing against discretely contained events—is an exercise that prepares them well to write their own homefront stories: to make contact with the "official" history of their times with their elbows, and with their handwriting, from the sites that are important to them.

Illustration 4.1. Artist’s Room

From exhibition by Jiyeon Choi. Stanholpe’s unused luggage on the left indicates her decision not to “follow,” but to stay and paint.

Illustration 4.2 a-b. Child Thief Artifacts

a. 

b. 

"James Edward Lambert," from exhibition from Jacklyn Nemunaitis

Afterward

Assigning writing that is personally invested, imaginative, idiosyncratic, replete with everyday lives and places, in a course that is also about war is, I think, a hopeful choice as an instructor; closing a dissertation, that is also about war, with students' alternative histories is hopeful too. By refusing as instructors, students, and writers to cede history to a more powerful teller, we also refuse to give up its trajectory: our snapshots and peaches and cakes and scraps have, in conversation, a cumulative pull. Thus, I'll end this project as I began it, with a collage. The pieces that follow—first from a radio spot of Bowen comparing the power of her imaginative (rather than institutional) education to that of bombs, the second from a book by composition professor Richard Miller integrating personal writing and catastrophic history, the third a description of a youth project to reclaim canonical texts as a survival strategy, the fourth Stein's refusal to allow the technologies of violence to generate writing—collectively assert active, everyday reading and writing practices as an alternative to historical and institutional violence. Hosting this conversation, making this "meeting point," at which literary modernist and peace-aspiring citizen, teacher and irrepressible student, come together with things to say each to the other, has been both my work in the project and hope beyond it.

Elizabeth Bowen explained, in "Crises," a 1947 piece for BBC radio, that her own historical education had been "discouraging." She describes a youthful essay (she was 12) on the seventeenth-century English civil war: "I had written:

> ‘Now the Roundheads hated the Cavaliers because the Cavaliers were better looking than they were…’
>
> ‘Oh,’ they said, returning the essay, ‘oh, but you can’t say that!’
>
> ‘Why—who says I can’t say what?’
>
> ‘You can’t say that because it is not the case.’

Bowen contrasts her confrontation with official history with the imaginative history she reads in Ryder Haggard’s *She*: a novel that, she points out, literally journeys away from Cambridge, a metonym for institutionalized history and education, toward a personal history as represented in the scraps of an old archive: “How different’ (says Holly, who tells the story) is the scene whereof I have now to tell from that which has now been told! Gone are the quiet college rooms, gone the wind-swayed English elm, the cawing rooks and the familiar volumes on the shelves,” Bowen writes, citing Haggard’s text (4). Bowen remembers reading *She* as if she lived it:

> *She* was historic—it stands for the first totally violent impact I ever received from print. After *She*, print gave me a new feeling. I was prepared to handle any book like a bomb. It was—did I realize that all the time—Horace Holly, not She-who-must-be-obeyed who did the trick. Writing—that creaking, pedantic, arch, prim, opaque, over-worded writing…what could it do? That was the revelation [….]
>
> The power of the pen. The inventive pen. (8-9).

The book was “like a bomb”—it had impact—but a creative rather than a destructive one. In pursuing an education beyond the disciplining of her schoolroom, Bowen discovers

authorship and the possibility that the imaginative and the personal might, through her writing, come together to transform the historical. No wonder, then, she kept writing throughout the Second World War, despite the bomb-destruction of her own home—she saw her writing as participating in an alternative.

In *Writing at the End of the World*, Richard Miller also considers the coming together of personal and academic modes of learning, and bombs. He questions how humanities instructors should proceed when the "curative" powers we often assign to reading and writing "cannot protect [students] from the violent changes our culture is undergoing" (4, 5). Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the teens who killed their classmates at Columbine High School in 1999, "wrote and produced for all different sorts of media [….] They read, they wrote, they talked. And at the end of the process, they tried to kill everyone they could," Miller writes (4-5); he cites Chris McCandless, a recent college grad who loved Jack London and Tolstoy, recommended books to friends and strangers, and whose "emaciated body was found, along with his favorite books and his journal" in the Alaskan wilderness in 1992—the end of a "spiritual journey" inspired by his reading (11). Miller continues his litany of readers and writers misled, destroyed by these uncritical practices, and questions how instructors might better prepare students when the enormity of their times—as marked by September 11th—renders so many stories mute. Miller's answer comes in his attempt to narrate the personal pain of his own childhood spent with a suicidal father, alongside his attempt to describe 9-11 through the destruction it produced—its tons of material ruins, much of it smashed to dust. In both instances, he attempts to pull together scraps—unassuming childhood images, pieces of the airplane wreckage, office supplies. Miller himself performs through his text an experiment in

"think[ing] anew about writing as a place where the personal and the academic, the private and the public, the individual and the institutional, are always inextricably woven"—the most urgent writing for our students, he argues (31).

Reading and creating, juxtaposing sheets of the canon and their daily lives, the Kids of Survival—a group of students in the Bronx—form collages as part of a curriculum that incorporates art into literature. "A book [*The Scarlet Letter*, *Amerika*] is often taken apart and the pages glued onto Belgian linen, which is used as a ground for some of the painting. Some of the text may be left open to the viewer. The final visual works are inspired by the connections between the actual reading of the book, the teenagers' own lives, and additional imagery such as that of Picasso" (Hoffman 31).

Pressed to write a story she did not want to tell, Gertrude Stein considered the bomb in a tiny piece called "Reflections on the Atomic Bomb," written in 1946, the last year of her life: "They asked me what I thought of the atomic bomb. I said I had not been able to take any interest in it. […] What is the use, if they are really as destructive as all that there is nothing left and if there is nothing there nobody to be interested and nothing to be interested about." She concludes: "Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense. They listen so much that they forget to be natural. This is a nice story." Not a passive listener—they listen so much—Stein gestures toward another story, one that creates rather than leaves "nothing left," one she will help to write, in which an atom bomb has no place.

Appendix A

Modern Literature in Progress

> It was impossible to make head or tail of it all, I decided, glancing with envy at the reader next door who was making the neatest abstracts, headed often with an A or a B or a C, while my own notebooks rioted with the wildest scribble and contradictory jottings.
>
> —Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

The narrator of Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own* is, perhaps, near and dear to our experience: she's a student with a research question. A composite of many women—call her "Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please"—she contemplates "women and fiction" on college campuses, at the library, as she flips through the books on her own shelves, and as she goes about her everyday life. Woolf herself kept rich diaries and reading journals in which she recorded and refined the insights and experiences that became her famous works.

This course introduces major writers of the first half of the twentieth century including Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Samuel Beckett, and Virginia Woolf. We will investigate modern literature "in progress" by engaging in close analysis of published texts and, in some cases, of writers' fascinating, messy notes and drafts. As we track the writing process of now-canonical texts, we will discuss the implications, both for individual works and for a larger modernist project, of the kinds of changes writers made as their texts evolved, changes that often unsettle more than add clarity. Moreover, we will read modernists' accounts of *themselves* in progress: how do their representations of their (and their characters') development as writers conform to or subvert our expectations for narratives of education and personal progress? Do these accounts suggest a common vision among literary modernists?

This course will sharpen students' reading and interpretive skills with challenging modernist texts, and establish (and revise) definitions modernism more broadly. In addition, students will be asked to attend to and reflect on their own critical and writerly processes.

Texts:

- Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record* (1912)
- James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

  Also: "Proteus" and "Nausicaa" episodes of *Ulysses* (1922); Joyce's schema for the novel; pages from the *Little Review*, which serialized *Ulysses*, especially advertising, letters to the editor, and editorial responses to "reader critics"; papers from *United States v. One Book Called "Ulysses"*

- Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933)

  Also: Selections from Stein's freshman compositions at Radcliffe College and accounts of her writing process and writer's block in *Everybody's Autobiography* (coursepack)

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Between the Acts* (1941)

  Also: Selections from *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* and Virginia Woolf's reading notebooks (coursepack)

- Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

Also: Selections from manuscripts, page proofs, and Beckett's theater workbook (coursepack)

Sample Assignment:

In the weeks before you begin your final critical paper for our class, you will be asked to maintain a reading notebook—a twenty-first century version Woolf's. A general research interest—say, representation of history in works we've read by Woolf and Beckett, or representations of home in Woolf and Stein—should focus your notebook. You should include excerpts from and your observations about scholarly works that relate to your topic, and also your observations about ways you see your topic manifested in your everyday life. You're welcome to include multimedia entries (we'll discuss optional multimedia "notebooking" software that you can use for free and that might facilitate this assignment). Accounts of conversations, fragments of news articles, photos you find, take, samples of songs, are welcome, as long as they are drawn into the larger topic by your annotations. This notebook will ultimately form the scaffolding of your final paper.

Appendix B

Stories from the Homefront Project

Your second essay for our course takes a nontraditional form: you'll work individually, or constellate into groups no larger than three, to represent the homefront experience of a person or group of people living in London during the Blitz. As a class, we've looked at narratives by ordinary people: stories told in domestic-detail-laden diaries, in music, in fiction—stories written between-the-lines of official history. Now it's your job to tell the story of the characters you take on—your job is to give them a distinct voice, distinct preoccupations, distinct ways of communicating. For example, you might form a fictional family, work as a reporter in London, be a young woman volunteer, etc.

You'll research what life would have been like for your character. Each of you will create a character profile to flesh out your identity. Then you'll create a multimedia representation of your or your group's wartime experience through text, sound, and images.

Here's how the project breaks down:

(1) Each student or group of students will find at least three sources that help elucidate what life might have been like for your character(s): you'll create an annotated bibliography of these sources. This means you'll have a bibliography with at least three entries, including a discussion of what each entry *is* and how it's useful to your project. Each entry should be about three sentences long. You should bring in your sources to share with your group—I'll help with copies, if needed. At least one of your sources should be from print texts.

(2) Each student will write a one-and-half- to two-page (double-spaced) character profile.

(3) Each student or group will create some kind of "exhibition" in an online space. It should include several elements—consider using bits of narrative, pictures (that you've found or taken), sound or film clips (if you find any).

(4) Individuals will write a two-page, groups a three-page, rhetorical analysis explaining what key messages you were trying to convey and how, specifically, you conveyed them.

Appendix C

Modernism and Modern Wars

Another speculative course, Modernism and Modern Wars *is named for Margot Norris' 1998 introduction to an issue of* Modern Fiction Studies *that examined modernists as war writers from the vantage point of ongoing violence at the end of the twentieth century. This course shares the insight that our status as contemporary citizens—as war is waged both in Iraq and against terror—allows us entry points into modernist texts that might seem impenetrable. We will read texts that engage the First and Second world wars directly and obliquely and we will characterize literary modernism through its response to war trauma. The course concludes with Wallace Stegner's post-World War II short story "The View from the Balcony" about American university students for whom a fraternity party becomes sharply inflected by the memory of battles abroad. Students will have an opportunity, if they choose, to write their own experiences of living on the homefront, reflecting critically on if and how the work of modernist writers informs their writing.*

Modernism and Modern Wars

My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.
—Wilfred Owen, Preface to *Disabled and Other Poems*

The Germans were over this house last night and the night before that.
Here they are again. All the searchlights are erect. They point at a spot
exactly over this roof. At any second a bomb may fall on this very room.
One, two, three, four, five, six … the seconds pass.
—Virginia Woolf, "Thought on Peace During an Air Raid"

This course introduces modern literature in the historical context of the First and Second world wars. As we discuss characteristics of literary modernism—including representations of psychic interiority, the breakdown of the reliable narrator, and what Paul Fussell describes as the emergence of irony—we will question to what degree modern writers speak to, withdraw from, and present alternatives to the violence of their times. We will examine texts that engage war directly and obliquely, by combatants and noncombatants, set on the battlefield and at home. You will have an opportunity, if you choose, to write your own experiences living on the homefront during a war on terror, reflecting critically on if and how your choices of style, form, and content are informed by—or reject—the work of particular modernist writers.

Texts:

- Ford Maddox Ford, *The Good Soldier* (1915)
- Wilfred Owen, selected poems from the First World War (coursepack)

- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)
- Ernest Hemmingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)
- E.E. Cummings, *The Enormous Room* (1922, brief selections from typescript edition with drawings by the author, coursepack)
- Elizabeth Bowen, "The Demon Lover" (1941)
- T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding" (1942)
- Gertrude Stein, *Mrs. Reynolds* and "Off We All Went to See Germany" (1952, 1945, brief selections, coursepack)
- Alice B. Toklas, *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* (1954, selections, coursepack)
- Wallace Stegner, "The View from the Balcony" (1948, coursepack)

Secondary texts including:
Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (1975, chapter one, coursepack)
Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920, selections, coursepack)

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