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The Wisest Sappho: Thoughts and Visions of H.D. in Jeanette Winterson's Art & Lies

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THE WISEST SAPPHO: THOUGHTS AND VISIONS OF H.D. IN JEANETTE WINTERTON’S ART & LIES

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To my wife, Ilona, without whose love, support, and example this tome would never have been finished.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................. Page vi

Introduction ......................................................................................................... Page 1

1. Lesbian Feminist and Postmodern Interpretations ........................................ Page 13

2. Quest for Self-Knowledge and Healing ........................................................ Page 34

3. Re-visioning Helen and Sappho ..................................................................... Page 56
   - Sappho as Literary Foremother ................................................................... Page 60
   - Self-Authorization ....................................................................................... Page 65
   - Changing Helen; Changing Sappho .......................................................... Page 68

4. Poet-Prophet-Artist ......................................................................................... Page 84
   - Revisiting Blake ......................................................................................... Page 92
   - Eros and Death .......................................................................................... Page 96
   - Art as Salvation ......................................................................................... Page 100
   - New Jerusalem .......................................................................................... Page 105

Conclusion ......................................................................................................... Page 113

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................ Page 121

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .............................................................................. Page 133
ABSTRACT

Jeanette Winterson’s affinity for modernist works, writers, and conceptions has been well-documented by her, particularly in her book of aesthetic essays, *Art Objects*. I propose that the body of her work needs to be understood within the concept of post-modernism as a continuation of the modernist project. There have been a few critics and/or scholars who have recognized the modernist aspects of her works, and some have even dubbed her “post-modern” or “neo-modern.”

While a smattering of scholars have noted pieces of older texts surfacing within Winterson’s works, what is missing is a solid investigation of her relationship to the modernist writers. She has given tremendous amounts of intimations to guide readers in this direction. *Art Objects* is a series of essays about her love of language, and of art and literature, especially referencing the modernists. Winterson has written: “There are seven books and they make a whole cycle. *Oranges, The Passion, Sexing the Cherry, Written on the Body, Art and Lies, Gut Symmetries*, and *The PowerBook*...[I]t is in the cycle of the fiction that I can be found.” From this it may be extrapolated that she uses the “canon” as source material for her own writing. I propose that, in this “cycle” of fiction, she works both intertextually and stylistically with James Joyce in *Oranges are not the only fruit*; with T.S. Eliot in *Sexing the Cherry*; with Virginia Woolf in *Written on the Body*; and with H.D. in *Art & Lies*. She not only references these writers in her work, but consciously undertakes to work collaboratively with them in creating her own body of work. She has resurrected their notions of humanity, their vision of literature as an art form, and the importance of uniting introspection with the *Zeitgeist*. This dissertation will treat three fundamental elements of H.D.’s work which figure prominently within the fifth book in Winterson’s modernist cycle, *Art & Lies*: the psychoanalytical quest for self-knowledge and healing; a re-visioning of the work and image of Sappho; and the assumption of the identity of poet-prophet.
INTRODUCTION

Literary criticism of Jeanette Winterson’s fiction began not long after the initial success of her first published work, *Oranges are not the only fruit*. Both supportive and hostile scholars and critics began by focusing on her lesbianism and on the non-traditional sexualities present in her books. Her private life and media missteps were increasingly used as ammunition with which to attack her literary output. On the other hand, she was embraced by queer theorists and feminist scholars who praised her post-modern interpretations of contemporary life. Her works are, however, as much about literature as about life. By this is meant the use of language and form, as well as issues and aesthetics. In this regard, she follows the modernist movement. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century a generation of modernists sought a new means of expressing the human condition. In reaction to social, realist literature, the modernists turned inward, seeking to examine and sometimes alter the interior universe of the individual. The most talented among them also managed to relate this personal interior to the public sphere, capturing the mood of a nation, a generation, a moment in history. Taking her cue from the modernists, and especially from T.S. Eliot and his ideas on the new writer’s place within the continuum of literary history, Winterson finds inspiration for her talent within the tradition of European literature. In his seminal essay on modernist aesthetics, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, Eliot discussed the “timeless” aspect of "tradition":

"The historical sense compels a man [sic] to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a
writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

Winterson, writing in her own essay, “A Work of My Own”, echoes not only Virginia Woolf’s essay title, “A Room of One’s Own”, but Eliot’s concept of the artist as inheritor of an artistic tradition, working within a contemporary present:

I have to respect my ancestors and not try to part company before we know each other well. A writer uninterested in her lineage is a writer who has no lineage. The slow gestations and transformations of language are my proper study and there can be no limit on that study. I cannot do new work without known work. Major writers and minor writers alike are vital. The only criterion is that they be true; that they had something a little different to say and a way of saying it that was entirely their own. To live alongside such writers is to live within a complete literary tradition. (Art Objects 172)

Winterson’s affinity for modernist works, writers, and conceptions has been well-documented by her, particularly in her book of aesthetic essays, Art Objects. For her, it was a period of explosive creativity, second only, perhaps, to the Renaissance:

The move into the Renaissance period from the medieval was a profound freeing up of ideas and interplay of ideas. The buoyancy and exuberance of the Renaissance comes out of a confidence and a curiosity that we don’t have. We are insecure and cynical and this makes us hostile to experiment. The Renaissance was Experiment, and I believe that had it not been for the disastrous effect on European culture of two World Wars, what we call Modernism might have proved only the start of a period in history as genuinely new. (190-91)

It has been claimed that Winterson’s fiction is considered (and/or is considered by herself to be) the successor to Virginia Woolf’s work. I believe that this has led to confusion as to her over-arching literary project. I propose that the body of her work needs to be understood within the concept of post-modernism as a continuation of the modernist project, rather than as a rejection of it. There have been a few critics and/or scholars who have recognized the modernist aspects of her works and some have even dubbed her “post-modern” or “neo-modern.” In an essay contained within one of the few
books of scholarly articles on Winterson’s fiction, *Sponsored by Demons*, Lyn Pykett has called Winterson’s work “post-Modernist”:

Winterson's postmodernism is post-Modernist not in the sense of constituting a break with Modernism or superseding it, but rather as a collaborative dialogue with Modernism which continues what Winterson sees as the Modernist project. (53)

James Woods, ostensibly writing a review of *Art & Lies* in the *London Review of Books*, writes more about her complete *oeuvre* up to 1994. He has dubbed it “Modernist striving” and does not intend the phrase as a compliment (4). In “Bonded by language”, a scholarly article on Winterson’s use of language within *Written on the Body*, Brian Finney, notes her “indebtedness to modernists” and describes her as “a neo-modernist rather than a postmodernist” (11).

While a smattering of scholars have noted pieces of older texts surfacing within Winterson’s works, what is missing is a solid investigation of her relationship to the modernist writers and their undertakings. Winterson herself has given tremendous amounts of intimations to guide readers of her fiction in this direction:

When we read a modern writer who is true, part of the excitement we get from her style is the excitement of other styles that have passed that way …The alert reader, especially the reader/writer, is ready for clues, clues that unravel the past, as well as the modern writer we are enjoying. (*Art Objects* 181)

In *Art Objects*, she writes a series of essays about her love of language, and of art and literature, especially referencing the modernist writers. Pykett has depicted this work as such an indicator:

Winterson's rereading of her own fictions in the essays in *Art Objects*, together with a repeated invocation of the authority of the ‘major Modernists’ which self-consciously calls attention to her own ‘raiding’ and reworking of their writings, invites us to place her work in a continuing Modernist tradition. (59)
Winterson’s frustration at what she sees as a dismissal of the modernists also surfaces in *Art Objects*. In this book of essays, subtitled “Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery”, she explains the importance of the work done by the modernists, and laments the loss of an important lineage of English literary evolution. She finds that, “too many academics, critics and reviewers tout a system in which Modernism is a kind of cul-de-sac, a literary bywater which produced a few brilliant names but which was errant to the true current of literature” (176). Winterson undertakes to pick up this lost thread of literary tradition, intertwining their works within her own, following Eliot’s guidance. In “Tradition”, he had written, “the most individual parts of his [a poet’s] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously” (38). The modernists, while referencing older works and traditions, were very much writers of their own time. Winterson, too, marries these two concepts in that her works not only embrace the traditional literary canon and function in relation to it, but also address issues and inquiries contemporary to her own time.

Modernism has often been broken into two categories: the “high” and the “avant-garde”. Shari Benstock, in her essay entitled “Expatriate Sapphic Modernism,” distinguished these branches. She stated that the high modernists worked towards “a political agenda of exclusion” that emphasized dualistic renderings and attempted to “separate art from history,” and that the avant-garde “announce[d] itself as a rupture, a break with the past, and marks a cultural-historical shift” (186). Joanna Dehler, in her book, *Fragments of Desire: Sapphic Fictions in Works by H.D., Judy Grahn, and Monique Wittig*, continues this thought with the insight that women modernists were faced with the challenge of placing themselves within the traditional, male-dominated, literary heritage, while their subject matter or point of view might have been “Other”:

For the women writers of the period, this dichotomy between ‘high’ and ‘avant-garde’ modernism often led to a tension between the desire to become part of a new modernist canon and the urge to reject any constraints, including modernist ones. The desire to create literature that has canonical status as well as mythical ‘weight’ was often at odds with the desire to express what had been excluded and labeled as ‘Other.’ Some modernist writers tried to confront this dilemma by encoding and ‘masking’ their messages in their poetry and prose—references to Sappho’s heritage often served as a useful mask. Conforming to the
classicist and elitist agenda of ‘high modernism,’ these references facilitated delivering subversive messages directed against gender stereotypes. (31-32)

Writing in the latter part of the twentieth century, Winterson has continued the modernist line of inquiry in her own fiction. Finding much of the literature of the intervening years unequal to the explorations of the modernists, Winterson builds on their program to continue the thread of literary and poetic progress. She is right in thinking that there have been few women writers during those intervening years who have reached as far into experimentation with poetics as well as with personal and social issues. Few have even attempted to do both, let alone succeeded. Winterson also taps into a well of literature from before the nineteenth century, as did the modernists. She has undertaken examinations of the human condition as she finds it, and, through her interior musings, makes the personal political. In her fiction, she has worked intellectually and aesthetically with modernist writers such as James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and, in Art & Lies, the poet, H.D. She has resurrected their notions of humanity, their vision of literature as an art form, and the importance of uniting introspection with the Zeitgeist. Continuing her interest as a reader of English literature, Winterson consciously undertook to work intertextually and investigatively with the modernists in creating her own body of work. She follows Eliot’s counsel, respecting what Pykett has called “the relationship of the individual talent to the literary tradition as one of disciplined immersion, rupture, and renewal” (58).

For Winterson, the immersion is the beginning. In response to a question posed to her through her website, she defended the importance of knowing our literary heritage she answered, “Everybody should read the Canon of Western Literature, even if you don’t accept it as canonical. For a reader, it’s riches. For a writer, it’s roots” (Winterson FAQs). Once one is familiar with what has come before, one can begin to break with the past and work towards a revitalization of the tradition. The renewal is to be found within her fiction. Winterson has stated that:

There are seven books and they make a whole cycle. Oranges, The Passion, Sexing the Cherry, Written on the Body, Art and Lies, Gut Symmetries, and The PowerBook….I’ve done a lot of work over the last
fifteen years, all the books, screenplays, loads of journalism, but it is in the cycle of the fiction that I can be found. (Winterson, Powerbook)

From these pronouncements it may be extrapolated that she uses the “canon” as source material for her own writing. I propose that, in this “cycle” of fiction, she works both intertextually and stylistically with James Joyce in *Oranges are not the only fruit*; with T.S. Eliot in *Sexing the Cherry*; with Virginia Woolf in *Written on the Body*; and with H.D. in *Art & Lies*. She not only references these writers in her work, but undertakes to continue their projects in her own writings. Pykett, commenting on the modernist aspects to be found in Winterson’s writings, states that:

*Art Objects* repeatedly invites the reader to see Winterson’s postmodernism as in fact a post-Modernism. *Art Objects* is, in large part, Winterson's attempt to situate herself in relation to the tradition of Modernism and to affirm her commitment to Modernism as a project of relevance. (57)

In discussing some of Winterson’s fiction, Pykett noted that Winterson works both with and within the modernist tradition, and she perceives a relationship between Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Winterson’s *Oranges are not the only fruit*:

If *Art Objects* is a kind of homage to the ‘major’ Modernist writers—James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and, to a lesser extent, Gertrude Stein—so too is Winterson's fictional practice. Her first fiction, *Oranges*, is Winterson’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. (58)

She notices the stylistic and aesthetic resonances from Joyce permeating Winterson’s first work:

*Oranges* is not simply the story the making of the artist, and of the artist's journey towards her position as exiled visionary (a position which is not so much chosen as given), but it is also, in its form, an embodiment of that artist's aesthetic. It self-consciously attempts ‘a new way with words’ (*AO* 53), raiding (a word which Winterson herself uses more than once in this context) the storehouse of past literature and reshaping its contents to make something really new. (58)
Pykett goes neither further nor deeper with this line of inquiry. Had she, what she might have discovered was that Winterson’s book investigates many of the same themes and motifs which Joyce treated in his. In trying to reveal what goes into the making of an artist, Joyce and Winterson delve into questions of family and class, the place of school and the place of place in developing an artistic personality, and, most importantly, the consequence of religious education and its effect on sexuality.

T.S. Eliot’s influence on Winterson’s work may be observed in many of her works, especially in her play with chronological time and in the presence of concurrent time-lines. This was noted by Pykett, as well, in another throw-away line. Again, she does not follow up this line of thought; she merely notes it and moves on:

The preoccupation with simultaneity is also articulated as a concern with parallel lives...Eliot’s preoccupation with the simultaneity of time present and time past...Eliot’s is one of the several ghosts of high Modernism who haunt Winterson's fiction. (55)

This subject matter of Eliot’s is seen most clearly in Sexing the Cherry, with its juxtapositioned story lines and perhaps even overlapping personalities. Winterson, herself, has hinted at such a relationship when she wrote in Art Objects, “I was in a bookshop recently and a young man came up to me and said ‘Is Sexing the Cherry a reading of Four Quartets?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, and he kissed me” (118). Rarely giving such straight answers about the “meaning” of her work, Winterson prefers to talk about other works and other writers, allowing readers to extrapolate how these ideas might relate to her work:

To talk about my own work is difficult. If I must talk about it at all I would rather come at it sideways, through the work of writers I admire, through broader ideas about poetry and fiction and their place in the world. (Art Objects 165)

Written on the Body is the book wherein critics began to notice the influence of Virginia Woolf on Winterson’s work. This is entirely understandable because this is the work in which she interacts with Woolf’s texts. Woolf has said that Orlando was written as a love letter to Vita Sackville-West. Written is a love letter to Winterson’s partner at
the time, and fictionalizes their relationship, as well as the triangle involving her lover’s husband. The beloved of the story, Louise, has cancer, and the physiological descriptions of her body and her disease respond to a call put out by Woolf in her essay, “On Being Ill”. In this essay, Woolf inquires why illness “has not taken its place with love and battle and jealousy among the prime themes of literature” (9). Encountering illness as an intense personal experience, Woolf questions the validity of only recognizing the mind and ideas as topics appropriate to literature. The body, too, even in its less-than-glamorous manifestations, may be a suitable subject for art. And Winterson creates that art in depicting Louise’s stricken physiognomy in Written. Perhaps the most important, certainly the most discussed, aspect of Woolf’s oeuvre in Written, is the question of gender. Within Orlando, the gender of the protagonist transforms from male to female and demonstrates that, while there may be legal and social restrictions attendant upon one’s gender, there are no such boundaries in love. Winterson has taken Woolf’s playfully transgendered lover and replaced him/her with a decidedly genderless lover. While much of the discussion on the work has focused on discovering the gender of this protagonist from supposed clues in the text, the point has been missed; both Woolf and Winterson were arguing that gender is irrelevant to love.

The fifth book in Winterson’s modernist cycle is Art & Lies. It was the most canonical and least playful of her works up to that point in time. The modernist with whom she chose to work this time was the poet, H.D. Joanna Dehler comments on H.D.’s struggle to unite the high modernism of her friends with her own identity:

H.D.’s early work, in particular, exemplifies these tensions, reconciling Eliot’s and Pound’s modernist master narratives with the rebellious voice of the female lesbian ‘Other’ disruptive of the symbolic representations of gender and sexuality. (32)

Only the earliest, most widely read of H.D.’s works were considered by the early critics. These were, for the most part, limited to the poems of Sea Garden and Collected Poems. Scholarship on H.D. originally focused on her early poems and her place in the vanguard of the Imagist movement, and to a certain extent, that remains the generally accepted view of her work.
Many early scholarly works were not complimentary in their readings of her endeavors. Vincent Quinn wrote an entire book, *Hilda Doolittle (H.D.*), about a poet whose “place in modern poetry is slight” (31), as one “does not find in them the larger intellectual and social concerns of major poetry” (31). As will be pointed out by later feminist scholars, it was only that he could not find them. Her reputation he considered to have been based solely on her early poems. The remainder of her work, which he explains in depth, he finds flawed, describing her prose with terms like “fragmentary”, and “discordant” (63), “unconvincing” and “vague” (79). He only details her life up until 1925, finding nothing after that relevant to her work. This would explain why he was unable to place *Trilogy* within the context of H.D.’s experience of surviving the London Blitz, and how he failed to examine it in depth as her attempt to provide Western culture with something on which to rebuild itself.

In examining the prose fiction of *Palimpsest, Hedylus*, and *Bid Me to Live*, Quinn belittles them as being too alike in theme and style. He seems to forget that H.D. was operating in a modernist mode, undertaking projects and using material at hand to interrogate the subject and develop a style (as if Picasso did not paint the same subjects in the same style in order to work out a concept). He castigates her mingling of first- and third-person narrative (something we also find in Winterson) and decides that her works address all “problems…from a woman’s point of view” (55). He repeatedly calls her a “sensitive woman” (54, 71, 72) whose spirit is in conflict with the world. He even judges *Hedylus* as both “compelling and weak” (77), and its plot as not being realistic enough, never mind that she is re-writing myth. Finally, he decides that, while her translations from Greek are acceptable by the standards of Ezra Pound (whose authority he never questions), but that they are too like her own verse poems. He does not address the fact that she may have been (as has been noted by many others) imitating the Greek verses with her own poems to begin with.

Glenn Hughes, in the chapter, “H.D.: the Perfect Imagist”, in his book *Imagism and the Imagists*, asserts that she is talented, but “she has not perceptibly widened her art; …what she has done is to lengthen it” (111). He sees her as “a modern poet who was able to recover and communicate the peculiar sensibilities of an ancient race” (112), but not as a Modernist who used Greek style to communicate modern sensibilities. Douglas
Bush, writing in 1937, was an early critic to label H.D. as “a poet of escape”. In his book, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry*, he finds her too emotional and imprecise. He views her as a woman-poet who sees love as the *raison d’être* of a woman’s whole existence; he finds that she attempts to avoid the unsightliness and cruelty of contemporary life. Bernard F. Engel presages his intent by entitled his article in *Contemporary Literature* “H.D.: Poems that Matter and Dilutations.” He claims that she barely wrote a dozen short poems of quality and proceeds to examine some of her “bad” works. He wants to call them “feminine”, but resorts to describing them as “sensitive”. He sums up his conception of her by doubting that she had a real understanding of what it means to be an artist, implying that she had an overly indulgent and romantic view of herself as an artist.

It is beyond comprehension why so many critics spent so much time writing about a poet for whose work they had so little respect. It is not as if she had been canonized at the level of Eliot or Joyce, and so needed to be brought down a peg or two. Most of H.D.’s prose works were not even published for decades, and her later long poems were not taken into consideration by many critics. For the most part, criticism of her works remarked on the brilliance of her early poems, and expressed disappointment at any work which she produced which veered from her Imagist roots. This draws an obvious, if merely anecdotal parallel, with the reception of Jeanette Winterson’s later works during the latter half of the twentieth century. Society has moved on, and sensitivity is no longer a negative trait for a poet. Being “sensitive” is not something which will ever be used as a pejorative in reference to Winterson’s work or life, but like H.D., criticism of her work is still colored by her gender. She is more often characterized as arrogant, and her later, less lighthearted work, as pedantic. In a male writer these strengths would be described as confidence and scholarly aptitude.

Rejecting the judgments of gender-biased criticism of H.D.’s work, feminist scholars, beginning in the 1970s and 80s, brought to light another whole range of issues and influences, as well as stylistic innovations in H.D.’s later, lesser-known works. In her chapter, “Who Buried H.D?”, Susan Stanford Friedman seeks to resurrect H.D.’s reputation from the scrap heap to which much of her work has been relegated. Revealing the patriarchal bias of many of the critics and of the creators of the canon, she
demonstrates that H.D.’s career paralleled those of Eliot, Pound, William Carlos Williams, and D.H. Lawrence in that she “began writing in the aestheticism and fascination for pure form characteristic of the imagists”. Later, she “turned to epic form and myth, religious tradition, and the dream as a way of giving meaning to the cataclysms and fragmentation of the twentieth century” (46-47).

Recently, there have been books on H.D.’s analysis with Freud and her resulting literary output. Claire Buck, in her book, *H.D. and Freud: Bisexuality and a Feminine Discourse*, for example, draws correlations between H.D.’s sexual questionings and her work with Freud, stating that, “increasingly, under the influence of Havelock Ellis and Freud, H.D. used the diegetic incorporation of psychoanalysis and models of reading as a means of addressing questions of identity and sexuality” (13). Elizabeth A. Hirsh in the chapter “Imaginary Images: ‘H.D.,’ Modernism, and the Psychoanalysis of Seeing” found that “[in] ‘H.D.’s later writings psychoanalysis and modernist poetics not only intersect but actively interrogate one another” (433).

Some scholars have followed inquiries into her use of the Sappho fragments, and into her gender and sexual identity. Dehler discusses H.D.’s use of “[t]he classical mask” of Sappho’s poetry to explore lesbian desire while maintaining a place in the line of classical poetry. Susan Gubar, in her key article, “Sapphistries”, asserts that “H.D. uses the runes of Sappho as the fragments she shoves up against her own ruin” (55). Buck continues the interrogations into H.D.’s use of sexual difference within a traditional form:

> From 1919, H.D. makes sexuality and sexual difference a major theme of her writing. In the 1920s and 30s, in a series of dramatic monologues with female speakers she makes use of classical personae to explore the dilemmas of both creativity and sexuality for women. In her prose writing of the same years, novel after novel reiterates a female version of the traditional modernist narrative of the portrait of the artist as a young man. (13)

In “Creating a Women’s Mythology: H.D.’s *Helen in Egypt*”, Friedman explains how H.D. has taken images of women inherited through the Western canon and re-created the women, their voices, and their myths. She exposes H.D.’s creation of a “women’s mythology” which restores literary voice and agency to Helen of Troy, and which pushes to the center of literature a women-centered system of values. In “When a ‘Long’ Poem
is a ‘Big’ Poem,” Friedman lays out the strategy whereby women writers revive the tarnished images of female figures. She uses H.D.’s “re-visioning” the image of Helen as her prime example.

A few scholars have also commented on the prophetic quality of H.D.’s poetry. Alicia Ostriker asserts that, with Trilogy, H.D. chose to use her poetry to expound her vision:

[It is] a long poem which will grapple with the giant issues of twentieth-century poetry: the need to recover a coherent idea of self and society from the shards of social fragmentation, the apocalyptic horror of war, and the confusion and distress arising from changing gender relations; the need to construct or invent some grounds of spiritual faith in a world dominated by materialism and doubt; and the need to redefine the nature and uses of poetry and the imagination.” (“Rule” 339)

As we will see, that this is also what Winterson has done in Art & Lies. In placing Trilogy in a line of “long poems” which include, for her, Dante’s Commedia, Blake’s visionary poems, and Wordsworth’s Prelude, Ostriker defines a “long poem” as “philosophical and discursive, partly narrative, ultimately visionary” (“Rule” 339). Ostriker asserts elsewhere that a major element of H.D.’s poetry is engaged in “defining the poet as poet-priestess, composer of sacred rituals” (“Poet” 31).

These four elements, Imagist language, Freudian paradigms for healing, Sapphic intertextualities and female sexualities, and the role of the poet as prophet are present in Jeanette Winterson’s work of fiction, Art & Lies. This dissertation will treat the latter three: the psychoanalytical quest for self-knowledge and healing; a revisioning of the work and image of Sappho; and the assumption of the identity of poet-prophet, as they operate within Art & Lies. While concentrating on these three of H.D.’s projects, Winterson’s work resonates with philosophic thought and literary allusions from the Ancient Greeks to the Renaissance, and with poetry from Greece through the Elizabethans to the Modernists, but I will leave Winterson’s use of language for another time.
1. LESBIAN FEMINIST AND POSTMODERN INTERPRETATIONS

Much more criticism has been produced dealing with *Oranges are not the only fruit* than with any of the succeeding works by Winterson. Therefore, a greater part of this chapter will look at these critiques, rather than attempting to give equal weight to the criticism of each of Winterson’s books. In a very general way, two aspects of Winterson’s works have been the subjects of the most intense critical inspection: (how, and if) she is to be read as a writer of lesbian texts and as a writer of postmodern texts. The second of these is the most readily accepted view, as a wide range of critics and scholars have expounded on postmodern themes and aspects within her works. The first characterization is the more problematic. *Oranges* burst upon the scene with its fresh voice and its loveable young lesbian just as women scholars in both the U.S. and Europe were gaining enough credibility to have their insights treated as respected views. They were championing contemporary African-American and other women writers of color who were finding their way into print at the time, and they were re-discovering older writers (from the Harlem Renaissance, for example) who were being read with eyes schooled in feminism. Some of these scholars were re-reading various earlier writers (such as H.D.) and their female protagonists with an eye toward their less-than-completely-heterosexual identities. It was into this atmosphere that *Oranges* was released. That there was a new, young writer who wrote so well and had such enchanting ideas and a protagonist who (in spite of her conservative upbringing) had no self-loathing because of her lesbian sexuality was a revelation for them. That Winterson was willing to push the limits on sexual identity into the realm of unquestioned acceptance in contemporary society was fresh and exciting. That her first three novels continued this trend helped her maintain her position as the critics’ darling. It was with the publication of her fourth major work, *Written On The Body*, that the cracks between what was expected and what was produced began to show. The fact that the protagonist of *Written
is never given an explicitly gendered identity was seen by many as a retreat from the out-
and-proud characters she had created before. This un-gendered one was widely regarded
as a lesbian, but the refusal to label her as such meant that she was closeted, and that was
viewed as a step backward in the march toward equality and acceptance. As the focus of
her subsequent works moved even further away from the sexual identity of their
characters, the critics howled even louder. With *Art & Lies* and *Gut Symmetries*, a
number of critics no longer hedged in voicing their disapproval; Winterson’s personal
life was also cause for criticism (rather than just her literary works) and her early rising
star sank.

The drastic reversal in the critical reception of each of her subsequent books is
due to the fact that the critics’ focus on her fiction was often limited to one aspect of the
work. While Winterson’s overall project has not wavered, each book has been a stand-
alone work, investigating its own questions. It has been the refusal or inability of the
critical establishment to expand their scope of vision to encompass more than the aspects
of *Oranges* which drew them to Winterson’s work in the first place which has reduced
the number of her supporters. They have not taken their eyes off of the sexual politics of
her works, while she has gone on to create a cycle of work which explores a far greater
variety of issues than just this one, limited subject, and so Winterson has lost favor with
those who read her primarily as a writer of lesbian fiction.

Those who perceived her as a writer of post modern fiction have continued to find
interesting things to write about her work (her use of language, gender and sexuality, time
and space, lack and desire, form and theme). In large part, however, they have engaged
her work with that of some of the poststructural and psychoanalytical theories (i.e. those
of Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan) which Winterson deprecates. Winterson, in an
attempt to be better understood, has written at length in *Art Objects* of her ideas about
literature and its place with the other arts in society, and has encouraged readers to return
to and read the source materials which she mines, namely the great modernist works.
While there have been a few who have remarked upon some modernist tendencies in
some of her work, and have even dubbed her post-Modern or neo-Modern, no one has
followed up this line of enquiry. It has become widely accepted that Winterson is
considered (and/or considers herself) to be the literary heir of Virginia Woolf. What is
missing is a solid look at her relationship to other Modernist writers and their experimental undertakings. This dissertation will attempt to begin to rectify this situation, using *Art & Lies* as an example of her modernist project in order to develop a new way of reading Winterson, one more in line with her stated ideas about the literary project. This chapter, however, will focus on the two prevailing paths which criticism follows into her work.

With her essay comparing early twentieth-century lesbian texts with ones from the wave of women’s literature to come out in the 1980s, Gabrielle Griffin examines the lesbian mired in a patriarchal society with neither room to create a positive self-image nor much of a lesbian identity. While earlier, traditional heterosexual romances might have a woman try a lesbian experience before retiring to her culturally-approved place as a wife and mother, these newer lesbian texts reject the notion that a woman’s ‘true’ place is with a man. This is central to the body of later works, which, *Oranges* included, “translates itself into a counter narrative of men as insignificant and/or grotesque” (83). The protagonist of *Oranges are not the only fruit*, Jeanette, never shows any interest in men, never experiments with a man to ascertain if lesbianism is not her true identity. Jeanette’s father has not only no power in the family (or in society), but almost no existence within the text. He is a mere shadow, and as such, an implicit message that men are not important in Jeanette’s life. Griffin contends that *Oranges* is essentially a lesbian text, one which seeks to validate such an identity:

Both essentialist views (you are born one) and social constructionist views (you are made one) on lesbianism are offered. On the latter front, one of the most obvious potential contributing factors in Jeanette’s lesbianism might be that her community is composed of strong women who offer models of independence and nurturance while men do not feature or are cast in a negative light. Marriages are not represented as fulfilling for women…On the essentialist front, … Jeanette never shows any interest in men. (96-97)

Laura Doan’s widely read and cited essay, “Jeanette Winterson’s Sexing the Postmodern,” finds that Winterson’s representation of the lesbian Jeanette seems to be radical only on the surface. She asserts that Winterson has merely reversed the gender/sexuality poles and lesbianism has become the norm (at least within the confines
of the text), and heterosexuality a lifeless, loveless shell. Doan asserts that the text of *Oranges* is not a truly radical postmodern text because, “[i]n *Oranges* binaries are revealed at every turn, though never erased or eliminated. For the lesbian writer, the task, the political agenda if you will, is to displace and explode the binary” (147). So, while she is radical in centering her story on an affirmative portrayal of a happy lesbian, she is not truly radical in the “postmodern” sense in that her pole-reversing strategy does not go far enough to undo the dualisms that have been built into our cultural productions over the last millennia. Based on this line of thinking, it is surprising to find that Doan has no follow-up essay on the dualism-exploding protagonist of *Written on the Body*.

While not finding the lesbian portrayal in *Oranges* effective, Doan does, however, see promise in the multiple narratives within the text. Through metaphor (oranges and the marmalade) and the epigraphs, Doan notes Winterson’s literary innovations and a trend toward postmodernism, which is followed up in later works. For example, in addressing Villanelle’s construction in *The Passion*, Doan notes with approval that:

> Villanelle enters the male domain because of a genetic inheritance. The oddity of webbed feet can remain hidden for years beneath boots, but there is no mistaking the implications: the search for clear-cut distinctions where gender is concerned, is futile. (149)

Doan reads Villanelle, then, as a postmodern trope, with her problematic gender and her search for her “real” “self” as seeking not a unified self, but a multiple questioning of gender binaries. This, she asserts, allows for an interesting opening for lesbian space.

In “Subversive Storytelling: the Construction of Lesbian Girlhood through Fantasy and Fairy Tale in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*,” Isabel C. Anievas Gamallo views *Oranges* as a coming-out story based on the traditional *Bildungsroman*. She finds that, rather than universalizing the protagonist’s story as a way of normalizing her story (and her lesbianism), Winterson’s work centers on Jeanette’s sexual identity because, “lesbianism is not a mere accident in Winterson’s construction of girlhood. On the contrary, the search for a sexual identity shapes and orients her literary project” (124)”
In “Jeanette Winterson and the Aftermath of Feminism,” Patricia Duncker refers to 1990s postmodernism in order to separate lesbian theory from feminist theory, deciding that it rightly belongs with the then-newly-recognized queer theory. She argues that *Oranges* is a much more complicated work than those called for and created by feminists during the 1970s and early 1980s. It contains too much skepticism and play, and too many literary allusions to be a traditional feminist work of polemic. Rather than continue her examination of *Oranges* into queer theory, she reverts to feminist theory, specifically a branch of feminism which she contends examines the mother-daughter relationship. This view, which rejects Freudian (and Freudian-based psychoanalysis) views of little girls’ development, centers the mother-daughter relationship as continuing to be the primary one in the evolution of a female identity. The lesbian desire is a continuation of the first love a girl experiences: love of another woman. Jeanette’s strong bond with her mother and her mother’s personal power (and powerful personality) create a tremendous pull in favor of women. Thus, Duncker asserts, her lesbianism is not so much political as psychological.

Lauren Rusk, in *The Life Writing of Otherness: Woolf, Baldwin, Kingston, and Winterson*, believes that Winterson is in a polemical mode:

> *Oranges*, with its allegorical content, …is a didactic narrative….Jeanette, as she grows, disputes other people’s assumptions and resists fitting into pigeon-holes: missionary, heterosexual, virgin, demon. Accordingly, her narrative also defies categorization. (109-110)

For Rusk, Winterson’s text contains elements also found in other lesbian texts, such as transgressive storytelling through the use of “hybrid forms” like the inclusion of fantasy and fairy tales, and their revision to suit the author’s polemical intentions. Having noted the importance of these intertextual interruptions, Rusk reads them as more closely identified with interjections of psychological realism rather than as representations of postmodern multiplicities. For her, Jeanette rejects an identity of Otherness, asserting that her love is natural, overturning the traditional natural/unnatural dualism, and claims for herself an identity which is not defined (or limited) by her choice of lovers. This last
would refute Doan’s contention that the text adheres to dualistic world-views. The
dualism is not simply overthrown, it is thrown out.

Reading only Oranges, both Griffin and Gamallo find the depiction of Jeanette to be political as well as emotionally affective at swaying the reader to accept lesbianism as an acceptable possibility. Griffin sees it as a triumph for same-sex desire and as normalizing in that it refuses to see lesbianism as a problem. She notes that the narrative (unlike traditional literature but like the new women’s literature) pushes the male characters to the margins. She also perceives the book as analyzing the institutions of patriarchal power (especially religion) and as clarifying how women internalize its oppression of them (especially in the character of the mother and her relinquishing of her own power within her church). Gamallo sees the central theme of the book as lesbianism: normalizing it, retrieving it from the realm of the Other. By encouraging the reader to empathize with Jeanette, the text successfully subverts previous queer-monster stereotypes.

Doan, Duncker, and Rusk question the effectiveness of the perceived political strategy. Doan notes the role-reversal of the passive father and the active and strong mother characters, as well as the positive portrayals of same-sex desire as opposed to the negative representations of heterosexuality. She sees these innovations as merely superficial changes, arguing that a complete overthrow of the existing dualisms is needed in order for the work to be truly radical. She argues that Oranges is not postmodern and multiplicitous enough, but that later works correct this. Duncker, on the other hand, finds that Oranges is too postmodern, being too playful to be effectively political, even though it is stocked with feminist topics, principally the mother-daughter relationship. Rusk points out that the novel never uses the word lesbian, but decides that the novel does effectively escape the dualisms which Doan asserts it does not. For Rusk, the novel does deconstruct binary structures of male/female and hetero-/homosexual, but undermines its multiplicitous ideas by othering men. Griffin, Doan, Gamallo, and Rusk all agree that the positive portrayal of lesbian sexual identity and its differentiation from female heterosexual identity are of prime importance within the novel and for the novel within the context of contemporary literature.
Jeanette Winterson’s works have been examined through the lenses of Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan, and she has been declared a postmodern writer, based on her experiments with language, her employment of gender and sexuality, time and space, lack and desire, form and theme. Her use of intertextual references has also been widely documented (although, not in any structured way, so as to produce a cohesive theory of her use of intertextuality).

Following the trend to convert the Bildungsroman into a feminist reading for texts, Paulina Palmer, in *Contemporary Lesbian Writing: Dreams, Desire, Difference*, finds *Oranges* to be a mix of Bildungsroman and a coming-out novel, but her focus is on the functions of the multiple narratives. She finds that in her multiple discourses and use of fairy tale and fantasy, Winterson’s work is postmodern, and its innovation is the use of narrative strategies to drive the psychological development of the protagonist. By identifying Jeanette with the protagonists of other stories, we follow her to emotional landscapes beyond those which the Yorkshire narrative can provide:

*Oranges*…in true postmodern spirit, envisages and depicts subjectivity itself in terms of narrativity. Jeanette, instead of uncovering a single, static identity, constructs for herself a series of shifting, fluid selves by means of the acts of storytelling and fabulation in which she engages. (97)

Palmer notes that the role-reversals are an important strategy for undermining phallocentric gender representations. The various characters who represent Jeanette within the fairy tales and fables (including male ones) position her outside the damsel-in-distress role, thereby breaking down those paradigms. Palmer also argues that there exists within the text of *Oranges* and its intertextual play, a thesis of unoriginality, that there can be no completely original work. Postmodern works may undertake to subvert the dominant literary works, their genres, and their ideologies. She contends that “[i]mages of femininity constructed by a male-dominated culture are interrogated and problematized” (102) in *Oranges*. The fairy tales are rewritten to include a decidedly critical view of the stories of subjectivity told to little girls.

Laurel Bollinger, another early critic, finds Winterson’s use of the Bildungsroman genre to be misguided. In “Models of Female Loyalty: The Biblical Ruth in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*,” she asserts that it allows its male
protagonists to eventually leave the mother figure, but that the women are often left within the family structure and its relationships, and allowed to sink into dissatisfaction. Since there is no exit strategy for women protagonists, they are not able to develop as the male characters have. She states that the fairy tale, too, with its passive female characters, is also unhelpful for developing the strong mother-daughter relations she finds necessary to lesbian identity. While Bollinger does perceive of Jeanette’s final trip home as a sign of her maturation, she finds biblical stories of female loyalty i.e. Ruth and Naomi, to be a more natural referent for lesbian writers. She sees the blurring of the lines between fact and fiction, and between the text and its intertexts, to be effective postmodern strategies. It is not clear why she does not perceive the blurring of the outlines of Bildungsroman and fairy tale structures as effective postmodern strategies, as well.

While Bollinger details the main ideas used by Winterson from the first eight books of the Christian Bible, she finds them “reductionist” in that each only contains one primary idea and ignores the rest of the verses and stories. She contends that this construction is a successful postmodern parody which repeats the master text while subverting its ideology, and reclaiming its stories in the cause of the oppressed. The fact that Winterson was able to incorporate these books, in order, into her text in a meaningful way goes unappreciated by Bollinger, although she does assert that the fracturing of tradition(s) in the text allows a lesbian narrative to claim space among the heterosexual master narratives.

In Telling Histories: Narrativizing History, Historicizing Literature, Susana Onega contends that the non-linear narrative and the experimental structure within Oranges break with tradition and its adherence to realism and autobiography. She centers her argument on the “Deuteronomy” chapter, which she finds to be a “two page-long reflexive commentary in which we hear the voice of the adult narrator theorizing on the true nature of reality, of story-telling and of history” (137). Onega positions Winterson among the New Historicists who reject the Hegelian theory of a progressive world history. She finds, rather, within the text, a refusal to recognize a distinction between story and history, and its claim that history is coherent and objective and stories are subjective and may be incoherent (For Winterson, truth is always found in stories, in
art, rather than in reportage). Onega connects Lyotard’s ideas of patriarchy and its “myths of totality” to the New Historicists’ fracturing of universal reality; its realities being no more unbiased and true than any other ideology. Onega misreads Winterson as arguing that history is really only individual memories in order to frame this idea as problematic. She contends that for the marginalized, simply being heard was a struggle, and so their un-recorded memories make no contribution to history. For her, this idea is more modern than postmodern, following on work done by Eliot and Proust. That Winterson’s text fills the lacuna in the recorded memories file does not mitigate the view that her idea on history is un-postmodern. That Winterson has reclaimed not only fairy tales for women by endowing them with agency, but also the Bible (that paragon of patriarchal narrative), does not enter into Onega’s equation. The important factors for her are that the linearity of Jeanette’s story and the order of the Bible chapters has been broken by the interjection of the fairy tales. This creates a postmodern narrative, which (in agreement with Eliot) gives the text a truer perspective than actual autobiography. For Onega, fantasy, “the uncanny hesitation between the mimetic and the marvelous, creates a space of epistemological uncertainty where the real and the unreal coexist” (142), and that space is where a female, and in particular, a lesbian, voice can be produced and heard.

A final essay in which the postmodernism of Oranges is examined is Tess Cosslett’s “Intertextuality in Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit: The Bible, Mallory, and Jane Eyre,” which focuses on the “pirating” (16) Winterson commits in her appropriations of the master literary texts, as opposed to lighter fare, such as fairy tales. Cosslett sees potential in this type of appropriation as a feminist strategy. She finds Winterson’s use of the Bible to be less marked than the chapter titles would indicate. It is “just vague general labels, indicating a mood and a few aspects of a story” (16). She also notes that there are verses from Genesis cited in the “Numbers” chapter, and that, referring to feminist scholars’ reading of the Ruth story as a lesbian relationship (noting the use of the word “cleave”-- usually reserved for husbands), she finds it misapplied, since Jeanette ends up without someone to cleave to. For her, the principal intertextual story of the chapter is that of Perceval, and is one of exile and isolation. Jeanette’s return visit in the end, while not ending with marriage and a son, and so not adhering to true
pastiche, does provide a feminist strategy of the absence of closure. Cosslott finds that
Winterson also plays fast and loose with Arthurian legend in her use of the Perceval story. Perceval’s relationship with Arthur and his separation from him is paralleled in
that of Jeanette and her mother, such as the leader of the court/church having a favorite
who will go off and change the world. Sometimes the Perceval story suggests an
alternative, and foreshadows Jeanette’s eventual departure. That the quest’s object is
different for the ruler than for the questor (for Jeanette it is a successful lesbian romance)
is another departure from a straight pastiche, although the questors’ returns are seen as
“both a return, and the middle of an unfulfilled quest” (21).

The examinations of Winterson’s works as lesbian feminist and/or postmodernist
continue with her subsequent books. In “Fractured Bodies: Privileging the Incomplete in
Jeanette Winterson’s The Passion,” Thomas Fahy writes of the anti-imperialism found in
the fragments of bodies in The Passion. He asserts that the characters Villanelle and
Henri abandon love for sex and then Christianity for the passion of Napoleon’s crusade.
Only as they begin to rediscover their individual identities, most often through the loss of
a body part, can they separate themselves from the ambitions of empire-building. When
conquest fails them, they seek solace in creative outlets: the flowers of Henri’s garden
are his never-ending stories. Fahy contends that, as a post-modernist text, The Passion
proposes art as the solution to the incomplete, juxtaposed with the order and
completeness of unfeeling imperialism. He differentiates between fragmentation as a
modernist source of anxiety and post-modernism’s “embrace [of the ] fragmented” (98).

Lynn Pearce, in a chapter of Reading Dialogics, focused on Winterson’s
depictions of lesbians, and decided that they were not successful in advancing the cause
of lesbian politics, as they used a universalizing strategy, constructing all love as being
equal. This idea has been criticized by queer theorists for not recognizing issues and
aspects of queer love which are distinct from heterosexual relationships. Lisa Moore and
Cath Stowers dig deeper into the details of Winterson’s work to answer this charge. They
find complex lesbian narrative structures and styles.

In “Teledildonics: Virtual Lesbians in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson,” Lisa
Moore’s look at The Passion attempts to unite inquiries into Winterson’s place within
both postmodern and lesbian literature. She reaches back to Romanticism and to the convention of romantic love in lesbian fiction in order to reconcile these two concepts:

For all the obvious ways in which we can line up these novels with either of the slippery terms ‘postmodern’ and ‘lesbian’, Winterson’s fiction also significantly refuses or complicates each of them. Readers of cyberpunk or David Lodge, for example, will find in Winterson’s novels a perhaps disturbing faith in the transforming powers of romantic love, a Romantic investment in self-knowledge and sexual obsession, that accords ill with postmodern conventions of Irony and Isolation. These features of the novels, however, will be familiar to readers of lesbian fiction, in which ‘all for love’ is a recurrent theme and romantic obsession a structuring form; such themes and forms have characterized the important interventions lesbian novelists have made into the hegemony of the heterosexual love story, in the process creating their own canons and conventions. (105)

Moore does not only look at Villanelle’s depiction, but at the powerful positive impression that Henri (the male protagonist) receives of lesbian relationships between the prostitutes he encounters. He compares their tenderness with each other to the brutality of their encounters with soldiers and is envious of their passion for one another. This is, for him, the ideal love for which he longs. Lesbian love is, then, portrayed not as universalized in the usual sense, but as the pinnacle of romantic love. In the end, though, Moore decides that, by setting The Passion in the historical past, Winterson has refused to address contemporary culture’s homophobia. She argues that by resorting to an historical narrative, Winterson has created the “virtual lesbian,” a lesbian presence in literature, but one which is free from the details of contemporary society and its inherent homophobia.

In “Journeying with Jeanette: Transgressive Travels in Winterson’s Fiction,” Cath Stowers, references the women’s travel narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and sites The Passion as a counter narrative. The lesbians are not concerned with mastery over the people and places they encounter:

Travel is figured in two differing paradigms. On the one hand, there are Henri’s infantry expeditions and questing after Napoleon; on the other, the alternative model of Villanelle’s shape-shifting, fluid Venice. Napoleon personifies the masculine linear force of history-making, rationality and
war, where the feminine, woman’s history, becomes charted out of sight, considered to have no place on patriarchy’s official map of world events. (142)

Napoleon’s roads are straight; his towns organized along right angles. Whereas Venice, configured as feminine, is all curves and irrational, and does not even have roads. Stowers argues that Winterson undermines the dominant masculine discourse of history by throwing it into relief against feminine narratives; that Winterson goes beyond writing women into history. She offers Henri as a male-narrated non-linear narrative; he is not a “great man”; his life does not take place within the public sphere; he is “homesick”. Henri writes “stories”, rather than history. He emphasizes the subjective and personal nature of his writings. He is, as a result, positioned as feminine within the binary gender traditions; therefore, his tales become lesbian narratives as well.

In “The Passion: Storytelling, Fantasy, Desire,” Paulina Palmer addresses The Passion as fitting Linda Hutcheon’s concept of “historiographic metafiction”; as a text which parodies and rewrites history in light of contemporary issues. For Winterson, these are configured as lesbian. Since Henri is constructed as feminine by the text, it is he who brings in the lesbian question. It is he who documents and comments on the oppression suffered by the women around him; it is he who gives us the first reference to a lesbian relationship. Palmer notes that “[I]n addition alerting the reader to women’s oppressed plight, Henri also introduces the topics of compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian relations, both of which are integral to the novel” (104). In characterizing the text as specifically political, Palmer challenges Moore’s reading of Villanelle in “Teledildonics”. She would have it that Villanelle is a “signifier for lesbianism” (104), as she is the masculine woman, the cross-dresser. Since all of her relations with men are a result of necessity rather than desire (which is reserved for women), she is a bold-type example of the oppression of women inherent in the compulsory heterosexuality of Henri’s mother and the prostitutes. Her real passion is reserved for the Queen of Spades, the only depiction of true passion within the text. Whereas Moore contends that Villanelle as the representation of lesbianism is not as political as it is romantic and lacks reference to homophobia or other problems, Palmer argues that it does. The affair between Villanelle and the Queen of Spades ends because of the return of the husband
and the lesbian lovers are constructed as outsiders in relation to the norm of compulsory heterosexuality:

A particularly moving incident, one which depicts the position of the lesbian in hetero-patriarchy as ‘problematic in the extreme, is the episode in which Villanelle, positioned in the marginal role of outsider and voyeur, to which throughout history the lesbian has generally been relegated, gazes through the window of the Queen of Spades’ villa and watches her conversing with her husband in the social and financial security of the family home. He plants a kiss on his wife’s forehead, affirming his ownership of her and signaling the control which he exerts on her life. This episode illustrates the constraints which a phallocentric economy imposes on women’s lives, separating and inhibiting relations between them by curtailing their sexual and social freedom. (“Passion” 104-5)

In “Bending the Arrow of Time: the Continuing Postmodern Present,” Alison Lee looks at the motif of time in Winterson’s next work, Sexing the Cherry, in order to accord it the designation of postmodern text. She cites the Hopi epigraph which explains that their verbs have no tenses as Winterson’s way of indicating that her characters are free to move through time, if need be. Lee finds that the way in which the text is constructed does more than just deconstruct the Newtonian physics conceptions of time and space, but brings a social or political shape to its postmodernism. Just as the past can be separated from its historical “truth”, so, too, can the future. It can be one of many possible futures, and so, it can be acted upon; it is not yet written. In Sexing, Winterson posits a place where time and space exist together. If she is right, Lee asserts, then her readers are present in, and able to participate in, that place as much as they do in the text.

Doan finds that Sexing the Cherry is Winterson’s most successful example of lesbian postmodernism. She refers to its use of the strategies of both technique and ideology to illustrate its postmodernism. These include fragmentation, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, and pastiche as techniques and the refusal of closure, the questioning of coherence and of “grand narratives,” and the refutation of a stable reality. The lesbian ideology she finds in the breaking in of the external world on the relationship of the fairy tale princess and her female love as a critique of lesbians who attempt to replicate heterosexual relationships. Gender lines are blurred as Jordan cross-dresses, but Doan
states that “Winterson also realizes that cross-dressing—cultural perversion as cultural subversion—is only a temporary strategy to facilitate a break from imposed restrictions; it cannot enact permanent authentic social change” (151). Doan also reads the grafting of the cherry, with the outcome always being female, as a clear lesbian symbol. This deconstruction of gender which creates a hybrid disrupts the binary of traditional gender roles. For Doan, Winterson “envisions the contours and logic of a lesbian postmodernism that collapses binaries and creates a space not just for lesbians but for productive, dynamic and fluid gender pluralities and sexual positionings” (153).

In her book, *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narrative*, Marilyn R. Farwell decides that Winterson’s fiction has more in common with lesbian feminists than with male postmodernists. She argues that women have a different relationship to the challenging of Western cultural hegemony than men, and also that gay men and lesbians, as members of the marginalized, have an even more particular relation to it. Generally, lesbian texts resist closure as they resist an easy identity. She sees the Dog Woman as a metaphorical lesbian in that her heterosexual encounters are unsuccessful, as her size is uncomfortable and, therefore, opts her out of a traditional female role and identity. She is also the narrator of her own story, and as such, has the agency of a subject rather than an object. This, too, removes her from the heterosexual female object position. Her size makes her able to refuse society’s control over her body (which transgresses normative boundaries). It is by challenging the construction of femininity that she creates a space for lesbian identity.

Literary criticism of Winterson’s work continues with her next text, and Lisa Moore considers the protagonist of *Written on the Body* as the best example of a “virtual lesbian.” She asserts that the narrator is neither androgynous, nor a shape-shifter, transforming from one gender to the other and back again. It is “a figure constructed of disparate body parts, desire, identities and histories, put together in a postmodern pastiche that nonetheless allows for the grand romantic obsession of lesbian romance fiction in the best identitarian tradition of lesbian cultural politics” (110). The narrator deconstructs gender and sexual stereotypes and refuses to replace them with a new construction. In using elements from both cyberpunk (i.e. William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*) and lesbian
Moore contends that Winterson is attempting to create a new lesbian postmodernism.

Marilyn Farwell recognizes that the search for the gender of the narrator of Written On the Body is a side-track. For her, the text is lesbian for the way in which Louise’s body has been configured as “excessive”, as had the Dog Woman’s body before her. Hence, the “excessive female body is a challenge to the traditional Western textualization of the female body” (187). The narrator is conscious of this tradition (there are elements of Gothic novels, crime stories and opera in evidence), feels “trapped within a story which is fraught with clichés” (188) and the position of the narrator shifts, attempting to find new ways to express love. For Farwell, “[t]hese shifts of narrative level and voice highlight the metafictional nature of this novel. It is a story about story, about the possibility of telling the same story in a different form but no in an unrecognizable form” (189). The answer is to begin with Louise, go outside the traditional romance and reposition Louise as excessive. The cancer in her body is rapidly reproducing itself, “represent[ing] both the traditionally negative and disruptively positive descriptions of the female body as excessive” (190). Once the relationship and the lovers are repositioned as excessive in this way, they become positioned as lesbian, regardless of the lack of specifics as to the gender of the narrator. Through the use of the medical descriptions, the narrator learns Louise’s body, and then reinscribes it in poetic language, inhabiting it. The identification of the narrator with Louise’s body in these sections also denotes sameness, which may be understood as lesbian. Farwell also is the first to note the postmodern uncertainty found in the ending. Winterson does and does not have Louise return, allowing for both a happily-ever-after romantic ending or a questioning of that tradition.

For the most part, scholars and critics have indulged themselves in the search to prove the narrator’s gender identity, with the excuse that, if lesbian, it will work well with their theories of gender and sexuality: political, psychoanalytical, or postmodern narrative. In “Narration and Gender: the Role of the First-Person Narrator in Jeanette Winterson’s Written on the Body,” Ute Kauer, beginning with Gérard Genette’s ideas on narratology, recognizes that Winterson is trying to erase gender, rather than merge male and female. The text questions the reliability of the narrator because the first-person
voice comes from within the story. She finds that, although the facts may not be reliable as objective truth, the emotional experience of being in love conveyed by the text remains “true”. For Kauer, “[t]he self creates his or her own biography by finding metaphors for experiences because those metaphors are a more precise expression of emotion than facts (43). When we observe that the narrator is lying to another character in the text, the distinction between reality and fiction are again thrown into doubt.

Kauer also determines that the tradition of first-person narrative is played with, as well as gender identity. Perhaps the lack of information about the narrator (name, age, gender) is another form of ironic mask. Normally, we would only be inside the narrator’s mind, and would have access to a lot of information about that person. Within Written, however, we are occasionally addressed by the narrator, so there is a consciousness of the reader’s presence. When we look in the mirror, it is only to look within and not at the physical appearance, so that the exterior of the narrator is not shown. These facts demonstrate the challenges Winterson is creating to the traditional first-person narrative position. For Kauer, the text exposes the clichés about gender and love by negating their importance in the context of the love story. But she is irresistibly drawn to prove the narrator’s gender, as others have been. For her, the stereotypes about masculinity are poked at humorously, not directly confronted, as are the ones about femininity. She also finds that the narrator empathizes and identifies with other female characters within the text. These distinctions make it clear to Kauer that the masks assumed by the narrator are all male, and therefore the true identity must be female in accordance with the feminist questioning of feminine stereotypes.

In “Fantastic Language: Jeanette Winterson’s Recovery of the Postmodern Word,” Christy L. Burns seeks to demonstrate that Winterson is linking language with the body, and in the center section of Written on the Body, attempts a revival of both by recreating Louise’s body through memory and poetic language. The emptiness of medical/scientific language is revealed and the narrator competes with Louise’s husband, the doctor/scientist, for the right to enter her dead/dying body. Burns pushes aside the quarrel over the narrator’s gender and instead delves into Winterson’s expansion of the limits of language. She concludes that she pushes so far as to restore Louise to life simply by concretizing memory and desire through language, by fantasizing her return:
As Winterson presses on the limits of language, she hits upon its necessary mediation, the recognition that words call up visions distinctly different from those they actually present, letter-by-letter, upon the page. From the ways in which words can be sensuous and metaphors pungent, eroticism develops. The body is not a literal, scientific object in the middle section; it is only real through imagination, s it is metaphorically recalled and erotically invoked. (297)

Burns recognizes within Art & Lies Winterson’s project of using the fantastic to create a system of language in order to recover an overused and flattened language. Burns refers to Baudrillard’s simulacrum concept, a copy without original, to illustrate Winterson’s point that contemporary language use is divorced from the “real”. By only referring to images that have gone before and not to what “is”, language has lost its significance and its ability to move us: “Art, and for Winterson especially literature, provides the link between both the real and the imaginary through its medium: the Word” (293).

By disinterring and revitalizing the history of language, she seeks to infuse contemporary English with re-freshed vigor and save it from being deadened by a sterile culture, so that “[f]antasy is no longer a vision that fills up the imagination; it is the inspiration that arises in and through the sensuous and erotic aspects of language” (278).

Winterson’s use of repetition, which Burns reads as musical motifs and which play out as incantations, attempts to reclaim language from consumerist repetition. By emphasizing eroticism, she wants to make the word dance on the page and in the ear; attempting, as Burns puts it, to revive “the social imaginary, which has been disrupted by postmodern media and consumerism” (281). Burns also finds sensation to be an important evocation:

Winterson uses that which exceeds rational meaning—sensation—as she also uses fantasy and the imagination to mediate the rupture between a given and often harsh reality. She presses toward an erotic use of language that moves her writing away from cold and rational sense, taking it toward sensate meanings that mix reference with desire and seduce readers toward change rather than commanding or instructing them. (294)

In “Powerful Differences: Critique and Eros in Jeanette Winterson and Virginia Woolf,” Burns is able to link the two major contending interpretations of Winterson’s
work. She continues her study of Winterson’s *oeuvre* by comparing her writing directly with that of Virginia Woolf. While her main interest remains focused on desire, this time in the guise of *eros*, she takes note of Winterson’s call for Woolf to be read as a poet as well as a feminist writer and thinker, remarking that “her feminism and experimentalism are still not always placed in the same category” (366). So, she tracks Winterson’s attempt to “conspicuously combin[e] this visionary aspect with ardent social critique” (367). She finds within the essays in *Art Objects* that, “[f]or Winterson, Woolf is both artist and feminist” (367) and this is what she, as Woolf’s literary heritor, seeks to continue in her own work. For Burns, “[t]he problems that trouble Winterson’s work and its reception are continuously at the center of feminist discussions—those about the place of sexual desire, of righteous anger, and of the split consciousness that often defines us” (367).

Burns reflects on Woolf’s use of a severely delineated world in which Woolf’s characters moved, noting that they are more realism than her prose and structure might suggest, as she “was still enmeshed in developing a critical awareness of women’s realities in her context” (368) and did not make imaginative leaps into fantasy worlds in which things might be different. Winterson, on the other hand, “has available to her more secure histories and can enable multiple approaches, from realism to fantasy, in contemporary fiction” (369). Burns notes that Winterson’s use of an “alliance of literariness and social re-visioning” (371) seems to be that which bothers her critics most, arguing that they are quite content to recognize the value of each, just not in combination with each other. This combination is detected most clearly in Sappho’s voice, which relies on “humorous critique [and] poetic seduction” (371). Sappho is the critic-philosopher of *eros* as well as a poet. Her words are incantation; they are seduction. Continuing the argument of “Fantastic Language”, Burns finds that “[b]y infusing eroticism into Sappho’s language, [Winterson] reclaims words from advertising and media clichés” (372).

Within *Art & Lies*, Burns also finds distinct criticism of “men and capitalism” (“Powerful” 377) in the depiction of Handel’s life and the insecurities to be found behind the professional façade. As representative of both church and science, the twin pillars of patriarchy, Handel becomes a voice which speaks with the authority of one within those
institutions, but whose words are those of a feminist critique. These institutions have left him without feelings, without purpose, without a sense of self. He blames men for convincing women that these roles are to be envied and emulated. He is disengaged from life and empty of passion; he expresses “remorse and shame” (“Powerful” 377) for past, patriarchally-accepted actions, especially towards the women who have crossed his path. What saves these criticisms from pushing away the reader, according to Burns, is that they are “couched in the rhythms of Winterson’s rapturous language” (“Powerful” 378). As “‘naked truths’ and an extreme clarity of emotions are key tasks for art in Winterson’s model” (“Powerful” 378), language is employed in the service of truth. As Burns notes, Winterson found in Woolf’s language “words that cut through the semblance of the thing to the thing itself” (Art Objects 95).

Asserting that “[a]nger is centrally at issue in Woolf’s iconography” (“Powerful” 380) and that her Three Guineas was ill-received on account of its anger, Burns finds the anger in Art & Lies within Sappho’s rants against her male interpreters, but more obviously and importantly, within the depiction of Picasso’s sexual abuse. She relates this to Woolf’s own abuse, which was never openly written about by her. That Woolf could not portray this as vividly is another indication of the constraints of her time; such things were not spoken of. While society still struggles to admit its existence, Winterson gives it to us raw; the words employed by others in Picasso’s story to describe the abuse (such as the vicar’s term, ‘horseplay’) down-play the relentless viciousness depicted within Picasso’s narrative. Woolf’s Three Guineas is now read for its insight and foresight, and its anger is now considered justified. Anger is now recognized as a viable and necessary tool in the feminist toolbox and Winterson wields it well in seeking a feminist re-vision. For Picasso, the anger is non-verbal, and so, is transferred into her art. This act, in itself, is transformative and the writing of, and our reading of, the art of Winterson’s work is meant to be as well. For her, “art occupies ground unconquered by social niceties” (Art Objects 108).

In the Sappho narrative, Winterson works to “wed wisdom and desire in her writing” (“Powerful” 384) in order to achieve her goal of uniting experimental language with revolutionary ideas. Burns notes:
[the] process of engagement that finds the center point between critique and eros, the oscillating tension between the pull towards separation and the drive toward intimacy. Reading is an engagement that resists any final erasure of difference. (“Powerful” 384)

For Burns, this entails “[b]ridging, but not erasing, the distinctions between text/reader, masculine/feminine, subject/society, and politics/art” (“Powerful” 384). She finds that both Winterson and Woolf seem to call for art to be androgynous, something that is not seen as pro-active in contemporary feminist readings, rather as escapist fantasy. While Woolf proposes an androgynous artist in answering Coleridge, Winterson’s androgyny is more along the lines of cross-dressing or cross-gendering, and, as such, are experimenters, questioning if not breaking the binaries of gender construction. With her use of “rapturous prose and starkly ‘fantastic’ or nonconformist characters, Winterson mobilizes a powerful embrasure of difference that turns the artistic act of creation into the potential for change, enacted through literature and the imagination” (“Powerful” 387).

Burns finds Art & Lies to be “an orchestrated interweaving of the two necessary elements of feminist vision” (“Powerful” 388). Rather than resort to pure rant/cant, she seeks to use art to bring about social change by engaging the reader emotionally:

For Winterson, passion is important and not so dangerous. Thus, she formulates a different strategy: she does not moderate emotions so much as reach and then chart their extremes as complimentary notions….Winterson sees a map of radical extremes, of righteous anger and ecstatic vision, and her pendulum moves along this course. Hers is an ardent necessity—she must strip stale distortions away and rebuild associative connections anew….As a writer angling toward social revision, Winterson may not claim to control the nature of our response, but certainly she is working to guarantee that literature presses toward evocative political effect, ecstatic and rapturous in every impact. (“Powerful” 388-89)

It is, finally, Christy L. Burns who has been able to successfully configure the two contending interpretations of Jeanette Winterson’s works into a unified whole. In reading the “fantastic language” of the prose as an aid to the radical political strategy which Winterson has revealed, she is able, at last, to adequately explain the lesbian feminist and
postmodern projects to be found within Winterson’s fiction. It is by combining these two elements within her writings which has enabled Winterson to both enthrall and challenge us; to decry the weaknesses in our culture and to shine a light down the tunnel toward a more just world.
2. QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND HEALING

“There were things under things, as well as things inside things.”

*(Tribute to Freud)*

“There is no system that has not another system concealed within it.” *(Art & Lies)*

That the quest for self-knowledge, and its resultant healing, is a major theme within the works of H.D. should not be surprising. She was, herself, an analysand of Sigmund Freud during his last years in Vienna, and wrote *Tribute to Freud*, which investigates “[p]sychoanalysis, the science of the unraveling of the tangled skeins of the unconscious mind and the healing implicit in the process” (21). It is also a literary account of her own quest to understand her life; of her time with him and her disagreements with him, and of the insights she gained into her own psyche using his techniques. The seemingly stream-of-conscious narrative is actually constructed to demonstrate Freud’s technique of association in order to access hidden memories. It is a literary example of the return of the repressed, and urges upon us the Socratic maxim:

*Know thyself*, said the ironic Delphic oracle, and the sage or priest who framed the utterance knew that to know yourself in the full sense of the words was to know everybody. *Know thyself*, said the Professor, and plunging time and again, he amassed that store of intimate revelation contained in his impressive volumes. (110)

In *Psyche Reborn*, Susan Stanford Friedman has positioned H.D. within the development of modernist thought in that, “[t]he dissolution of symbolic systems unveiled as grand illusions impelled a literature centered on quest, art whose forms and themes were consistent with the search for new patterns of meaning” (*Psyche* 3). In placing H.D.’s work within the mainstream of modernism, Friedman has noted the
importance of quest as a central theme or motif in works by Pound, Eliot, Lawrence, Williams, and Joyce. For them, “the archetypes of quest in mythological and literary traditions [were] models of search” (Psyche 4). For H.D., the quest was an interior quest for the self and one’s own truth, or personal enlightenment, and is apparent in many of her works. Claire Buck has documented its importance in *Helen in Egypt*, noting that Helen’s “project, to decipher the ‘Amen-script’ is redefined as the psychoanalytic project of reading the self. Self-knowledge is the object of reading and the quest” (155). In her later years, H.D. broke with many of the early modernist ideas, but the search for answers to life’s questions continued to be a major theme in her writing:

In the *Trilogy* and in all the poetry she wrote thereafter, the personal and the mythological are made to serve the needs of a religious and philosophical quest to explore basic humanistic questions about women and men, life and death, love and hate, destruction and renewal, war and peace, time and eternity. (*Psyche* 8-9)

The inclusion of Freudian undertakings within her writings was not given attention by her early critics, and so a contemporary appreciation of her inquiries is absent. This theme was, however, investigated and mined with great success by later scholars. In her book *Penelope’s Web*, Friedman has described H.D.’s *Helen in Egypt* as “a lengthy sequence of lyric poems organized on the narrative principle of reflective self-analysis” (*Penelope* 358). Friedman argues that H.D.’s prose is personal and avant-garde in that it ignores the modernist dictum away from personality, and follows the jerky thread of messy emotional life. Studying the metaphor of the butterfly-spirit emerging from a cocoon of darkness found in H.D.’s *Trilogy*, she asserts in *Psyche Reborn* that, in H.D.’s work, “Knowledge is power. When the secrets of the unconscious are put in the light of reason, much of their power to haunt and control the ego is lost” (96). The imperative to investigate one’s own “secrets” is found in various works by H.D. We find it expressly stated in *Tribute to Freud*. For H.D., “The question must be propounded by the protagonist himself, he must dig it out from its buried hiding-place, he himself must find the question before it could be answered” (127-28). Again, the “protagonist” must, “clear away his own rubbish, before his particular stream, his personal life, could run
clear of obstruction into the great river of humanity, hence to the sea of superhuman perfection, the ‘Absolute’ as Socrates or Plato called it’ (128).

In reading Helen in Egypt as another of H.D.’s psychoanalytically based texts, Joanna Dehler, in Fragments of Desire, has stated that in this major work, the “know thyself” and self-examination themes are of primary importance. She notes that “[i]n his role as analyst, Theseus encourages Helen to remember and reassess the past to achieve reconciliation based upon accepting loss and pain, not suppressing them” (60). H.D., herself, states in the text of Helen in Egypt that it is necessary to “review all the past in the light of a new day” (225-6). This reassessment must begin with remembering, painful though it may be.

Jan Rosemergy has demonstrated in “Navigating the Interior Journey: The Fiction of Jeanette Winterson” that Winterson has used the quest theme in her earlier works, such as Oranges are not the only fruit and The Passion. She contends that there is “[a] central premise about the quest for self which Winterson’s fiction so consistently dramatizes: although the quest involves an outward search leading to worldly knowledge, the quest ultimately requires an interior journey” (252). Whereas Handel, Picasso, and Sappho are all on a train bound for the coast in order to escape the external constraints of their lives (church, career, family, critics), their true escape is dependent upon their making an interior journey into the dark corners of their pasts:

In her fiction Winterson portrays the journey into the external world, where gender stereotypes and oppressive institutions of family and religion limit the self. Walls and pollution are recurring metaphors for these social forces that distort the self. She also portrays the interior journey symbolized by water imagery where imagination and passion free the self. (248)

Since she has already written the theme of the interior quest into her earlier works, it is not, therefore, remarkable that Winterson should be attracted to this characteristic of H.D.’s work, and that it should be one of the aspects of that work which she would highlight in Art & Lies. Winterson stated her ideas on self-reflection in Art Objects, her book of essays on art and literature:
The psyche and the spirit do not share the instinct of the damaged body. Healing is not automatically triggered nor is danger usually avoided. Since we put ourselves in the way of hurt it seems logical to put ourselves in the way of healing. Art has more work to do than ever before but it can do that work. In a self-destructive society like our own, it is unsurprising that art as a healing force is despised. (157)

Again, Winterson asserts on the flyleaf of the first English edition of *Art & Lies* that “*Art & Lies is a question and a quest.*” The question is “How shall I live?” and the quest is to “Know thyself.” The trio of protagonists have been cocooned within their seemingly conventional lives. On their journey, their memories will be sparked, and that light will burn back into their dark pasts, bringing illumination. The resurfacing memories are the main narrative of the text, and will ultimately lead the trio to some kind of closure with the traumas they have endured and the emotional distress from which they suffer. This has to take place in order that they begin to heal and to find a new way to live. As Handel puts it:

> In the antiseptic world we try to purge ourselves of difficult things. Don’t dwell on it, switch the light off and go home. But this is home. I have to be a home to myself. I am the place I come back to and I can’t keep hiding difficult things in trunks. (117)

So we delve with them into their stored memories, in order that they might learn the lesson of compassion and find some peace. It is their road to healing, and their escape from their cocoons into the light of a new day.

Friedman finds that “[i]n the *Trilogy*, H.D. announced the rebirth of Psyche, the butterfly who emerges from the cocoon of near-death” (*Psyche* 10). We find this cocoon reflected in the train on which the protagonists in *Art & Lies* (Handel, Picasso, and Sappho) travel. The framing narrative takes place on a train, headed for the coast (the sea, the unconscious), and is told through a series of memories, each cycle of which delves deeper into the past. These are just random memories until they can be viewed within the entirety of a life; they are as H.D. put it, “priceless broken fragments that are meaningless until we find the other broken bits to match them” (*Tribute* 52). The characters’ memories take us into their pasts, beginning with how they came to be on the
train; how they left behind their previous lives. Their memories are stirred through association, but here, Winterson uses the device of the book which Handel has brought with him as the object which will set their memories in motion. For Handel, it is the book itself; for Picasso and Sappho, it is the book’s contents. We will eventually reach the moments of crisis which have shaded each of their lives and informed their experiences. These are deeply buried secrets, which must be uncovered layer by layer. Their origins, meanings, and interconnectedness must be sought out and examined “in the light of a new day.”

Winterson employs H.D.’s technique of association as well as the palimpsest theme found in several works by H.D. (including the novel, Palimpsest) in bringing her readers into the minds and memories of her protagonists. Tribute follows H.D.’s thoughts, through its associations, into memories of her family and her early life. Her mother’s image is conjured up by the stove in Freud’s office and the memory that “The Nürnberg Stove was a book that my mother had liked” (23). Her father is also accessed via the stove, as he “had a stove of that sort in the outdoor office or study he had built in the garden of my first home” (26). When Freud described the analysand who visits him before her as “considerably taller” (28), she remembers her brother as being described as “considerably taller” and recalls a few stories of him from her early childhood. Writing of two memories of her brother, she recalls, “Those memories, visions, dreams, reveries—or what you will—are different. Their texture is different, the effect they have on mind and body is different. They are healing. They are real” (51).

The search for “real” memories is also the path of Winterson’s narrative. In Art & Lies, the phrase “know thyself” is repeated as a call to Handel, Picasso, and Sappho to dredge up and remember their pasts, and begin to heal. As the train plods toward the coast (a borderline-- the place where one thing ends and another begins-- a favorite H.D. theme) our protagonists spend the time dreaming and remembering what has happened in their lives to bring them to this point. What was it they love(d), lost, and how is it they now want to live? In this sense the train journey is also that interior quest to “know thyself.” They take us with them through their interior monologues on their internal journeys.
The frame of the narrative is a train trip to the sea, with the bulk of the story being told in flashbacks and taking place in London. The time is a pseudo-contemporary setting; London, 2000 A.D., with its class divisions and clash of decay and renewal, is recognizable, although both the state religion, the Church of England, and the monarchy which was its titular head, have been stripped of their officially recognized and privileged positions. It is explained in the introductory epigram that, in order to appreciate, to “possess”, the work, we must enter into this text’s reality:

THE NATURE OF A WORK OF ART IS TO BE NOT A PART, NOR YET A COPY OF THE REAL WORLD (AS WE COMMONLY UNDERSTAND THAT PHRASE), BUT A WORLD IN ITSELF, INDEPENDENT, COMPLETE, AUTONOMOUS; AND TO POSSESS IT FULLY YOU MUST ENTER THAT WORLD, CONFORM TO ITS LAWS, AND IGNORE FOR THE TIME THE BELIEFS, AIMS, AND PARTICULAR CONDITIONS WHICH BELONG TO YOU IN THE OTHER WORLD OF REALITY.

(Oxford Lectures on Poetry: Professor Bradley: 1901)

Winterson has put us on notice that, although much of this reality seems familiar to us, she is not attempting to write a realist work. She notes that “[t]wo things significantly distinguish human beings from the other animals; an interest in the past and the possibility of language. Brought together they make a third: Art.” (AL, 137) We should, therefore, respect the seeming inconsistencies of the text (such as Sappho’s current existence) as necessary to her art and its project, and recall that much of this text takes place within memory, which allows one to voyage into realms both known and unknown. That not all memory is (f)actual was pointed out by H.D. in Tribute to Freud. H.D. and Freud:
travel far in thought, in imagination or in the realm of memory. Events happened as they happened, not all of them of course but here and there a memory or a fragment of a dream-picture is actual, is real, is like a work of art or is a work of art. (51)

In keeping with Freud’s use of mythological images and attributes as touchstones, H.D. sought to unite myth and the arts into a healing vehicle. A favorite image/hieroglyph in her longer poetic works (*Tribute to Freud, Trilogy*) is Hermes (Trismegistos)/Thoth. In *Tribute to Freud*, he is portrayed as the one to reunite the branches of thought of “[r]eligion, art, and medicine, [which] through the latter ages, became separated; they grow farther apart from day to day”(75). H.D. contends that it is “[t]hese three working together, to form a new vehicle of expression or of a new form of thinking or of living” (75) which will pull the world back from its rush to war and destruction. The society in which H.D. wrote these two works was at the beginning of a second world war in her adult lifetime. She sought to deter it from this route, and return it to the humanistic path encouraged by the arts. This was before the propaganda machines of the various countries had co-opted many artists and writers into the ranks of the belligerent. She had experienced first-hand the corrupting influence of war on men, even artists, and had written about the changes apparent in her poet-husband after he enlisted in the British Army during the first world war.

Within H.D.’s writings, the guide/messenger of healing is incarnated in Hermes/Thoth. Hermes was used as a guide; he gave direction. His statue was placed at crossroads, so that those who were unsure of the way might be directed. The image of Hermes, the god of healing, whom H.D. refers to as “Mercury,…Leader of the Dead” (*Tribute* 9), makes his appearance in *Art & Lies* to Sappho. As the “Leader of the Dead” he comes representing the hermetic knowledge attributed to him. This knowledge are the secret processes by which the regeneration of humanity is to be accomplished. Traditionally, it is contained in the lost Book of Thoth. Winterson represents this book with the book which Handel inherited from the Cardinal, and fills it with the wisdom of the ages. The necessary wisdom is to be found in the literature of western culture, especially works containing admonitions for self-knowledge and healing, and instructions
for living, for example *The Trial of Socrates*, the *Gospel of St. John* (“Let not your hearts be troubled.”), and *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

Winterson’s Sappho saw Hermes once, bringing “art and mathematics” across the ages:

> Across the burning beach a man bright-haired. His camel was the colour of washed sand. His hands and his face were golden. The light struck his shoulders and flinted away. He was run through with the sun. He carried a lance under his arm, and held, in either hand a shell and a stone. He stretched out his hand and from the shell I heard the long poem of the world. I closed my eyes to find them full of starfish where the sun beat on them in steady rhythm. My friend told me that it was his task to bury the shell and the stone before the end of time. They were all of art and mathematics. The pith and marrow of us before the end. (57)

The shell he carries is the one he will make a lyre of, and so invent music, his third important attribute, and the one which Handel will embrace at the end of the text as his path to psychic health. H.D. also uses the image of the “blameless physician,” Asklepios, in order to write of the imperative to heal. In *Tribute to Freud*, she equates this character with Freud, and his type of healing (associational, and mythological imagery) with healing as a project which the arts can undertake. Susan Stanford Friedman has commented upon this in *Psyche Reborn*:

> While H.D. accepted Freud’s categories for the unconscious and his methods of translation, she valued this psychic reality and its expressions in dream, art, and religion from a nonmaterialist, nonrationalist [read: artistic and metaphysical] perspective. (87)

H.D. and Jeanette Winterson have each expressed their faith in the healing power of art and the role of the poet-prophet in changing the direction of history away from the death drive. Love, compassion and *Eros* are the preferred moral goals. With Handel, Picasso, and Sappho, Winterson has given us three prophets of the type wished for by H.D.:

> Two or three people, with healthy bodies and the right sort of receiving brains, could turn the whole tide of human thought, could direct lightning flashes of electric power to slash across and destroy the world of dead,
murky thought. Two or three people gathered together in the name of truth, beauty, over-mind consciousness could bring the whole force of this power back into the world. (Notes 27)

Handel is our cultural critic and guide for most of the narrative. It is he who describes the “world in itself” of the text (and, ultimately ties together the threads of the three voices’ stories). He is the outsider’s voice from inside the Church, the upper class, the professional class. He was a Catholic priest and a surgeon, who, although he is highly-respected by his medical colleagues, is seen as an eccentric because of his religious faith and his lack of “family life.” Handel, the “breast man,” has no women in his private life. His colleagues have both wives and mistresses and look upon his celibacy with suspicion.

As Handel muses on his life, he philosophizes on his/our secular, consumer-oriented society, comparing it with the values and ideals that he was taught by the Catholic Church. He finds society lacking: there is sex, but no romance; sentiments, but no true love. There is a corporatized church and a commodified royalty. For him, these operate to fill the spaces left by faith and fealty. Not that Handel, as a Catholic, seeks the reestablishment of the official Church of England, nor a reinstatement of the monarchy, but he observes that they are among the shallow concepts with which people seek to fill the void in their psychic and emotional lives. They, too, are seekers, only theirs is an unconscious quest, their lives lived unquestioned, unexamined. Even when they admit to being unhappy in their lives, as does one colleague, they do not undertake changes. The central concept of “Know thyself” is that the unexamined life is not worth living. So, as we review his life with him, it becomes apparent that what his chosen professions lack, which Handel does not, is compassion. He has not been able to express this emotion for so long; it has become deeply buried and his emotions in general have become inured to life. He has created a solitary existence that requires only surface contact between him and those with whom he interacts. His quest will be the search for the source of his withdrawal, and the means to reconnect with himself emotionally and with others externally.

In general, we work our way backward into Handel’s past. He has recently survived the public scandal and embarrassment of removing the wrong breast from a
patient, but this experience, and the discounting by his colleagues and society of the patient’s importance (she was an older, less profitable, prostitute) have caused him to again break with his profession and to question what he wants to do with his life. Previously, he had left the priesthood because it insisted he stifle any compassion he may have felt toward the human frailty of his parishioners:

I wanted to go out among the poor and dispossessed and bring them the Good News. They did not want the good news; they wanted condoms, and I thought that they should have them. I was defrocked for slipping them in the free Bibles I gave out. That was in Brazil. (190)

After pursuing and rejecting two careers chosen in order to serve humanity, he is again at a crossroads in his life. The question “How shall I live?” haunts him.

As a young man, Handel resists the advances of a fellow student. He hesitates, loses her, and is, in turn, lost. He will never again have an opportunity for love and will become accustomed to, if not content with, his solitary, celibate life. He is able to notice the beauty of a woman (and of her body) as she lies on his examination table, but he is not moved by it. He has repressed the entirety of his emotional life. His happy early memories are of the hour he spent each afternoon in his mother’s company. Yet his emotional detachment left him unable to truly mourn her death.

Eventually, we reach his childhood relationship with an old Cardinal, who, while engaging in a sexual relationship with him, takes him under his wing and teaches him of the arts and beauty. Within this context, we are treated to a picture of the hypocrisy within the Church and its attitudes toward sex and heresy. The Cardinal, whose own childhood love was a great castrato, encourages Handel in both his intention to enter the Church and in his singing. This culminates in his arranging, unbeknownst to the parents, for a medical castration for Handel in order that his voice might develop the power and beauty of a castrato.

The surgery is discovered after the fact and the relationship with the Cardinal is forbidden by the parents, who send Handel away to boarding school. When he is taken from the Cardinal’s presence, he loses access to the beauty and pageantry that he has known from both the Church and the opera. He asks, “Which cut did the harm? His or
their's?” (201). His castration and its subsequent sense of loss, is, then, the crux of the matter. In the presence of the Cardinal, being a castrato felt normal. In the outside world, Handel is aware of being different, Other. This is why he shied away from a sexual encounter with his friend whom he loved, why he has remained celibate even though he is no longer a priest, and the reason he has lived so emotionally detached. As he advances through school and the seminary, he holds onto music and opera as a talisman of that lost beauty. For Handel, the quest is for that which he lost: beauty, music, and the ability to access an emotional life.

Picasso is fleeing a family life that has almost destroyed her. She has to her advantage inner strength, resilience, and a sense of purpose. She wants to paint, but, in order to find her own vision, she is compelled to leave. As Jan Rosemergy has noted, an essential part of the quest motif in Winterson’s work has been the realization that “finding one’s self requires breaking free of the parent’s vision and fabricating one’s own vision of the self” (250). Picasso’s family members have each assigned her an image from which she must break free:

‘This is you,’ says my mother, holding up her drawing.
‘This is you,’ says my father, who is something of a cartoonist.
‘This is you,’ says my brother, who only ever draws himself.
(161-2)

Uppermost in Picasso’s mind as the train takes her away from her family is the misery rooted in the sexual abuse visited upon her by her brother, and the unwillingness of the adults around her to recognize and intercede on her behalf. We are given vivid depictions of this lifetime of abuse:

[M]y brother used me, night after night, as a cesspit for his bloated adolescence…

[H]er brother and his angry Prod that punished her for being lovely, clever and quick…

Matthew had torn at her body as crows do lambs, attacking the soft fleshy parts and leaving the creature alive…
Ten years of Matthew’s love embraces and I knew better than to fight. He had twice broken my wrists, once dislocated my hip, and the last time, two years ago, fractured my collar bone. (42, 82, 85, 156)

Early on in her story, we are convinced that her endurance and survival of this abuse is the key to her suffering and her quest for renewal. Picasso seeks an escape from sexual slavery, as well as encouragement for her painting, and love. We eventually learn that the members of her family are not all biologically related, although the ones who are, her father and brother, are responsible for most of her physical and psychological damage. Her father, Sir Jack, from whom she seeks approval and affection, belittles her burgeoning artistic impulses, sneering, “A woman who paints is like a man who weeps. Both do it badly” (38). Picasso has lost not only her innocence, but any concept of family. Those around her do not nurture and protect her. Rather, they are the perpetrators of her suffering. We find out, too, that her mother did not appear to perceive what was happening, and that she constantly expresses her disappointment that her daughter is not a pleasing young thing, conforming to her role as the daughter of an up-and-coming family:

‘You were always a difficult child.’
‘If only you were more affectionate.’
‘Why don’t you smile like other little girls?’
‘Heartless…that’s what you are. Heartless.’ (41, 85, 154)

This external shut-down, perceived by her mother, belies Picasso’s inner life. She wants to be an artist: “She was ambitious, but she did not confuse her desire to paint with an ability to do so” (38). She has found an artistic outlet for the emotional reality she is unable to verbalize; it is channeled into her painting: “When Picasso looked at a Cézanne apple, she felt all the desire of Eve standing on the brink of the world, paradise falling away” (40). For her, paradise is lost. She is, therefore, a seeker of a different kind of knowledge other than the experiential knowledge gained from her life. She wants a bite of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, a taste of wisdom and insight.
When Picasso tries to get the vicar to intervene and stop her abuse, he tells her not to exaggerate about “horse-play”, and to talk to her mother. We learn that, after falling off the roof of her house, “she spent most of her stay in the psychiatric unit of St Sebastian the Martyr, private hospital for the mentally ill” (83). There, too, no one wanted to believe her accounts of what had happened to her at home, so she learned not to speak, which was interpreted as a further sign of her psychological illness. The permanent limp caused by the fall is an external sign of the internal damage caused by her life. It is the only damage anyone notices.

After returning home from the “hospital”, she remembers being up on the parapet that night:

I have been thinking back and back to that night on the parapet and the resolution of wings. I should have been killed. It was intended that I should have been killed. There is more to the story but it has taken me a long time to remember it. I have not wanted to remember it. When I told them in the hospital they said I was inventing. My mother is certain I am inventing. It is easier that way. Memory can be murder. (155)

Her brother was home from boarding school, and violently attacked and raped her again. She retaliated by smearing paint all over him. After, seeking the soothing cold of the air outside the attic window, she was confronted by her father. He accused her of having attacked her brother, as the brother had charged. She told her father what really happened, threatening to disclose the abuse to the police. Her father, refusing to allow her to tarnish his reputation by revealing that all is not domestic bliss within his family, pushed her from the roof. The one person from whom she sought approval, from whom she wanted love, whose love she valued, has betrayed her. The abuse by her brother pales in comparison to this act of aggression and betrayal by her father. Upon finally remembering this event, and recognizing its significance, she makes the decision to leave home for good. This is one lie too big to keep to herself and continue living within this household. Her departure ends the suffering she has known, and begins a quest for love and safety within a family of affinity, one that will nurture her and her talent, rather than harming her. She wants to put an end to her life as a victim of her family: “I will not be what I was”(93).
In *Art & Lies*, Sappho is portrayed as both the historical poet from the sixth century B.C.E and as that same poetic voice in a contemporary context. She has endured more than two millennia of commentary on her life and works. She is both a modern-day lesbian poet and an ancient Lesbian poet. What is missing are her erudition and her poetic voice, and her love of women, or a woman. What remains of her history is mostly salacious accounts by various male writers of her love-life, and stories of the Church burnings of her works. Her name now means only a sexuality (“Say my name and you say sex”), but it is not a sexuality necessarily applied to her because of her work, but, rather by reputation. Even the account of her death has been hetero-cized. Despite all her love poems to women, she purportedly kills herself for love of a young man.

Sappho was known as a great philosopher; her works were noted for their love of wisdom: “she is called by a late scholiast who knew more of her than we can hope to learn from these brief fragments, ‘The Wise Sappho’” (*Notes* 62). H.D. queries, “If moderation is wisdom, if constancy in love is wisdom, was she wise?” (*Notes* 64)

Winterson echoes that question, but the inconstancy referred to by H.D. is missing: “Was it wise to fall in love with Sophia, one of nine children, and if not the most chaste, the most difficult to please?” (*AL* 56) Her quest is for a woman to love, who will re-inspire her pen and her tongue. Her muse comes in the form of Picasso, whose given name is Sophia. All her various loves have been replaced by Winterson with Picasso/Sophia. With Picasso, Winterson re-endows Sappho with her wisdom and her muse (Sophia being one of the Muses), and with her poetic voice. Winterson’s Sappho, inspired by Picasso/Sophia, writes new poetry to her love.

For Sappho, one of the earliest poets to use the first-person singular in relation to a lyrical “you” in order to project a more personal emotional expression, the quest is to rediscover her voice, her words, her muse. H.D. marveled at her ability to construct “perfect and flawless (as in her verse, she carved from current Aeolic dialect, immortal phrases) the whole, the perfection, the undying spirit of goddess, muse or sacred being from the simple grace of some tall, half-developed girl” (*Notes* 65). Railing against the loss of most of the nine volumes of her work, Sappho demands, “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY POEMS?” repeatedly throughout *Art & Lies*. The answer comes within the text. Winterson puts Sappho’s words and passion back into her own mouth, as
she rediscovers her love of women and wisdom in Sophia. This is discussed further in the chapter on Re-visioning.

We learn of the history of Sappho and of her works, most of which are known chiefly through depictions by later writers, particularly Latin poets, who cited her as examples of poetic perfection. She was vilified by later writers, who wrote lurid stories of her love-life. Her infamy became so great that she was singled out by Savonarola for book-burning, presumably on account of her slatternly reputation, rather than her poems. Decrying the intentional destruction of her work by the Catholic Church during the Italian Renaissance, Sappho rewrites Socrates’ statement of the theme of the text as “‘Know thyself,’ said Socrates. ‘Know thyself,’ said Sappho, ‘and make sure that the Church never finds out’” (AL 54).

In the works of both H.D. and Winterson, there is in evidence the concept of the individual being psychologically dead, as well as a societal malaise or death, and of the necessity of a rebirth. H.D. delved into this subject with Freud and highlighted it in *Tribute to Freud*:

Eros and Death, those two were the chief subjects--in fact, the only subjects--of the Professor’s eternal pre-occupation. They are still gripped, struggling in the dead-lock. Hercules struggled with Death and is still struggling. But the Professor himself proclaimed the Herculean power of Eros and we know that it was written from the beginning that Love is stronger than Death. (156)

Through Handel’s musings, we are brought to understand that what is killing humanity today is not an aerial bombardment, as H.D. underwent while writing *Trilogy*, but a shallow, materialist culture, peopled by the psychically dead. For Handel, those around him are not living. They are the dead; this London is a city of the dead. There is, he contends, a way out of this void. It entails attending to the Self. For him, “the Self is not a random collection of stray desires striving to be satisfied, nor is it only by suppressing such desires…that any social cohesion is possible” (24). In order to heal our culture, we must begin by healing the individuals who have been harmed by that heartless culture: “Our broken society is not born out of the triumph of the individual, but out of his
effacement” (24). Hermes comes because society has become dead and the individual quest is to not be one of the living dead. Sappho explains this cultural death:

The spirit has gone out of the world. I fear the dead bodies settling around me, the corpses of humanity, fly-blown and ragged. I fear the executive zombies, the shop zombies, the Church zombies, the writerly zombies, all mouthing platitudes, the language of the dead, mistaking hobbies for passions, the folly of the dead. When all speak the same speak the poet can no longer speak. The language is rich when it is fed from difference. Where there is no difference there is no richness. There is no distinguishing among the dead. (64)

And though it has been repressed, the wisdom of healing the sick and raising the dead still exists and contains enlightenment for the modern world. We have only to begin the journey by opening the book.

As our protagonists begin to lift the layers of repressed memory, their long suppressed pain surfaces. Experiencing this pain will be, then, the next step on the road to recovery. According to Eileen Gregory, in “Rose Cut in Rock,” suffering is essential to Sappho’s “wisdom”, which “H.D. understands not as an abstract, Platonic wisdom, not Greek sophrosyne or Christian constancy, but one gained within the nets of devastating feeling” (138). The suffering of the three voyagers is spun out in “nets” for the reader. Handel’s castration is mourned by him in his usual detached way, but we perceive the mourning he does on account of the deeper cut that is the loss of beauty and music in his life. We suffer along with Picasso as she endures her brother’s sexual abuse for years. Sappho suffers from the loss of her muse, Sophia, the inspiration for her poetry. It is through the remembering of their losses and consequent sufferings that the three begin to find their own wisdom and to answer Handel’s question, “How shall I live?” In expanding on the central theme of Art & Lies, Sappho brings out the importance of memory and remembering in the process of self-knowledge and self-healing, in spite of the temporary pain it may induce:

It is not so much something missing as something not found. Perhaps something not remembered. Plato understood it as the longing for the time, before birth, when the soul was freed from vulgar needs and bodily
restraints. For Plato, the duty of the human being was the duty to remember. To remember all that we are in the face of the little that we seem to be. Development of the soul for the soul. (145)

In *H.D.’s Freudian Poetics: Psychoanalysis in Translation*, Dianne Chisholm has also found the idea of memory and renewal as a theme in H.D.’s *Trilogy*. She finds that “[i]n *The Flowering of the Rod*, jar is a key figure, a ‘crypt’ of memory and a cryptography, whose piecing together and decoding through free association releases ‘Psyche,’ a revitalized spiritual presence intended to heal a discontented modernity” (61). Chisholm decides that “*The Flowering of the Rod* is not a ‘tale’ so much as a collection, collation, analysis, shelving or resolving of ‘fragmentary ideas, apparently unrelated’ but eventually ‘found to be part of a special layer or stratum of thought and memory’ which we, the readers, are invited to piece together skillfully in collaboration with the writer” (61). This also accords with her analysis of these layers as continuing H.D.’s interest in the motif of the palimpsest. The layers of memory must be uncovered, one at a time. This is reflected in the slow peeling away of the strata of memories by the “voices” in *Art & Lies*.

H.D. and Winterson enjoy the concept of the psyche as representing both the mind and the soul. For them, this *esprit*, this “over-mind”, as H.D. calls it in *The Wise Sappho*, is where the damage has been done, so it must be accessed in order to heal it. Our protagonists are psychologically walled off, so they will need something out of the ordinary to breach their walls. Winterson has provided a prop in the form of the book which the protagonists each reference on the journey. It acts a catalyst for their memories. Through association, they are able to access long-buried parts of their pasts. Handel has been left the book by the Cardinal, so it reminds him of his past with the Cardinal and the beginning of his love of beauty and music, which call to him again. For Picasso, its stories recall her forced sexual past. But, by placing positive accounts of love and sex in juxtaposition with her own experiences, she is given access to depictions of love which differ from what she has been shown at home. They are also different from the image of familial love which her family presented to the outside world. For Sappho, some of whose work is to be found within the book’s pages, it recalls her past literary achievements, and the joy found in their creation.
Each character undergoes a “fall”, a symbolic death, which provides a break with the past life and initiates the quest for self-discovery. Susan Stanford Friedman notes in *Psyche Reborn*, that the literary history of the Psyche story employed by H.D. follows the lead of Apuleius, who wrote that “Psyche must undergo severe trials culminated by the archetypal descent to the underworld before she can rejoin Eros” (9). As with H.D.’s work, it is “[a]fter a period of living death, [that] the soul begins its emergence as butterfly” (Psyche 9). Handel’s fall from his elevated status as a wealthy surgeon allows him to leave behind social constraints and responsibilities and begin his personal recovery. Picasso’s “fall” from the roof, gets her out of the house (although into an institution), and so, provides her with a break from the constant abuse by her brother. When she conjures up the memory of being pushed by her father, she is released from any remaining illusions about the family and familial love. Sappho’s fall/leap from the white cliffs of Leuké, while literarily killing her, carries within its mythology the alternative ending that the leap cures the leaper of the love. As Sappho remembers back, it becomes clear that it was her lover, Sophia, who leapt to her death. Perhaps it is the memory of this painful truth, rather than the fiction of her own death forced on her by later writers, which allows Sappho to begin a spiritual and artistic rebirth.

In *Notes on Thought and Vision*, H.D. proposed the arts as a healing force, which begins with remembering. For “memory is the mother, begetter of all drama, idea, music, science or song” (23). For Winterson, too, there is great good to be had from remembering past hurts and processing them through the medium of art. It is a way of dealing with the past, and yet, moving beyond it in order to engage with the future:

> The healing power of art is not a rhetorical fantasy….I know of no pain that art cannot assuage. For some, music, for some, pictures, for me, primarily, poetry, whether found in poems or in prose, cuts through noise and hurt, opens the wound to clean it, and then gradually teaches it to heal itself. Wounds need to be taught to heal themselves. (*Art Objects* 156-7)

The healing begins with forgiveness: forgiveness is requested and forgiveness must also be granted. Winterson employs a simple metaphor to convey this healing. Within the memory-releasing cocoon of the lumbering train there is a light which shines. It is a simple, yet lovely, metaphor: the light of enlightenment. The three voices, Handel,
Picasso, and Sappho, will all be touched by this light, and warmed by it, and it will shine down into the dark reaches of their past, offering psychic redemption. Handel perceives this light as he struggles to remember his past and its pain:

Long-slanted light. Light in polished spears that pierces my side and releases blood and water. The hydremic body and the unforgiving light. Why should the light forgive me?...Things in the dark, things hidden away, not for the shafts of sunlight that force the dust to dance....Remembering, the body of the past that was broken and lifeless, knitted together in a gruesome semblance of what was. I'm not there, it's gone, I know it has gone but my mind betrays me and pushes me back down winding tunnels to the chamber of the dead where a terrible pantomime is being performed. (AL 112)

The descent through the “winding tunnels to the chamber of the dead”, the self-reflection which leads to psychological self-knowledge, is the path of the narrative.

The symbolic names of the “three voices” of the title show evidence that they were chosen with an eye to their intertextuality with the over-arching theme of psychological insight and healing. As H.D. chose Helen of Troy, Sappho, and Freud as legends into whose mouths she wrote her new philosophy of insight and healing, so, too, does Winterson employ famous foils in Art & Lies. Friedrich Handel, for whom Handel (whose “Christian name is Frederick” [201]) was named, was a composer who wrote intensely emotional and, what we might recognize as psychological, lyrics. Roger Parker has noted that Handel (the composer) “stands out in the history of Italian opera before Mozart for the psychological penetration and strongly expressive musical cast of his arias, which sometimes move far beyond what either the text or the dramatic situation suggest”(58). William Berger wrote that “a Handel opera is a great vehicle for singers who have intelligence as well as natural ability, and that's when the psychological perception and inherent drama of the works comes alive in a way that would have seemed impossible a century ago” (97).

Picasso, the young female painter is named for Pablo Picasso, the major artistic innovator in the twentieth century. Having lived through both world wars, Picasso “showed that modern art could take on the humanist functions of renaissance art for the
generation that had experienced Auschwitz and barbarism elsewhere” (Lévy 5). As Roland Penrose states in his book, *Picasso*:

> The work of Picasso is more than a mirror of our times; it opens our eyes to the future. Its vitality and its insight, its tenderness and its violence, are born of an understanding and a love for humanity. His art goes far beyond a facile enchantment of the eye. It fulfils a more essential purpose - the intensification of feeling and the education of the spirit. Picasso looks at the world with new vision, and by art he enables us to do likewise. (9)

This “education of the spirit” was of paramount importance for Picasso, and, as well as leading a renewal of art, he repositioned it at the center of cultural rebirth. That Pablo Picasso thought that “[a]rt must stand up…‘to the ocean of pain and death’” (qtd. in Lévy 13), is an example that Picasso (the character) must undertake to follow in her own works. It is certainly one which Winterson displays in her writing.

Sappho, found also in H.D.’s writings, was hailed for her the emotional insight displayed in her poems. H.D., in *Notes on Thought and Vision*, described her as “The wise Sappho! She was wise, emotionally wise, we suspect with wisdom of simplicity, the blindness of genius” (*Notes* 65). That what remains of Sappho’s works are merely fragments, is a theme which H.D. exploited within her own poetry, employing various fragments as titles or epigrams, using them as a way into a thought or emotion, or as a mask from behind which to operate. That she then uses the term “fragments” to describe bits of memory in *Tribute to Freud* cannot be coincidental. The association of them with excavated findings is clearly stated:

> Fragmentary ideas, apparently unrelated, were often found to be part of a special layer or stratum of thought and memory, therefore to belong together; these were sometimes skillfully pieced together like the exquisite Greek tear-jars and iridescent glass bowls and vases. (18)

In *Art & Lies*, Winterson has reconstructed more of Sappho’s poetry within Handel’s book of ancient texts; she has also restored her life through memories filled with Sapphic phrasing. She has rebuilt her life as an extant entity and restored her voice, both wise and emotional.
The selection of the “Trio” from Richard Strauss’ Der Rosenkavalier adds to the abundance of intertextual work dealing with psychological insight. Its librettist, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, noted for pushing German poetry forward in the late nineteenth century, went on to incorporate Freud’s writings into his own literary and operatic works at the beginning of the twentieth century. Writing of Strauss’ innovations in early twentieth century opera, Mark Morris notes that the collaborations with Hoffmannsthal were ground-breaking:

The masterpieces written with librettist Hugo von Hoffmannsthal developed that understanding of the human subconscious by adding layers of symbolism designed to express the complex interplay of the unconscious and the real world, even in the least symbolic of their operas, Der Rosenkavalier. In doing so they create an ethos best explained in Jungian terms, combined with a regular delight in the illusion of time and reality that often gives that interplay a sheen of elegance and wit. By no stretch of the imagination can this be called a 19th-century view of human nature: the Pandora's box of the subconscious had been opened, and cannot be closed again. (par. 12)

As the story nears its conclusion, the remembering, the dredging up of painful memories, is completed. Lessons have been learned; insights drawn. What remains is the healing, beginning with forgiveness and an opening up to future possibilities. Winterson encourages us to recognize that the healing process must now continue. The ending is a positive one, with Picasso and Sappho finding one another (again), and Handel’s joyous burst of song. The “Trio”, as the piece from Der Rosenkavalier is known, is a song of compassion. It is one of acceptance of both the past and a recommitment to a positive present. There is within it a recognition of the power of love.

This song has been carefully chosen as it is one which Winterson has characterized as “music of surrender and understanding” and as “the proper end to the book…[and] also the point reached at the end of the book by Handel, Picasso and Sappho” (Winterson, Art & Lies) They are compassionate artists who will express their experiences, ideas, and emotions in their art, giving us new ways of seeing and understanding. Because Memory (Mnemosyne) is the mother of the muses, the ending encourages us to imagine a more artistic and productive future for our “trio” since they have made peace with their memories. They will lead the way into a new, more considered, and more compassionate
future. As Sappho asserts, “Salvation, if it comes at all, will be conscious. Ignorance is not the road to wisdom” (AL 138).
3. RE-VISIONING HELEN AND SAPPHO

“In Helen, hated of Greece”; “Helena, cursed of Greece” (Helen in Egypt)

[Sappho]: “A notorious seducer of women”; “a devil” (Art & Lies)

In her long poem, Helen in Egypt, H.D. re-visits and rehabilitates the image of one of the great (and greatly maligned) female images of literature, Helen of Troy. She revives the tradition of Helen’s time in Egypt, begun by Stesichorus, in which Helen is no longer solely to blame for the deaths of numberless Greeks and the fall of Troy. H.D. accomplishes this project by endowing Helen with a voice and an agency of her own, allowing her to tell her own story as she works her way through her past, examining her role in this history. As Susan Stanford Friedman describes it, “H.D.…. revised the story of Helen by having her narrate the tale” (“Long” 29). Winterson undertakes a similar project with her character, Sappho, in Art & Lies. Sappho notes with chagrin the stories that have been written about her by later male writers and laments the loss, through time, of the majority of her actual poetic work. Her legend is no longer built upon her literary accomplishments, but on the spurious tales told of her sexuality, which in many cases has been skewed from the woman-centered poetics of her original work to the depiction of a wanton, and heterosexual, woman. Winterson succeeds in this resurrection through a strategy called “re-vision.”

In Adrienne Rich’s 1971 essay “When the Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision,” she asserts that women wrote long poems both before and after the genre was codified. She argues that their voices were discarded or forgotten as the dominant culture narrowed the canon. Rich gives us the term “re-visioning,” which she describes as “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (35.) Friedman has taken up Rich’s term and applied it to the works of H.D. As one on “four self-authorizing strategies” employed by women poets, that which she
labels “re-visionist” (“Long” 35), Friedman defines as the “construction of the discourse of re-vision…in which the outsider immerses herself in the discourse of the inside in order to transform it” (“Long” 18-19). According to Friedman, “H.D. pioneered this strategy for the feminization of culture in twentieth-century poetry-- first in her short gynomythic poems in the twenties, then in her great revisionist epics in the forties and fifties, Trilogy…and Helen in Egypt” (“Long” 26). This strategy was necessary in order that women poets such as H.D. be able to write under the weight of millennia of the male canon. As Dianne Chisholm has shown, H.D. was conscience of the negative and/or passive role assigned to woman within the canon, and sought to open a space for herself and other women writers by manipulating the genre:

H.D. subjects the corpus of Western literature and the maligned, malignant figures of (female) sexuality it embodies to a radical treatment. She begins with the classical texts of the ancient Greeks which incubated and delivered the logos of Western thought, and specifically with the first histories and heroic epics that gave birth to the notion of Man as subject, ego, heroic individual, and historical agent. She begins here, having perceived that with the birth of Man came the repression of woman, the violent forgetting of women as signifiers of an erotic power beyond the newfound mastery of epic grammar, Platonic logic, and historical narrative. (165)

That women poets were not taken seriously is evidenced by the fact that Ezra Pound signed H.D.’s early poems (for her) with the initials H.D., rather than her full name. He thought the poems were good and wanted them to be read, so the female gender of the poet had to be disguised, else they would be relegated to the woman’s page.

As H.D.’s first book of poems, Sea Garden, had done with the Sapphic fragments, Helen in Egypt undertakes a literary dialogue with the fragmentary fictional past of Helen of Troy and continues it, attempting to reconcile its interrupted tradition with her own perspective of woman as acting subject. Sea Garden focused on the retrieval of shards of Sappho, but Helen in Egypt works toward a complete reconstruction. Friedman, continuing Rich’s concept of re-visioning asserts, “Women’s poetry can be a (w)rite—writing as ritual that undoes and redoes the myths and texts of patriarchy” (“Long” 35). Helen in Egypt both revises the Helen myth and creates a continuation of it after the fall
of Troy. Following in the tradition of Stesichorus and Euripides, Helen is not only not responsible for the Trojan War, but was not even there. In H.D.’s work, Helen is transported to Egypt where she will meet figures from her past, especially Paris and Achilles, both her lovers. In the first section, “Pallinode”, Helen and Achilles are reunited in a temple by the sea. This “Amen-temple”, exists on a transcendental plane, neither in life nor in death; in neither Greece, Sparta, nor Egypt. It is a place of remembering. In the second section, “Leuké”, Helen and Paris meet up on Leukas, the white island. Theseus, her former counselor and friend also appears as a Freudian figure, offering guidance and insight. “Eidolon”, the third section, contains a chorus of three voices: Helen, Paris and Achilles. The poem moves from one time and place to another, ignoring any strictures imposed by the boundaries of realism. Dreams, thoughts, and reminiscences are interwoven into a re-working of Helen’s story, as she searches for her own version of the truth of her life.

H.D.’s interest in Sappho is spelled out in her essay, “The Wise Sappho.” She not only is aware of Sappho’s reputation as well as of her works, but finds within the fragments a person and a personality which have been altered, ignored, abandoned, and slandered by the men who repeat, rework, and re-write her story down through the ages:

Sappho has become for us a name, an abstraction as well as a pseudonym for poignant human feeling, she is indeed rocks set in a blue sea, she is the sea itself, breaking and tortured and torturing, but never broken. She is the island of artistic perfection where the lover of ancient beauty (shipwrecked in the modern world) may yet find foothold and take breath and gain courage for new adventures and dream of yet unexplored continents and realms of future artistic achievement. She is the wise Sappho. (Notes 67)

It is as a wise Sappho which Winterson creates in Art & Lies. She, too, is a “lover of ancient beauty (shipwrecked in the modern world)” who dreams and writes of new art and new ways of living. As Celia Shiffer has noted in her essay “‘You see, I am no stranger to love’:Jeanette Winterson and the Extasy of the Word”, “[b]ehind Winterson’s novels…exists a movement for recovery” (sec. II), and Art & Lies is no exception. While the erudition of the work is evident, as is its philosophizing and analyzing of life, Winterson seeks to rehabilitate, “re-vision” Sappho as the wise poet/philosopher.
Winterson follows H.D.’s strategy of not requiring an extensive education in the classics, as Eliot or Pound might do, but incorporates explanations of, or reflections upon, her sources. We find this evident in her treatment of Sappho. We are given the reason for her repeated lament, “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY POEMS?” Winterson cites the long history of male writers who have written more of Sappho’s reputation than of her poetry. In fact, her reputation as a loose woman or as a lover of women had overtaken her reputation as a poet. This, of a woman whom Plato noted had nine volumes of poetry and was revered in his time for her laconic eloquence, emotional honesty, and clarity of style. Winterson gives Sappho back her poetic voice and her agency, writing new poetry into her head. Not only do we hear her lament the loss of her poetry, very little of which has survived to this day, but we are treated to a version of the events of her life based upon her original lines of poetry and Winterson’s insider’s view of her life and loves as a lesbian. This, as opposed to those which have come down to us through male writers, such as her suicide for love of a man, Phaon, at the white cliffs of Leukas.

Shiffer has noted the extent to which Winterson has undertaken the rehabilitation of Sappho as a speaking subject:

Sappho, who, as a character is a repetition of her historical-mythological self and whose own work, as the novel points out, was destroyed...is caught by a system that makes it nearly impossible to make oneself heard or understood. But she nevertheless takes up the work begun by other Winterson characters (and the texts themselves), borrowing texts and transforming them; despite a legacy of the Father's Word reiterated, she insists, "There are other ways of saying what I mean ... Other words fit for the weight. Other words that pin me to an honesty I might not like" (AL, 139). The words of the other not only become possible, but are given body; they are weighted, capable of effecting change (importantly) on the speaking subject herself. (sec. II)

And as Sappho speaks, we learn of her disdain for the stories which have been told of her and of the men who sullied her reputation, themselves:

So many men have got off on me. Large men, small men, bald men, fat men. Men with a hose like a fire-fighter, men with nothing but a
confectioner’s nozzle. Here they come, poking through history books, telling you all about me. (AL 52)

Ferreting out Sappho’s words and images from amongst the detritus that is her poetic legacy, Winterson returns the focus of Sappho’s desire back to women. As the fire of her inspiration is re-lit by the image of Picasso/Sophia, her words come back and the fragments of her poetry are fleshed out anew in the Sappho-inspired poetics of Winterson. Winterson reclaims Sappho as the foremother of women, especially women-loving-women poets. Sappho has, indeed, regained her voice.

Sappho As Literary Foremother

Sappho has long been seen as a literary foremother for women poets and prose writers. In her article, “Sapphistries,” Susan Gubar has traced the influence that the existence of her works (as fragmentary as they are) has had on early modernist women who undertook a literary project. Some, like Natalie Barney, re-wrote her life (and particularly her death), reclaiming it from the male writers who had so maligned her. Her play, *Acts d’entr’actes*, contains a central role for a Sappho character who does not die of unrequited love for the boatman, Phaon, as Ovid had construed it, “but because of her desire for a girl promised [to another] in marriage” (“Sapphistries” 48). Gubar also cites no less a figure than Virginia Woolf who called Sappho, “an inheritor as well as an originator” (qtd. in “Sapphistries” 46). As Woolf was the one who lamented the plight of the woman writer as the under-privileged and under-appreciated “Shakespeare’s Sister,” it was important to her to find and draw attention to previous women writers who had been successful and had enjoyed the respect of readers and other writers. She was not alone in seeking to create and claim a place in a literary heritage for the women writers of her day. Gubar explains:
Sappho’s preeminence provides…H.D. with evidence that the woman who is a poet need not experience herself as a contradiction in terms, that the woman who achieves the confessional lyricism of Sappho will take her place apart from but also beside a poet like Homer. Through the dynamics of their collaboration with Sappho, feminist modernists like…H.D. present themselves as breaking not only with patriarchal literary tradition, but also with nineteenth-century female literary history. (“Sapphistries” 47)

So, not only were female modernists compelled to break with the literary conventions of the previous century, as their male comrades did, but they were required to justify why they should be allowed to do so. Not only did they feel, like their male writer friends and partners, that they had to overcome what Harold Bloom has termed an “anxiety of influence”, but they, like the women writers of the nineteenth century, had to overcome what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have named an “anxiety of authorship.” They, like their earlier counterparts, reached all the way back to Sappho for a validation of their literary ambitions as women. In the autobiographical novel, The Gift, H.D. cites more recent female progenitors within the context of her own mother explaining that women could, indeed, be artists, thereby authorizing her daughter’s literary aspirations. When asked by her daughter for clarification she replies:

‘Why yes, ladies write books of course, lots of ladies write very good books.’
‘Like Louisa M. Alcott?’
‘Yes, like Louisa Alcott and like Harriet Beecher Stowe.’ (43)

H.D.’s two leading male mentors, Ezra Pound and Sigmund Freud, were no help to her in developing as a woman writer. Pound had erased her gender with the stroke of his pen in labeling her a neutered “H.D., Imagiste”, and H.D. recalls that Freud had said “that women did not creatively amount to anything or amount to much, unless they had a male counterpart or a male companion from which they drew their inspiration” (Tribute 149). Gubar notes that as many of the women who took up Sappho as muse and mask were, themselves, lesbian or bisexual, she became a symbol for them of both their sexuality and their repressed literary tradition:
Sappho represents...all the lost women of genius in literary history, especially all the lesbian artists whose work has been destroyed, sanitized, or heterosexualized in an attempt to evade what Elaine Marks identifies as 'lesbian intertextuality.' Antithetically, the effort to recover Sappho illustrates how twentieth-century women poets try to solve the problem of poetic isolation and imputed inferiority. ("Sapphistries" 46)

As English translations of Sappho’s fragments were published at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in books by Henry Thornton Wharton, Edwin Marion Cox, and Edward Storer, and as more fragments were uncovered (literally) in Oxyrhynchos in Egypt during the same period, more of Sappho’s actual works were familiar to this generation of readers and writers than they had been any time in the English literary history. Her works were so well respected, in spite of her terrible reputation as a woman, that she is even acknowledged as the inspiration for Pound’s Cantos (Kenner 54-75). The women modernists, who were no less susceptible to this influence and were even more desperate for a classical female voice to adopt, actively sought Sappho as a subject for their own works. As Gubar notes, it was because so much of her original Aeolic texts were unaccounted for that, “the modern woman poet could write ‘for’ or ‘as’ Sappho and thereby invent a classical inheritance of her own” ("Sapphistries" 46-47). Renée Vivien, writing both La Mort De Psappha and “Sappho Lives Again”, even revived Sappho as a modern woman (“Sapphistries” 51-52).

Women who loved women had been enthralled by Sappho’s lyrics written to other women. Her existence and her unabashedly lesbian love-poems were a validation of their sexuality, as well as their poetic ambitions. That she was respected by such leading male thinkers as Plato and by such poets as Meleager was further encouragement for them in their attempts to create both lives and literature based on their love of women. H.D. certainly seized on Sappho’s noted emotional intensity as well as her chiseled and crystalline verse as inspiration for her own work:

By recovering a female precursor of classical stature, moreover, …H.D. could mythologize the primacy of women’s literary language. Whether the recovery of Sappho results in…a chiseled classicism, as for H.D., it holds out the promise of excavating a long-lost ecstatic lyricism that inscribes female desire as the ancient source of song. ("Sapphistries” 47)
She wrote an entire essay devoted to “The Wise Sappho” and, while ignoring the homosexuality of much of Sappho’s verse, claimed her as a literary ancestor and her fragments as an ideal to which to aspire. She relied heavily on Henry Thornton Wharton’s 1885 *Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings with a Literal Translation*. Wharton had followed the German scholar Theodor Bergk’s assemblage of Greek fragments and had according, to Margaret Reynolds in *The Sappho History*:

> dismissed the web of myths around Phaon and the Leucadian leap; it made claims for Sappho’s importance as the first lyric poet; it established a standard for English translations; it quietly reproduced Bergk’s feminine pronouns; and it persuasively argued for the resilience of her poetic model throughout English literature. (126-27)

H.D. was also familiar with the “Edwin Marion Cox edition that she reviewed in the same year as she wrote ‘The Wise Sappho’” (Reynolds 220). Since Wharton had followed Bergk in restoring the feminine pronouns for the lyrical ‘you’ and ‘I’ of Sappho’s verse, H.D. was undoubtedly aware of the lesbian nature of the verses. She “also…knew the savage and destructive *femmes-fatales*-type Sapphos that inhabited the poems of…Baudelaire…and Swinburne” (Reynolds 226), and the prevailing and vicious bias in England against homosexuality. She chose to focus on Sappho, the innovative poet and the “crystalline” style of her extant lines.

H.D. wrote of her as a poet and as a woman who had been slandered by jealous men, but first and foremost, Gubar insists, “H.D.’s…[Sappho is] stark and fierce in her commitment to artistic perfection” (“Sapphistries” 53). In fact, her close study of Sappho in both English and Greek aided her in creating her first poems, which became the standard by which poetry of the period was judged. Gubar says that, “Sappho’s Greek fragments furnished H.D. a linguistic model for the poems that would define the imagist aesthetic” (“Sapphistries” 55). Joanna Dehler, in her book *Fragments of Desire*, agrees with Gubar that “[f]or a modernist writer like H.D., Sappho, then, becomes a literary model and foremother not associated with romantic conventions and ‘feminine’ sentimentality devoid of linguistic precision and assertiveness” (34). Using Sappho as
her classical model allowed H.D. to be a poet, and, thereby, providing a new model of the female poet which is free of the charge of inferiority, both poetic and emotional. H.D. was to redefine what it was to be a woman poet, moving away, with her fellow modernists, from the nineteenth century models of Gothic or Romantic writing. As Dehler notes, “[t]he development of a poetic style modeled on Sappho thus helps H.D. accomplish this difficult task: she can fulfill the modernist program of antiromanticism without renouncing a female literary legacy” (34).

H.D., and later, Winterson, delve into the masculine literary heritage and mine it to rewrite the stories of Western patriarchal culture. They will write as outsiders, (H.D. as a bisexual woman [and American], and Winterson as a working-class lesbian) from distinctly anti-patriarchal perspectives. As Gubar states in “The Echoing Spell of H.D.’s Trilogy,”:

H.D. presents herself as an outsider who must express her views from a consciously female perspective, telling the truth, as [Emily] Dickinson would say, ‘slant.’ Inheriting uncomfortable male-defined images of women and of history, H.D. responds with palimpsestic or encoded revisions of male myths. (“Spell” 64)

Gubar outlines H.D.’s “encoded” references and allusions in Trilogy, noting her re-vision of these “male-defined images of women”:

through recurrent references to secret languages, codes, dialects, hieroglyphs, foreign idioms, fossilized traces, mysterious signs, and indecipherable signets, H.D. illustrates how patriarchal culture can be subverted by the woman who dares to ‘re-invoke, re-create’ what has been ‘scattered in the shards/ men tread upon.’ (“Spell” 64-65)

H.D. weaves pieces of older stories, poems, and histories into her own, creating a new, woman-centered aesthetic within the modernist movement. Winterson continues this tradition in her own works, manipulating the modernist canon to create a new aesthetic of her own. As H.D. used the “runes of Sappho” (“Sapphistries” 55) to build her own structures, so, too, does Winterson employ the “runes” of H.D. to construct Art & Lies. But, while Winterson is much more forthright about raiding past texts in general,
she has only given hints of her over-arching project and of the specific modernists whose graves she is robbing with/in each of the works in her first cycle of fiction. Hidden within the palimpsest of literary and historical references that is *Art & Lies*, Winterson has created a work in which H.D. is both erased and present at the same time.

**Self-Authorization**

In her chapter “When a ‘Long’ Poem is a ‘Big’ Poem: Self-authorizing Strategies in Women’s Twentieth-Century ‘Long Poems’” within the book, *Dwelling in Possibility*, Susan Stanford Friedman has delineated among female poets four “strategies” which women writers have used to “deconstruct[] the opposition of inside/outside” (“Long” 18) and applies them to the long poem genre. These strategies allow women authors to write from inside the tradition, re-making it in their own image. She notes that these strategies “demasculiniz[e]” the genre and are performed as “acts of self-authorization” (“Long” 18). It is an interesting study of the ways employed to over-come the “anxiety of authorship” evident in many women writers’ works, as noted by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their ground-breaking work, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Friedman identified and defined the following strategies, or literary positions taken up by later women writers to cope with this difficulty. There is the “ironist,” who writes the “discourse of the satiric Other, the outsider who ironically deflates the insider.” The second strategy is that of the “historicist,” who attains the inside through a “reclamation of the public domain from which women have been largely excluded through a discourse of history—a (her)story in which the inside is the outside and the outside is the inside.” The third strategy, and the most important for this essay, is that of the woman writer as a “re-visionist.” Here, Friedman borrows Adrienne Rich’s term to describe the “construction of the discourse of re-vision…in which the outsider immerses herself in the discourse of the inside in order to transform it.” The final strategy employed by women poets, as noted by Friedman, is that of the “experimentalist.” As such, she is able to
“invent...a discourse of linguistic experimentalism, a gynopoetic of the outside that establishes a new inside” (“Long” 18-19, 35).

Friedman finds, in addition, that not only do women writers have to justify their efforts to write, but they have to create within the very movements and genres from which they have been excluded. This is true in spite of the fact that the modernist undertaking was still in flux, was revolutionary in its outlook, and, in theory at least, did not explicitly deny women the capacity to write:

Women’s position as outsiders to the kind of masculine authority coded into the genre of the long poem (over)determines that production of gender-inflected forms of these strategies, forms that accomplish a specifically female self-authorization not characteristic of (for example), Eliot’s irony, Williams’s or Hart Crane’s history, Wallace Stevens’s supreme fictions, or Pound’s experimentalism. Indeed, these strategies in poems like *The Wasteland*, *Patterson*, *The Bridge*, and *The Cantos* can be read to affirm a modern subjectivity from which women are excluded. In contrast, these same strategies function in women’s long poems to insist upon a gendered subjectivity that is unapologetically female.” (“Long” 36)

It is quite possible that correcting this affront, as well as their poetic experimentation, is what drew Winterson to prefer the modernist writers as models and to seek to continue their experiments. We find this to be true throughout Winterson’s literature. She insists that, “if fiction is to have any future in the technological dream/nightmare of the twenty-first century, it needs, more than ever, to remember itself as imaginative, innovative, Other. To do this the writer must reclaim lineage and language” (*Art Objects* 178).

Winterson has, in each of her works, employed one or more of these strategies herself. She writes with a fantastic sense of irony, being one of the revivers of that manner in the latter half of the twentieth century. She sharpens her wit and wields the words of patriarchy against its very walls in works such as *Oranges are not the only fruit*. Her project has always been to reclaim space for women writers within the canon. In discussing the modernist uses of the form of the biography/autobiography, she asserts that “Like *Orlando* and *Oranges are not the only fruit*, the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* is a fiction masquerading as a memoir” (*Art Objects* 53). Admiring Stein’s usurpation of a traditional form, Winterson lauds her for playing with a pseudo-realist
form and her ability to “take a well-known, well-worn form, formula almost, and vitalise it by disrespecting it” (Art Objects 55).

She re-visions, as Virginia Woolf did in Orlando, the female protagonist. Woolf undertook a subversive project with her pseudo-biography, in which, Winterson asserts, she “wanted to say dangerous things…but she did not want to say them in the missionary position” (Art Objects 68). In her own works, Winterson creates a wide variety of female, bisexual, and lesbian characters including, in Art & Lies, Sappho, the greatest woman writer and most famous L/lesbian in history, whom she re-visions as both the legendary poet and a contemporary lesbian poet. She shows Sappho’s side of things and re-endows her with her own woman-centered voice. Within the poetic passages of Art & Lies, she has re-created H.D.’s imagism (experimentation), recreating it as a style appropriate to the novel-length prose-poem. Experimentation is essential to her art, as it was for the modernists, and she asserts in Art Objects that, “Modernism fights against fixity of form, not to invite an easy chaos but to rebuild new possibilities. Art cannot move forward by clinging to past discoveries and the re-discovery of form is essential to anyone who wants to do fresh work (50),and again, that, [a] writer must resist the pressure of old formulae and work towards new combinations of language” (76).

Even in her early book, Boating for Beginners (which Winterson has made clear is not one of the seven books in this cycle), she questions the lack of space within the modernist canon for her as a woman writer, and sets about rectifying the situation. As Marianne Børch has noted in “Love’s Ontology and the Problem of Cliché”, “the eagle in Boating clearly raises the question of the poet’s relation to tradition to suggest that a poet is born through strong misprision of a beloved but potentially oppressive tradition” (42). Børch continues that Winterson’s work contains a life-affirming spirit not found in the works by postmodernists:

[Her work] plays on the margins of discourse--the demonic-uncanny--has value, validates the contingent as the source of its perception, counters postmodern strategies by which a similar recognition stops at exposing contingency’s hollowness; and, consequently, challenges the postmodern pathos of disillusioned ‘ars moriendi’ with the comedy of ‘ars vivendi’. (54)
Friedman noticed a similarly woman-centered, life-affirming project in H.D.’s work in her essay “Creating a Women’s Mythology: H.D.’s Helen in Egypt” as has Susan Gubar in her essay “The Echoing Spell of H.D.’s Trilogy.” It is from her modernist foremothers, such as H.D., that Winterson learns to create affirmative conclusions from a not only negative, but painful, beginning. In fact, in Art & Lies, Winterson goes so far as to designate those who suffer from this so-called “pathos”, this disillusionment, this hollowness” as “the dead”. As her trio of protagonists escape from this “city of the dead” they follow the trajectory of life-affirming eros and its search for love and beauty away from the “zombies” of death surrounding them.

**Changing Helen; Changing Sappho**

Helen…is both a phantom and reality. (HE 3)

Sappho both is and isn't the ancient poet of antiquity. (Winterson Art & Lies)

Helen of Troy (or Sparta) is a mythic figure who has been rewritten so many times that she has ceased to have any cohesion whatsoever. Dianne Chisholm highlighted this history as one of the reasons that H.D. chose her as the central figure in her long poem, Helen in Egypt:

‘Helen’ is a figure of astounding complexity. She is a written character, a proper name, a generic symbol of eros and female sexuality, a fantasy, a curse, a cue to remember, a signal to forget, a legend, a myth, a palimpsest of portraits of the classic femme fatale. (Note 11, 168)

It is the re-visioning of Helen which H.D. accomplishes with Helen in Egypt, and to do so, she has re-imagined her in another time and place and restored her voice and her agency.

When H.D. was writing, Helen had become identified with female sexuality and carried with her name the responsibility for the fall of innumerable men, much as Eve and
her sexuality have been construed as the reason for the Fall of Man. All of the fault has fallen on Helen’s shoulders, in spite of Paris’ obvious (co-)responsibility in the same way that Eve, alone, has been assigned all the blame for the loss of Paradise. H.D. saw clearly the bias inherent in reading Helen in this way. Had there not been defenses of her written by the noted writers Stesichorus and Euripides? These more sympathetic treatments of her story had been allowed to fall into disuse, while Homer’s version of her as the one responsible for the death of countless Greeks and the fall of Troy became the standard. It was the accepted one, and the one invoked as the authoritative source for works by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Pound. Helen had lost any semblance of having been a real woman and had become, instead, an icon, and not a woman-friendly one. She was no longer “Helen of Sparta, [but]…Helen of Troy,…Helen, hated of Greece” (Helen 14). She had also become another icon for female responsibility for the world’s ills. It was this injustice which H.D. strove to expose and correct by re-visioning Helen in her book-length poem, Helen in Egypt. Chisholm, writing of H.D.’s Freudian influences and intertextualities, has elaborated on this idea:

It is not the woman, Helen (if there ever was such a person), whom her palinode proposes to rehabilitate, but the palimpsest, the tracing and retracing of the Helen myths and legends that compose the literary canon. ‘Helen’ is no more than the effect of a long process of repression. There being no original Helen outside the poetry and history that represses her memory, ‘Helen’ is the repressed, who makes her symptomatic return in the obsessive fantasies of male authors who, together with the scholarly guardians of the canon, must repeatedly deny and denounce her haunting power. To recover and re-present the ‘original’ Helen requires a research technique that could trace beyond record, beyond literary history. (167)

Just as her male modernist counterparts sought out older, especially classical, sources for their art, so, too, did H.D. reach back into the Greek past in order to tell the story of women to her readers. She perceived that there was a way to re-read, re-write, and re-interpret these authoritative texts, as the men had done, in order to anchor her writings in the accepted literary tradition, and to give weight to the experiences of contemporary women by evoking ancient images. As Friedman asserts:
For H.D., there is a story within a story, the buried voices and visions of women that can be sought and brought to the surface in the very form that repressed it. For example, Homer’s *Iliad* can be retold from Helen’s perspective in a way that utterly reverses the tradition it evokes. H.D. uses her position as outsider to tunnel deep inside to find what has been repressed in the phallocentric discourses of patriarchal culture. (“Long” 26)

Dehler’s reading of *Helen in Egypt* also focuses on this idea of a reconstruction of the image of Helen:

H.D. tells a story that emphasizes Helen’s actions—not her passive role as an object of male desire. She assumes the role of a textual archaeologist who unearths fragmented shards, arranges them, and tries to reproduce a narrative that differs from the Homeric master narrative. What she creates is a story that has been repressed by the Western canon. (57)

She credits this to H.D.’s intense study of Sappho’s fragments, finding in *Helen in Egypt* a “rejection of Helen’s image as a passive object to be won as the ‘prize’ of a cruel war” (57). She finds in David Campbell’s Sappho Fragment 16 that Sappho recreates Helen as an active figure, choosing to leave her family and position for the man she loves. *Eros* wins out. This precedent by Sappho allows H.D. to open a gap in the poetic Helen tradition and create space for a poetic discourse which transcends Homer et al’s male perspective. For Rachel Blau DuPlessis, this constitutes “‘writing beyond the ending’ of patriarchal narratives by deliberately renouncing ‘conventional structures of fiction and consciousness about women’” (qtd. in Dehler 57).

In her introduction to the opening section of *Helen in Egypt*, H.D. refers to a path of the Helen mythology which had been repressed in favor of Homer’s version: the *Pallinode* by Stesichorus. She cites Stesichorus as the first to tell us how Helen got to Egypt, with Euripides later repeating the story. Both men apparently originally wrote harshly of her. They were said to have been “struck blind” because of this. They later wrote defenses of her, palinodes, and they were “restored to sight” (*Helen* 1). Those who continue the slander of Helen are blind, and those who can see are able to see this legendary woman as the agent of her own actions, deciding her own fate, speaking out for
herself, and excoriating those who would speak ill of her. So, “writing beyond the ending” of Homer’s Helen, H.D. restores sight to those who would see Helen. *Helen in Egypt* functions as a palinode or defense in that it brings to the surface again an alternative textual tradition that has been ignored by the standard reading. Relying on Stesichorus and Sappho for authority, H.D. incorporates their remnants of Helen’s story and accomplishes a modernist narrative containing, itself, a fragmented story.

Winterson endeavors to resurrect, or “re-vision”, Sappho in the same manner as that employed by H.D. to re-figure Helen. She, too, plays at literary archaeology. In her literary workings, she digs into the works of modernists such as H.D. and produces her own stories from selected fragments of H.D.’s *oeuvre*, ignoring, for the most part, the best known of Sappho’s fragments. Winterson brings Sappho back to life, restores her voice with its lyrical (and feminine) ‘you’ and ‘I’, and allows her to write her own works and words. In *Art & Lies*, Sappho mourns the loss of her earlier works, her poems, which have been lost and/or repressed. She is alive to fall in love with a woman again, in rejection of the fatal love of a man, Phaon. She is inspired by this new love to write again poetry of lesbian desire.

Like H.D.’s Helen, Winterson’s Sappho is not fixed in time or space as in a realist narrative. Continuing her engagement with the literary experimentalism of the modernists, Winterson allows the 2,700 year old Lesbian to live and love in 2000 A.D. (Winterson writes this as “After Death”.) At the time the book was written, the narrative’s present was in the future. But time is not a restriction for Winterson’s experimentation. Sappho, in 2000 A.D., is able to revisit the past in memory, taking us with her. This lack of fixity is common in Winterson’s later works, as her interest in quantum physics and the possibilities presented by multiple time-space continua allow her to flex her imaginative muscles. We find a similar pattern in H.D.’s treatment of Helen’s life in *Helen in Egypt*. Susan Edmunds ties in this use of “eternity” with H.D.’s Freudian themes and her project of re-visioning Helen:

Helen's history…and a sacred history where the truths of time are subject to the administrations of a higher truth: the truth of eternity. In eternity, past and future coincide, and so Helen's project can be at once an act of recovering a lost past and act of creating a new face for the future. The
rational impossibility of this is no deterrent. Long used to conflating the manifestations of eternity with the manifestations of the unconscious, H.D. grants sacred authority the very irrationality of the methods Helen employs and the contradictory aims of restoration and revision she hopes to satisfy simultaneously. (129)

As she proceeds through the text of Art & Lies, Sappho sifts through “the peculiar history of [her] afterlife in cultural transmission and in the cultural imagination” (Reynolds 10). She alludes to various historical and cultural representations of herself, most of which are based on the allusions made by H.D. in her essay “The Wise Sappho”. Sappho recalls fragmentary memories from her past. They constitute a refutation of the stories told about her in Western literature and myth which portray her as a desirable and wanton woman, (and, earlier, as a respected poet). She snidely dismisses as absurd the stories told about her death for love of a mere man, Phaon. She challenges the continued limiting definitions of womanhood, by reclaiming her poetic agency and proudly proclaiming her desire for another woman. The woman she loves/loved is named Sophia; Wisdom. In configuring her love this way, Winterson is also re-invoking the memory of Sappho as the “lover of wisdom”, the philosopher whose work so impressed Plato.

That H.D. worked with Sappho’s fragments is but one reason why Winterson might have undertaken a re-vision of her image. Seeking to efface Sappho’s image as a wanton heterosexual woman and replace it with a passionate lesbian poetic voice is also a personal battle for Winterson. In Art & Lies, she certainly identifies with the writer whose work is overshadowed, if not cancelled out, by her reputation. Her own public self had reached the stage where she had created a significant body of work, but no one focused on it any longer. Society was only interested in her private life (rather, the more salacious elements of public versions of her private life). She asserts that, “there is far too much emphasis put on the life of a writer rather than a writer’s work” (Winterson, Wachtel 62). She “got fed up with being continually thrashed to bits and having my personal life exposed [in and by the media] in ways that were vicious and designed to destroy” (Bilger 2).

Within Art & Lies, Sappho is found in the present as both a living poet and as the preserved copies of her works in the book carried by Handel. Her words and images are also present in the language used by Winterson, filtered through that of H.D. Key
elements of H.D.’s “thoughts and visions” appear as a palimpsest, both erased and present at the same time. If H.D. used Sappho’s “chrystalline” verse as a model for her imagist poems, then finding it again as Winterson works intertextually with H.D. is no surprise. Within the mind of Sappho, the character, Winterson reproduces Sappho’s evocations of emotion, contained in poems which H.D. described in “The Wise Sappho” as:

a world of emotion, differing entirely from any present day imaginable world of emotion; a world of emotion that could only be imagined by the greatest of her own countrymen in the greatest period of that country’s glamour, who themselves confessed her beyond their reach, beyond their song, not a woman, not a goddess even, but a song or the spirit of a song. (Notes 58-9)

H.D. also suggests that Sappho had a cultural agenda, noting that, “she had spent her flawless talent to destroy custom and mob-thought with serpent-tongue” (59). This aspect of H.D.’s and Winterson’s works will be examined further in the section on these writers as poet-prophets.

In “The Wise Sappho”, H.D. barely noted that there were only fragments of Sappho’s work remaining. In her time, this was understood, as was the fact that her words have been handed down in quotations. As Margaret Reynolds notes in her second book on Sappho, The Sappho History, Sappho is “always in translation” (9). H.D. records the bits of knowledge and legend about Sappho that came down through the ages, and of later writers’ reactions to her words. She quotes Sophocles as having “cried out in despair before some inimitable couplet, ‘gods--what impassioned heart and longing made this rhythm’” (Notes 68) and Winterson quotes this directly in Art & Lies: “‘Gods, what impassioned heart and longing made this rhythm?’” (58)

She notes that she was lauded by Plato, “poet and philosopher in the most formidable period of Athenian culture…having perspective and a rare standard of comparison, … speaks of this woman as among the wise” (Notes 68). She entitles her essay, “The Wise Sappho”, and the phrase is found and questioned or reiterated within its text. H.D. questions her wisdom in love, and Winterson expands on that concept by having Sappho self-question her love of “Sophia…the most difficult to please…There
was a time when she was courted by every poet and philosopher, even Socrates. She chose me” (56). With this statement, Winterson self-authorizes Sappho’s greatness as the Wise Sappho, philosopher.

H.D. cites various events from Sappho’s past, recorded by others, and Winterson summarizes them in *Art & Lies*: “It was a long time ago. She had a daughter called Cleis. She was the most famous poet of antiquity. Her work filled nine volumes. Little else about her is known” (149). Winterson elaborates on the lack of “true” facts about her life and work, expressing the loss of her words and wisdom:

Her body is an apocrypha. She has become a book of tall stories, none of them written by herself. Her name has passed into history. Her work has not. Her island is known to millions now, her work is not...Where are her collected poems, that once filled nine volumes, where are the sane scholarly university texts? Sappho (Lesbian c. 600 BC Occupation: Poet) (69)

H.D. did note this history of “tall stories”, and remarks on the survival of every fragment as being a story unto itself: “Legend upon legend has grown up, adding curious documents to each precious fragment; the history of the preservation of each line is in itself a most fascinating and bewildering romance” (*Notes* 69). In answer to that book of “tall stories”, Winterson rescues Sappho’s original verses for us and creates her own story line tracing their history to the present. They are to be found in the book that Handel received from the Cardinal. H.D. had placed the complete works in the famed Library of Alexandria, and Winterson continues from that point. The boys who live in the library, retrieving the requested texts for scholars, have made “eyries in among the books” (5). The scrolls had been “saved from the sacking...in AD 642” and “sold off a Roman market stall by an urchin who claimed to have used them as stuffing for his bed” (202). It is here that the manuscript seems to multiply. While it is intact, H.D. writes that “Savonarola standing in the courtyard of the Medici (some two thousand years later) proclaimed her [Sappho] openly to the assembled youthful laity and priests of Florence—a devil” (*Notes* 64), and notes that “the Vatican itself was moved and deemed this woman fit rival to the seductions of another Poet and destroyed her verses” (*Notes* 69).
Winterson, using H.D.’s words as a starting point, allows Sappho her own memory of this event:

Don’t trust Rome. It was Savonarola (Florentine 1452-98 Occupation: Martyr and Zealot) standing in the courtyard of the Medici who denounced me as a corruptor and a devil and had my work destroyed. My work. My work. The words spitting upwards in tongues of flame. The words smoking the clear uncritical air. The words curling off the manuscripts. The manuscripts cracking in the fire. (58)

But Winterson saves this “burning book that all the pyres of Time have not put out” (59), giving us two copies, and/or two histories.

Noting H.D’s assertion that “[c]ourtesan and woman of fashion were rebuked at one time for not knowing ‘even the works of Sappho’” (Notes 68), Winterson places a copy of “that bound volume, The Poetical Works of Sappho” (131) into the hands of Doll Sneerpiece, a friend of the Cardinal’s and “a famous courtesan, an adherent of Rome,…wealthy, still lovely, utterly corrupt” (27). In an ironic touch typical of her, Winterson places Doll in her room in the brothel she owns, describing it as having “[w]hite walls, white rugs from Egypt, stone-whitened sheets and a deaf white cat.” An additional instance of “re-virginning the whore” (74) is that “[t]he room smelled of Madonna lilies” (27). Madonna lilies are pure white flowers which have been the symbol of purity for over 3,000 years.

Doll calls Sappho “[t]he greatest poet of Antiquity” (54), and claims that her “copy, in its original Greek, had come from a one-eyed trader in antiquities, who claimed to have stolen it from the Medici themselves” (29). The cardinal, showing his copy of the book to the young Handel relates that it was preserved by the Church tells him, “Savonarola had this [Sappho’s works in Greek] burned in the courtyard of the Medici. Sensibly they had made a copy first. It has never been seen outside these vaults” (193). He then gives us a glimpse inside, at a previously unknown (and unwritten) verse from Sappho:

He turned the heavy brown page.

Then rose the white moon.
Within this brief verse, Winterson has included many images which both she and H.D. will draw from Sappho’s fragments: white, salt, the moon, water and the rose (here, playfully, as a verb). Winterson also allies herself with Sappho and her struggle with detractors, especially those who focus their criticism on her life rather than the body of work:

Piece by piece the fragments are returned; the body, the work, the love, the life. What can be known about me? What I say? What I do? What I have written? And which is true? That is, which is truer? Memory. My licensed inventions. Not all of the fragments return. (136)

As Sappho continues to reassert her voice in support of the revival of the poetic word, Winterson cites a Homeric phrase which H.D. invoked during her acceptance speech for the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ Award of Merit in May, 1960. Speaking about her lifetime of work as a writer and poet, she states that she employs “[w]inged words” which “make their own spiral,…caught up in them, we are lost, or found” (Morris, A. How 21). Winterson echoes this statement of the importance of poetic language and its ability to sweep us off our feet with reference to the wingèd messenger, Mercury, the Roman incarnation of Hermes: “[t]he wingèd word. The mercurial word” (137). This invocation of both H.D. and Homer make it clear that Winterson is writing poetry, even though it appears to be prose; that Art & Lies was written as an experimental text and that Sappho’s language is poetical, not mundane. Winterson allows that the language is not familiar:

Each of the voices has his or her own distinctive style and vocabulary, but Sappho’s is clearly a construct and removed from the kind of language we speak. I wanted this strangeness, - sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. but it is sustained, and as an experiment in language it was worth doing, if only to question assumptions/expectations about how things should sound. (Winterson Art & Lies)
Winterson reintegrates the fragmented selves of Sappho, creating a new synthesis of poet, philosopher, and lesbian. She infuses her text with the images from Sappho which H.D. also found the most alluring: roses and rocks, Leukas and leaps from white cliffs. H.D. begins her essay on “The Wise Sappho” by answering Meleager’s assertion that the remnants of Sappho’s writing were “[l]ittle, but all roses” (57). She paints her own metaphor for them and their continuing importance as examples and source-material:

[Reading deeper we are inclined to visualize these broken sentences and unfinished rhythms as rocks-perfect rock shelves and layers of rock between which flowers by some chance may grow but which endure when the staunch blossoms have perished. (Notes 58)

She portrays as flowers the poetry of later writers who grow their verses in and amongst Sappho’s “rocks”. Their verses are temporary, regardless of how delightful, but, in spite of all the forces and farces rayed against her reputation and her remnants, “Sappho must live, roses, but many roses for tradition has set flower upon flower about her name and would continue to do so though her last line were lost” (Notes 68). Winterson’s Sappho affirms this sentiment, stating that it is “[i]mpossible to silence me. I have been speaking through so many life-times and I will speak through so many more” (68).

Following Wharton, who notes in Fragment 146 that “Philostratus says:- ‘Sappho loves the Rose, and always crowns it with some praise, likening beautiful maidens to it’”, Winterson adopts the white rose as her Sappho’s talisman. White roses are found throughout H.D.’s poetry, (all pages in Collected Poems) reflecting beauty, as in “Priest”: “She is dead, / but there is beauty, / a white rose” (421), love, as in “Ariadne”: “here is bloom/ of wide white roses/ showing where Love trod” (332), and purity, as in “Garden”: “you are clear/ O rose, cut in rock” (24). The white rose represents the purity of desire in “Songs from Cyprus”, “rose, so white?…O Eros-favoured, part, meet, part—then/ rose, be rose-white, unsevered” (278) and, again, intertwined with wisdom, beauty, and love in “White Rose”:  

77
…white rose,/ your wisdom is a simple thing,/ and must we grieve who
found you very fair?/ white rose,/ white rose,/ beware,/ beauty is beauty/
but not, not so rare/ and not so bountiful/ that it may spare/ a moment/ to
revile/ Love;/ a moment to repent/ once Love is fled… (285)

Winterson echoes these with “White rose of purity white rose of desire” (61). She
repeatedly claims that, for her, Sappho carries “white roses never red.” H.D. asserted the
temporaneity of red roses: “I would not bring roses, nor yet the great shaft of scarlet
lilies. I would bring orange blossoms [white flowers], implacable flowerings made to
seduce the sense when every other means has failed, poignard that glints, fresh sharpened
steel: after the red heart, red lilies, impassioned roses are dead (Notes 57). Winterson
reaches back, defending Sappho’s choice, noting that:

[m]odern scholars have mocked her because she compared the moon to a
rose. Since the Renaissance, roses have been red, what is that to her? She
carried white roses never red. (149)

Winterson plays with this image a bit further, physically placing a “white rose, La
Mortola,…between the pages of [the] book” (187) which Handel carries, and
which, we are told, includes works of Sappho. And, as a lesbian (as well as
Lesbian), Sappho is “[t]he Rose-bearer and the Rose” (62), and “always, muser
and muse” (140).

Further linking the images of rose and rock, purity and love, Winterson’s Sappho
speaks of the lover as captive: “This love is neither wild nor free. You have trained it
where it grows and shaped me to it. I am the rose pinned to the rock, the white rose
against the rock, I am the petals double-borne, white points of love” (61). Again, echoing
H.D. and her Sappho allusions, Winterson writes using images of wind and sea,
particularly the white cliffs of Leukas, where Sappho is said to have leapt to her death.
They are found in H.D.’s “The Cliff Temple” as the “shelf of rock/…clean cut, white
against white/ rock-edge/…jagged cliff” (26). “Leuké” is also the second part of Helen
in Egypt, the place where Helen meets up with Theseus, her Freudian guide, to examine
memories from her life.
As H.D. does not mention the Phaon story (part of her general lack of focus on Sappho’s sexuality), Winterson follows Wharton and cites “Ovid, Roman 43 BC-AD 17 Occupation: Poet”: “The poet Psappho, for love of Phaeon the Ferryman, who spurned her, flung herself from the cliffs of Lesbos, into the dark Aegean sea” (72). Sappho, the great lover of women, mocks this interpretation of her death:

Ovid came along in the first century AD and tried to clean up my reputation with a proper tragic romance. Me, who could have any woman in history, fell for a baggy-trousered bus conductor with the kind of below-the-waist equipment funsters put on seaside postcards for a joke. (52)

But, Sappho did not die from a leap from those cliffs any more than Helen died on the walls of Troy. Helen lived on after the fall of Troy (and even has a son with Achilles, Euphorion, in certain versions). In stories by Stesichorus and Euripides, she and Achilles are reunited in Egypt or on an island, and in Helen in Egypt; they meet on a cliff-top. Sappho, likewise, is brought back to the cliff in memory when she sees Picasso up on the parapet that first night:

Down on the dirty pavement, Sappho looked up. She was looking at a cliff bent over the sea, she was looking at her body bent over the cliff. The hard white drop and the unforgiving sea. Not for love of you Phaeon but for loss of her. Not once, but many times, for loss of her. (72)

The “her” who is lost is Sophia, the woman who represents both wisdom and Sappho’s great love. Sophia/Picasso, who “was balanced on the girders of the imagination” imagined she was “standing on a cliff top” (44). Sappho pictures her as “White skin in a white dress along white edge of the sea” (55). Picasso’s image on the parapet that night is seared into Sappho’s mind and recurs throughout her narrative as the story of that night unfolds in pieces:

There was no escape except by the route which could cost her life.
Did I see you, Sophia, on a ledge in the night? White winged in waves of beauty that closed over my head?

I looked up in time to see her drop from the roof into the moving air. Naked, without sound, through the silent air. I ran to where she fell…

I know from my own experience that suicide is not what it seems. Too easy to try to piece together the fragmented life. The spirit torn in bits so that the body follows. (73, 132, 133, 134)

So Sappho, who did not die from a leap from the cliffs, understands the tortured soul, the “fragmented life” of Picasso. Many of the poetry sections of the book are laments to love’s loss or a lost love, as were several of the original Sappho fragments.

H.D.’s protagonist in “The Cliff Temple”, standing on the precipice asks:

    Shall I hurl myself from here,  
    shall I leap and be nearer you?  
    Shall I drop, beloved, beloved,  
    ankle against ankle? (26)

While we know that Picasso did not leap, attempting suicide, Winterson repeats this ankle as the “corkscrew of her leg” (133) which Picasso suffers in her fall from the roof.

H.D.’s voice on the cliff top continued, “If I woke, would you pity me, / would our eyes meet?” (26) and Winterson’s Sappho, arriving at Picasso’s limp body after her fall begs, “Open you eyes, won’t you open your eyes?” (133)

One further aspect of Sappho which both H.D. and Winterson revive is that Sappho wrote much of her work to women, her “girlfriends.” In Fragment 11 we find “I now sing deftly to please my girlfriends”(Wharton). In “The Wise Sappho” H.D. finally, subtly, addresses Sappho’s love-songs to women:

Or we have in sweetened mood so simple a phrase ‘I sing’--not to please any god, goddess, creed or votary of religious rite-- I sing not even in abstract contemplation, trance-like, remote from life, to please myself, but says this most delightful and friendly woman, ‘I sing and I sing beautifully like this, in order to please my friends-my girl-friends. (Notes 62)
H.D. provides us with a long list of women who are named in Sappho fragments:
Mnasidika…Gyrinno…Eranna,…Atthis-- Andromeda—- Mnasidika—Eranna—Gyrinno (Notes 62, 64), and Winterson echoes them in Art & Lies: “What were their names? Andromeda, Atthis, Dicca, Gorgo, Eranna, Gyrinno, Anactoria,… Doricha,… Mnasidika…It was a long time ago” (70). Winterson’s external voice questions Sophia and answers her own question, “Did she write to please you? She wrote to please you as the sun pleases the water where it falls” (70). So she wrote of love to, about, and for other women, but she also wrote for love of poetry, of the Word, as Winterson highlights in her text. This will be addressed in a later section.

There remains one further aspect of Sappho’s writing to be treated here, that of her lyrical power. Being cited as the originator of the first-person narrator speaking to a familiar “you”, she employs simple language to deliver powerful emotions. Her language writes of love, but it is also her style of language which made her the ideal poet for millennia. Relying on strong, mono-syllabic words, H.D. attempts to revive this “chiseled” or “crystalline” language and imagery in her imagist poetry. She draws pictures and we experience the emotions they portray. Winterson will employ a similar poetic style throughout Art & Lies, but it is most in evidence when Sappho is speaking. A couple of examples will serve to illustrate this point. Wharton gives us Fragment 100 as “And a soft [paleness] is spread over the lovely face” or, alternatively, as “love is spread over thy fair face…” In “The Wise Sappho” H.D notes this: “She speaks of the light spread across a lovely face” (62). In her poem, “Eurydice”, she draws this image out, expanding on the image of the light and its symbolism as the light/look of love and recognition:

what was it that crossed my face
with the light from yours
and your glance?
what was it you saw in my face?
the light of your own face,
the fire of your own presence? (Collected 52)

It also appears in one of her specifically Sappho-cited poems, “Fragment Sixty-eight”, here, meaning love: “nor in your eyes less light” (Collected 188).
This image of light on a face obviously struck a chord in Winterson, as she uses it repeatedly, turning it this way and that, letting it stand appear in various guises:

…the sun splintered the clouds and broke the light in shards on her head…

Turn up her face to the light.

Curiosity and desire of beauty…These are the flares that light her face.

Your face lit up by twenty centuries. Who told me you had stars in your eyes?

She was white with the sun at her head. (AL 69, 139, 140, 148, 147)

Again, we see the light on the face and/or in the eyes as a metaphor for love and desire, and, with reference back to the image of personal enlightenment.

The final example of an image created by Sappho, repeated by H.D., and carried on through Art & Lies is that of the lover suffering with the symptoms of love. Wharton gives us one of the longer fragments, Fragment 2, as:

For when I see thee but a little, I have no utterance left, my tongue is broken down, and straightway a subtle fire has run under my skin, with my eyes I have no sight, my ears ring, sweat pours down, and a trembling seizes all my body; I am paler than grass, and seem in my madness little better than one dead. (Wharton) (emphases mine)

In “The Wise Sappho” H.D. refers specifically to this fragment, noting the symptoms: “This woman whom love paralysed till she seemed to herself a dead body, as the desert grass is burnt, white by the desert heat; she who trembled and was sick and sweated at the mere presence of another” (emphases mine) (Notes 64). And again, in her poem, “Midday”: “I am anguished—defeated….My thoughts tear me./ I dread their fever” (10) Winterson, too, writes of these symptoms of love: blanching, burning, trembling:

The longing made pale by love.

And love? the brazier where I burn.
Touch me: You do. Your hands are white and your lips are pale.

Sappho knows desire, knows the blood-abandoned body, knows the loss of courage in her limbs. She knows the single look that bids her gaze. (AL 61, 147, 149, 72) (all emphases mine)

H.D. re-visions Helen, purifying her reputation as the adulteress who caused the death of thousands by giving her back her own voice, her own thoughts, and agency. She revives the tradition wherein Helen, alone, is not responsible for the Trojan War. While she offers no definitive answer, she resurrects some traditions other than Homer’s which cite Ares or Aphrodite, Zeus or Eris as possibly responsible. Winterson, aware of the wanton portrayed by Baudelaire and Swinburne, also seeks older traditions for her portrayal of Sappho. She rescues her from heterosexuality by creating her as a passionate lover of women once again. She revives her reputation as both poet and philosopher, lover of words and lover of wisdom. But perhaps, most importantly, she re-visions her desire for women by writing passionate poems in a sapphic vein and a Sapphic style. She returns Sappho’s desire for words.
4. POET-PROPHET-ARTIST

As a result of the explosion of new technologies into everyday life and the devastation wrought by technological warfare in the first World War, western European societies experienced a crisis of belief early on in the twentieth century. Its symptoms are generally recognized as a loss of faith in established institutions (both religious and national), personal and cultural fragmentation, including a shattering of cultural symbols and norms. The positivist philosophies which had embraced technological progress as a principal goal were rejected, and modernist artists and writers began reflecting this sense of loss of person and place. Refusing to accept only material reality, they experimented with various religious, literary, mythological, occult, political, and existentialist perspectives, and embarked on new searches for meaning among new ideas as well as ancient traditions and texts. The tradition of artist as seer, the poet as prophet, attempted to create symbol, pattern, and meaning within the dimension of art. They believed that within art, within poetry, the expression of a higher realism was to be found. For writers, the agency of language (the Word or Logos) was the material for this quest, but the refusal to accept only materialist explanations of reality, which had contributed to the spiritual desert of modern life, was the chief innovation.

One result of this anti-materialist perspective was that a general charge of escapism has been laid against the modernists in the post-war years. For example, Alicia Ostriker cites Douglas Bush in his *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* as stating that “H.D. is a poet of escape” and notes that he wryly observed that her view of Greece “has no connection with the Greece of historic actuality” (*Stealing* 5). Ostriker, who unlike Bush, understood H.D.’s use of Greece as poetic mask, observes that he makes no such criticism of the male writers who employed Greece in this way. While the male members of the modernist movement have received some reprieve from
the label of escapism, Susan Stanford Friedman notes that H.D. has not been accorded that same status:

When Eliot, Pound, Williams, and Yeats show that same rejection of materialist conceptions of reality, they are praised for their struggle to deal with the ultimate questions of human existence. It is a kind of double talk emerging out of a hidden bias that makes Eliot deeply religious, Pound profound, Crane prophetic, Williams archetypal, and Yeats visionary while the same phenomenon in H. D. is ‘escapist.’ (“Buried” 53)

In her book, *H. D. and the Public Sphere of Modernist Women Writers*, Georgina Taylor counters charges that modernist writers were escapist, particularly defending women modernist writers. She demonstrates that H.D. and her female colleagues of the period were not only aware of the reality around them, but were politically engaged during the 1930s and World War II, and she also shows how their literary work reflects that political *engagement*. She documents H.D.’s involvement with a refugee group and with the historical project, “Mass-Observation…an anthropology of ordinary lives carried out by ordinary people” (149). Taylor describes this project thusly:

Mass-Observation offered participants a chance to feel that they were contributing towards stabilizing the world community simply by communicating; if the ordinary lives of ordinary people could be known, perhaps then the kinds of prejudice and partisanship that lead to hostility could be averted. H.D. in particular had utopian hopes that Mass-Observation might ‘help to break down these barriers that make eventually for prejudice and at the last analysis for war’. (qtd. in note 54, Taylor 150)

Winterson’s admirers include lesbians and other queer-identified people who argue that her sympathetic portrayal of difference will “help to break down these barriers that make eventually for prejudice.”

In her chapter entitled “Responses to a World in Crisis (1932-46)”, Taylor locates H.D.’s work from the period leading up to the war as “part of a wider move from both formal experimentalism and from intense introspection for their own sakes, and a re-contextualization of both within contemporary socio-political reality” (144). Taylor describes H.D.’s attitude toward writing at the time as needing to be politically aware of.
its socio-historical context, psychologically enlightened, and interesting as literature. She wanted to use language creatively, in opposition to slogans and propaganda, “not to coerce but to express opinion and personal visions of ‘truth’” (151).

Winterson, allying herself with this project of H.D.’s, specifically defended Virginia Woolf, one of her other primary literary antecedents, against the charge of escapism, offering one possible explanation for this blind spot, worded in a somewhat more imaginative way:

I do not want to reinforce the charge brought against Bloomsbury by the younger poets of the 1930s; that Woolf and Eliot et al fiddled with their syntax while the Western World blew up. Woolf is a writer of social change, although perhaps the kind of challenges she offers have not seemed relevant to men because they are not about them, at least not directly. (Art Objects 68)

Isobel Armstrong has proposed that feminist theorists, in opening up “the social meaning implied by formal experiment” in Woolf’s fictional writings, have shown that Woolf laid down a challenge for contemporary feminist writers: to incorporate their principles into experimental works (qtd. in Pykett 59). Winterson responds to this in all her work, seeking to remake the world’s possibilities through her art:

We have to fight against the disintegration of society, which is happening not just here but in many places in the world, and unless we fight against it, it will certainly happen, and then the forces of reaction and of money and of power will take over. (Winterson, Wachtel 71)

H.D. and Winterson each position themselves to take up the mantle of previous prophets who have written in order to right the wrongs which they saw around them. They identify as poet-prophets, and, as such, see themselves as having an especial calling to put society back on the right path. These poet-prophets are each compelled to create works which resist what they see as destructive, and to use their art as a means of resurrecting their culture’s humanity. As Winterson asserts, “the most successful preachers are the ones who are able to convince their audience that the audience
themselves have got it wrong and the preacher’s got it right. And the artist tries to do this too—there are close parallels…” (Winterson, Wachtel 63).

Alicia Ostriker states that:

*Trilogy* places H.D. alongside her major modernist cohorts to compose an long poem which will grapple with the giant issues of twentieth-century poetry: the need to recover a coherent idea of self and society from the shards of social fragmentation, the apocalyptic horror of war, and the confusion and distress arising from changing gender relations; the need to construct or invent some grounds of spiritual faith in a world dominated by materialism and doubt; and the need to redefine the nature and uses of poetry and the imagination. (“Rule” 339)

Having been raised in religious households, Winterson and H.D. each looked to the Bible as a source of inspiration for their literature. Their assertion of a right to the status of poet-prophet is indicated by the motif of the priestly emblem of Aaron’s breast-plate as claimed by both writers. Their claim to this mark of the prophet contains echoes from Ephesians, “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (6:14), and from the first book of Thessalonians, “put on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of salvation” (5:8). In her poem, “Priest,” H.D. asserts her claim on it, declaring, “you will not…hail me/ who wear/ a breast-plate” (422). We find this claim echoed by Winterson in *Art & Lies*, as she affirms her membership in this company: “I wear my breast plate proudly” (63). The writers ‘wearing’ of the breastplate signals their alliance with the notions of both “righteousness” and “hope of salvation”.

The first book of *Trilogy* is *The Walls Do Not Fall*, and within it H.D. reconstitutes the position of the poet-scribe as sacred recorder of truths throughout ages of wrecked civilizations, and in spite of the materialism and murder around her. For H.D., it was an uphill struggle to be taken seriously as a poet-prophet when challenging the whole of contemporary society. In order to do this, H.D. works to place herself within the prophetic tradition of poets such as John of Patmos, John Milton, and William Blake, much as the three of them had placed themselves in the line of prophetic poets. Like John of Patmos and Milton, H.D. firmly establishes the right/duty of the poet-prophet to guide her society in the right direction. John’s authority comes when he is told
by “a loud voice like a trumpet…‘Write what you see in a book’” (Rev. 1:10-11) and that he will write “words of…prophecy” (Rev. 1:3). Milton sought to “assert Eternal Providence./ And justify the ways of God to men” (PL ch.1). In addition to re-combining ancient myths and source materials, H.D. relies on the Book of Revelation for her primary source of allusion: for the image of the seven angels who appear at the end of the world; for the idea of the two Marys, and Mary as a second Eve; and for the combining deities. She also references the twelve gemstones which represent the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, and the twelve tribes of Israel. She will combine these to create her own gospel of the rebirth of humanity and a post-war New Jerusalem.

As John cited the prophetic tradition of Daniel, Ezekiel and Enoch, Milton drew on John as an ancestor, and Blake dialogued with both John and Milton within his works. H.D., like those rebellious forbears, had to justify her position as poet-prophet. Unlike them, she had to defend even the existence of the non-material and non-materialist views. In her age, the poet was seen as irrelevant, let alone a visionary one; she felt compelled to reply to that charge. In The Walls Do Not Fall, H.D. defends the role of poets, granting them membership in a hermeneutic alliance whose “initiates” possess secret and ancient knowledge. Replying to a critic who contends that:

poets are useless,

more than that, 
we, authentic relic, 

bearers of the secret wisdom, 
living remnant

of the inner band 
of the sanctuaries’ initiate, 

are not only ‘non-utilitarian’, 
we are ‘pathetic’:

this is the new heresy; 
but if you do not even understand what words say, 

how can you expect to pass judgement on what words conceal?
yet the ancient rubrics reveal that
we are back at the beginning: (Collected 517)

H.D. wanted to claim a new space for the visionary artist; this would allow for thinking outside of traditional religion and modern political philosophies. She saw her role, and that of her contemporaries, as:

… the keepers of the secret,  
carriers, the spinners…

of the rare intangible thread  
that binds all humanity

to ancient wisdom,  
to antiquity (522-23)

According to Claire Buck, H.D. “poses her writing as analogous to religious ritual, prayer and magic, as effective as well as expressive, with the potential ‘to remake the world’” (77). She took this new role as poet-prophet very seriously. In A Tribute To Freud, she even mulled over a suggestion Freud had made to her: “Do I wish myself, in the deepest unconscious or subconscious layers of my being, to be the founder of a new religion?” (55)

Susan Stanford Friedman has documented H.D.’s “sense of destiny as poet-prophet” (Psyche 8), and notes that she was “[f]orced by the crucible of war to find a poetic voice and vision that confronted historical reality” (Psyche 7). For Winterson, “[t]he gift of a vision and a voice” is “difficult,” but “[a]rt is visionary” (Art Objects 179, 136). Buck writes that H.D. “poses her writing as analogous to religious ritual, prayer and magic, as effective as well as expressive, with the potential ‘to remake the world’” and that “[t]he roles she constructs for the woman poet, throughout her writing, as scribe, prophetess and priestess likewise operate to define her project for the reader (77). In that her work can provoke images in the mind, H.D. sees it as a type of invocation. This conjuring of images would cause a shift in perspective which could redeem the destructive environment in which she was living.
While H.D.’s hopes for art and its culturally transformative power are rooted in various historical religious traditions and images, Winterson sees that, while art does work well in a religious context, it need not be limited:

Art...sees beyond the view from the window, even though the window is its frame. This is why the arts are much better alongside religion than alongside either capitalism or communism. The god-instinct and the art-instinct both apprehend more than the physical biological material world. The artist need not believe in God, but the artist does consider reality as multiple and complex. (Art Objects 136)

Citing the influence on her work of her evangelical upbringing, Winterson has said, “It’s a problem in some ways having been told that you can change the world. If they say it to you young enough you believe it for the rest of your life” (Winterson, Wachtel 62), and Lyn Pykett has noted Winterson’s perception of herself as having a “special status as exiled artist-prophet” (58). Alicia Ostriker notes “H.D.’s need to define herself as a poet-prophet, for whom spiritual values were not illusion but central and valid reality,” and declares her “a visionary poet” (“Poet” 34, 29). Winterson echoes this concept of the artist as occupying a specialized niche within society, asserting that, “[w]hat art presents is much more than the daily life of you and me, and original role of the artist as visionary is the correct one” (Art Objects 133).

This idea of the artist as visionary coincides with Blake’s view of art and prophecy. In his works, he presents prophecy as a visionary account of reality; it is past, present, and future; a vision, not a prediction. This vision sees things imaginatively and metaphorically. The “Poetic Genius” is Blake's term for the ultimate imaginative being, the artist, and “genius” means a spiritual being rather than a brilliant individual. Thus, his artist sees the world from a different perspective than the rest of us, and presents it in a manner which enables us, and future generations, to grasp our time and our problems. Winterson asserts:

The true artist does have a kind of early warning system, an immanence that allows him or her to recognize and make articulate the emotional perplexities of his age. Writers who seem to sum up their time are
writers who have this prescience. It is not that they make better documentaries than the rest, this is where the realists miss the point, it is they make better poems. The emotional and psychic resonance of a particular people at a particular time is not a series of snapshots that can be stuck together to make a montage, it is a living, breathing, winding movement that flows out of the past and into the future while making its unique present. This fixity and flux is never clear until we are beyond it, into a further fixity and flux, and yet when we read our great literature, it seems that it was clear, at least to one group of people, a few out of millions, who come to be absolutely identified with their day; the artists. Art does not imitate life. Art anticipates life. (*Art Objects* 39-40)

Perhaps because of her studies and work with Freud, H.D. acquired a new appreciation for the importance of dreams and visions. Part of her claim for the renewed primacy of the artist as seer rested on the image (as of a dream) as the birthplace of ideas. An image could take us places and convey concepts better than mere explanation:

> beyond thought and idea,
> their begetter,
> 
> *Dream,*
> *Vision.* (*Collected* 519)

In “The Vast, Unmappable Cities of the Interior: Place and Passion in *The Passion,***” Helene Bengston notes that Winterson employs this line of thought, stating that, “her art, in line with the modernist thinking of her most influential predecessors, presents truth as subjective, unstable …and created by means of both imagination and emotion” (19). As a media of imagination, art, poetry, can take us into other worlds, as Blake had done:

> Art is for us a reality beyond now. An imaginative reality that we need. The reality of art is the reality of the imagination. The reality of art is not the reality of experience. The charge laid on the artist is to bring back visions. (*Art Objects* 148)

For Winterson and H.D., the new vision will be one of compassion and a resurrection of the arts as the way forward to a better future. H.D. blends gods, myths, and religions within *Trilogy* in order to distill her message; Winterson reunites the arts:
music, painting and literature to re-imagine the world as a place of light and enlightenment.

Revisiting Blake

H.D. combines her interest in ancient civilizations and their myths with the fragmented modern psyche to produce an art which will restore what appears destroyed. She believes that the modern world has lost the wisdom of the ancient myths, including their own Judeo-Christian heritage, and is crippled as a result. For her, it is the task of the artist to reconnect the present to these continually valid truths. With Trilogy, H.D. takes as a touchstone the Book of Revelation, but “she questions the severity and punishing cruelty of John’s apocalypse, with its vengeful version of the hidden future” (“Spell” 73.) While “I John saw” a series of disasters overtake the earth, H.D. proclaims that “my eyes saw” a sign of resurrection; “a half-burnt-out apple-tree/blossoming” (561). She follows Blake, rather than John, in emphasizing the positive in the ending of the world, focusing on the redemptive spirit inherent in the establishment of the New Jerusalem after the Apocalypse.

H.D.’s work will treat loss as the preliminary to a new era of human achievement, gathering material from the works of the past. As Ostriker related the poet’s visionary works to those of Milton and Blake in The American Poetry Review:

The goal is wholeness, to be won from fragmentation. What is to be repaired is at once self and not-self, a shattered self-doubting mind and a faithless world. One means to this end is strenuous introspection. Another is the reexamination of mythic sources, polycultural and polytemporal, leading to the shaping of a new myth. (“Poet” 29)

In Trilogy she interprets the bombing of London as marking the end of one era of human existence: “over us, Apocryphal fire,/what saved us? what for?” (511). By framing the
death/ruin of western civilization as “Apocryphal”, and employing London as a metaphor for that civilization, H.D. invokes the “New Jerusalem” of the book of Revelation and that of Blake as the representation of resurrection. We shall see how she builds her New Jerusalem later in this chapter.

Winterson explains how she, like H.D., dredges up older works, ideas, and images in order to use her art to push the debate on the role of the individual in public life, and of the arts in mainstream culture:

> It is a question of always going back and uncovering what is already there because the artist is something of a dredger: you have to let down your net and pull up things from the mud, from the silt, that are recognizable, that have been forgotten, that have lain disused and ignored for a long time. You bring them up and you clean them off and you look at them and you bring them back into the present where they can speak, where they have a place. I think it’s a dual role of dredging and cleaning, but then also of recreating so that you are always offering something that is right for your own time, that is new in itself. (Winterson, Wachtel 72)

Since Winterson has previously professed an affinity for the modernists and their themes, it would seem natural for Blake to be the visionary poet to whose work she is most attracted. In “All Religions are One”, Blake implies the unity of the artistic and religious imagination which features so heavily in early modernist art, and coincides so neatly with her and H.D.’s identities as poet-prophets. Blake also cited a prophetic tradition in many of his works. For example, the narrative of “Milton A Poem,” follows Blake and his ancestor poet-prophet on a journey of self-knowledge and renewal. Together, they will reconfigure the relationship between living poets and their predecessors. In Art & Lies, Winterson proposes a similar relationship between herself and the poet Sappho. By following a prophetic path through Blake, Winterson thereby aligns herself with the visionary poets who sought to reform the world. Milton, Blake’s predecessor, who sought to “justify the ways of God to men” (PL ch.1), was part of a generation which beheaded their monarch. Blake was an early proponent of Romanticism in the political sense, supporting the French Revolution in its pre-Terror days. H.D. opposed the rise of militarism around her.
Within Blake’s works, Winterson finds a multitude of subjects and inquiries which resonate with her and contemporary literature. For Blake (and Milton), eternity was not an infinite amount of time, but rather the absence of chronological time. All events take place simultaneously from an timeless perspective, and all space is the same place. The modernists had employed this concept to great advantage, including H.D. in all her major works. The free-flowing time-frame within Art & Lies reflects this conception. Her London is experienced by the reader as an emotional space, and less as a physical one. It is, like the worlds created by Blake, a journey of the mind:

…the world of Art & Lies is a strange one but it is a deeply emotional one and it is one which probes and peels away at the complacencies and habits that we take for granted …The worlds I create are always worlds where it’s possible to find new space, to leave behind things which perhaps drag you down, things that you need.…The journey that you make is not one of the clock: it’s an interior one, and in it you travel through time, through space, through place. (Winterson, Wachtel 67)

The main theme of the poems in Blake’s “Songs of Innocence and Experience” came from Blake's conviction that, while that children were born innocent, they lost their “innocence” as they experienced the ways of the world. The poems from “Songs of Innocence” were written from an innocent child's perspective. We see them reflected by Handel in the early memories of his mother and the Cardinal, and in some of the love poems of Sappho. The poems from “Songs of Experience” were written from the perspective of a person who had seen the evil in the world and had, become bitter towards it. These sentiments are echoed in the interior monologues of Sappho and, especially, in the abusive and incestuous experiences of Handel and Picasso. It will take a leap of faith for all three of them to believe in love and beauty once more, and Winterson demands no less of her readers.

In “Laocoön”, Blake lists “A Poet a Painter a Musician”, along with architect, as the only undertakings which are truly Christian. Again prioritizing the arts, these are personified in Art & Lies in the forms of Sappho, Picasso, and Handel. Winterson also takes Blake at his word, when she employs his exhortation in “Laocoön”: “You must leave Fathers & Mothers & Houses & Lands if they stand in the way of ART”. Picasso
leaves not only for her psychological well-being, but in order to continue to create her art as well. Her art will be the road to her personal salvation.

Within “Milton A Poem,” the character Milton unites with his feminine aspect, Ololon, in progressing towards the apocalyptic (in the sense of impending resurrection) defeat of the divisions between the sexes, and between the living and the dead. For Blake, the separation of the sexes is merely a temporary stage, an aspect of the Fall, and leads to conflict between the formerly undivided aspects. In “Jerusalem,” both male and female emanations exist within the integrated beings in eternity. As Blake merged the sexes, Winterson plays with the concept of there being only two genders. She echoes H.D.’s repeated assertion in Notes on Thought and Vision that, “Christ and his father, or as the Eleusinian mystic would have said, his mother, were one (Notes 52-53). As the Cardinal says to Handel, “In Christ there is neither male nor female. Male and Female he created Them. And in His image” (AL 198). Winterson will blur the lines between the sexes: Handel is a castrato, Picasso is a girl with a man’s name, and Sappho is a lesbian; all three exist outside the normative limits of a dualistic sexual paradigm. As Jan Rosemergy notes, “Winterson envisions empowered selves that promise a new society where female and male can be free and whole” (259). And, we might say, less completely differentiated.

Another echo of Blake’s works can be seen in the atmospheres fashioned for Trilogy and Art & Lies. Winterson again follows H.D.’s lead in creating new worlds within her fiction, employing what H.D. had termed in Trilogy, “spiritual realism.” H.D. did not mean “spiritual” in a particularly religious sense. The concept on which both H.D. and Winterson focus their energies is the human spirit; esprit, in the French, or psyche, in the Greek sense: mind, soul, spirit. Recognizing this tendency in Winterson’s work, Lyn Pykett has commented that:

In Winterson's avowedly anti-realistic fictions, stories are less a way of trying to explain or understand the universe than of (re)experiencing it, or alternatively, of shoring oneself against its confusions and complexities; less a way of understanding material history or ‘the historical process’ than of transcending it or escaping from its confines. (56)
As Susan Stanford Friedman stated when writing about H.D.’s use of the image of the caterpillar being reborn as a butterfly, “Psyche is the Spirit that survives physical decay to be reunited with the divine” (Psyche 9). It will be expressed in Art & Lies as the resurgent human spirit of the three damaged heroes who leave the world of the dead behind.

Crafting a London much like the contemporary one, but avoiding a realistic depiction, Winterson tweaks her fiction’s reality in creating her artistic vision: “Art is visionary; it sees beyond the view from the window, even though the window is its frame” (Art Objects 136). She turns a magnifying lens onto various social ills, highlighting what she sees as the major problems of the day: the commercialization of health care and housing; the commodification of the Church of England; an end to compassion for the poor and the resultant criminalization of poverty; and the loss of interest in art and ideas. By creating a world familiar enough to be recognizable she enables us to identify with characters who may be quite unlike ourselves, and, thereby, living lives unknown to us personally. She asserts, “It’s about feeling. To limit your feeling seems to me to be very dangerous and pointless. So I would like my readers to feel things that they have not felt before and to explore emotional territory that is otherwise closed to them’ (Winterson, Wachtel 70). In depicting a familiar world, Winterson lures the reader into a sense of security, then, slowly builds an increasingly menacing image of dysfunction and pain beneath the all-is-well façade. She seeks to “get underneath the barriers and the defenses which people normally put up to protect themselves from intrusion” (Winterson, Wachtel 63). In this way, her aim is to help people and society shed psychic disabilities and regain a sense of hope, in order to resurrect a consciousness of spiritual well-being: “I hope…that the reader is relieved in some way, literally, of things that perhaps they didn’t even notice that they were carrying” (Winterson, Wachtel 68).

**Eros and Death**

Recalling that “Eros and Death” were central to Freud’s inquiries, H.D., in Trilogy, and Winterson, writing Art & Lies, posit the world as a struggle between *eros*
and death; between the creative urge and the impulse to destruction. They configure their works to reflect this and they come down firmly on the side of the love force, the sex force, the creative force. For H.D., this death impulse is manifest as the death and destruction of a physical siege and menace of death, as well as the psychological forces leading to war. For Winterson, the death is psychological, artistic, and spiritual. Patriarchy, whether in militaristic or materialistic form, is configured as the primary threat to the human psyche.

The worlds created within *Trilogy* and *Art & Lies* convey the realities which the writers found around them. Their characters live in the City of the Dead—London. Western civilization is crumbling around their ears. It is to the arts and literature that they turn, guided by the authors’ belief in Art as the redemptive pursuit, whether it be public and cultural, as in *Trilogy*, or private and individual, as in *Art & Lies*.

The society in which H.D. wrote her poem was beginning a second world war during her adult lifetime. This was just as the propaganda machines of the various countries were co-opting artists and writers into the ranks of the belligerent. She had experienced first-hand the corrupting influence of war on men, and written about the changes apparent in her poet-husband after he enlisted in the army during the first war. She sought to deter people from this route, and return it to one which valued life over political philosophy. In *Trilogy*, she reduces western civilization to the metaphor of the city of London, and employs the scourge of war in general, and the Blitz in particular, to exemplify the loss of meaning for the individual and for society, depicting them as “ruin everywhere” (509).

The first book of *Trilogy* was begun as the bombs of the Blitz were still falling around H.D. She had chosen to stay in London during the war (a particularly courageous thing to do since she had already endured the bombings of London during the first war). She stated that she wanted to confront “the thing I wanted to fight in the open, war, its cause and effects” (qtd. in “Poet” 35). In *Tribute to Freud*, written around the same time, H.D. questions the direction of modern civilization, characterizing it as “ruined”:

*But we are here to-day in a city of ruin, a world ruined, it might seem, almost past redemption. We must forgo a flight from reality into the green*
pastures or the cool recesses of the Academe; though those pastures and those gardens have outlasted many ruined cities and threat of world ruin; (128)

Friedman contends that “H.D. wrote *Notes on Thought and Vision* to define the layers of consciousness that condition ‘the soul or mind or inspiration’ of the poet and artist.” She contends that it “belongs alongside Lawrence's cultural/aesthetic treatises” and that “[l]ike his, her tone is prophetic, addressing itself to the spiritually dead and embattled modern moment much in need of rebirth” (*Penelope* 9). For Friedman, *Trilogy* is “a record of quest, a search deep within the un-conscious and throughout many mythological traditions for the knowledge of unity beneath division and destruction” (*Psyche* 8). It will draw an arc from the bombed-out ruins of London (a city of dead victims) and the all-encompassing war with its accompanying death of both civilization and individual souls/psyches to a new city, a new Jerusalem, of revelation and rebirth for both.

Winterson’s vision of London as a “city of the dead” also finds its origins in H.D.’s novel, *Bid Me to Live*, where it is called “a dead city” (109). The London inhabited by Handel, Picasso, and Sappho is distancing, dehumanizing, and disappearing (transitive verb). Handel, Picasso, and Sappho are “each fleeing a dead city, a London of the future, a potential place without values” (*Art Objects* 160). There is no space left within it for humanity:

The First City is ceremonial. Ceremonies of religion, monarchy, law.

The Second City is political. Politics of slums, apartments, mansions. The correct balance must be maintained…//Homelessness is illegal. In my city no-one is homeless although there are an increasing number of criminals living on the street.

People vanish everyday…the Third City is invisible, the city of the vanished, home to those who no longer exist. (*AL* 11, 19, 22)

Winterson not only depicts that which she rejects, but also seeks in her works to transcend the materialist world, and “find new solutions”:
I see no conflict between reality and imagination. They are not in fact separate. Our real lives hold within them our royal lives; the inspiration to be more than we are, to find new solutions, to live beyond the moment. Art helps us to do this because it fuses together temporal and perpetual realities. To see outside of a dead vision is not an optical illusion. (Art Objects 142-43)

In order to best convey her own disappointment with contemporary society, Winterson imagines the people of her London as psychically dead; their lives are empty of purpose and there is no beauty remaining; the color has gone out of the world:

The dead are on their way to work, grey limbs rubbing together in an open grave, stack on stack in the metal containers of car, tube and train. The grisly carriages are painted bright colours, guillotine colours of tumbril and blade, execution-bright. Each man and woman goes to their particular scaffold, kneels, and is killed day after day. Each collects their severed head and catches the train home. (AL 65)

Part of the reason for this spiritual death is a cultural death which has robbed individuals of not only the presence of beauty, but of the desire for it. They lack ability to recognize beauty and the language to address it, even if it were present:

The spirit has gone out of the world. I fear the dead bodies settling around me, the corpses of humanity, fly-blown and ragged. I fear the executive zombies, the shop zombies, the Church zombies, the writerly zombies, all mouthing platitudes, the language of the dead, mistaking hobbies for passions, the folly of the dead. (AL 64)

So Winterson undertakes to revive, to resurrect these people by reviving the English language, itself. It will be through the power of art, of beauty, of the Word that she will resurrect those who are dead. She pursues “[h]and to hand combat between the living and the dead. Mouth to mouth resuscitation between the poet and the word” (AL 65). Winterson also sees the role of the imagination as another important element which is missing in the struggle against an unimaginative, psychically dead, society:

Art coaxes out of us emotions we normally do not feel. It is not that art sets out to shock (that is rare), it is rather that art occupies ground unconquered by social niceties. Seeking neither to please nor to displease,
art works to enlarge emotional possibility. In a dead society that inevitably puts it on the side of the rebels….The rebellion of art is a daily rebellion against the state of living death routinely called real life. (Art Objects 108)

Art as Salvation

H.D. proposes to redeem post-war civilization by conjuring up legends and gods of civilizations past. That their stories still exist is a beacon to those suffering beneath the bombs of the Blitz, proof that there is life after death. She seeks to re-direct society’s energies away from power and death and toward the celebration of creation and of life (eros). Defying the Sword with the Word is the first and most important of these. For H.D., language and the arts take precedent over modern-day political theory and the wars they spawned:

…remember, O Sword,
you are the younger brother, the latter-born,

your Triumph, however exultant,
must one day be over,

in the beginning
was the Word. (Collected 519)

She continues to assert the primacy of art over politics:

Without thought, invention,
you would not have been, O Sword,

without idea and the Word’s mediation,
you would have remained

unmanifest (519)
In *Trilogy*, she refutes the values which have led to this war and undertakes a quest through ancient images and texts for a new answer, a new way, out of this militaristic mind-set:

so let us search the old highways
for the true-rune, the right-spell,
recover old values…

Let us…recover the scepter,
the rod of power…

it is Caduceus; among the dying
it bears healing…

in the rain of incendiary,
other values were revealed to us (511-12, 520)

The “new Master” who comes “is Mage, bringing myrrh” (514-15). The myrrh is a healing balm, meant for both individual souls and a lost culture, but it is not exactly the traditional interpretation of the second coming of Christ. H.D., through the course of *Trilogy*, reconfigures this savior by combining images from various traditions (both pre- and post-Christian) in order to create a new, wholly peaceful image of the New Jerusalem and its redeemer. In *Trilogy*, the resurrection, the rebirth which takes place in the final book is the rebirth of the individual and of society led by the arts. Adalaide Morris has commented that this is:

[T]he work of the poet-alchemist who wanted to give us, through her combinations and recombinations of lost spells and legends, the power to transmute our own damaged civilization. The ultimate, audacious hope of *Trilogy* is that it might itself become an elixir of life, a resurrective power. (“Concept” 122)

Morris has noted elsewhere that H.D.’s quest is best described by what “Wallace Stevens calls ‘How to Live. What to Do.’” (*How* 1) This is a theme which runs through *Art & Lies*. Winterson repeatedly poses the question through Handel, “How shall I live?” In an interview given not long after the publication of *Art & Lies*, she discusses what she
sees as the role of the artist and of the importance of the arts in re-energizing an impotent society:

I think art can make a difference because it pulls people up short. It says, don’t accept things for their face value; you don’t have to go along with any of this; you can think for yourself. It gives you a kind of self-reliance. We all feel powerless and we can’t really manage to do anything because there’s just so much. I want to try and cut through those feelings of apathy and powerlessness and be a kind of rallying point, offer a rallying cry, to people who would otherwise feel dispossessed. (Winterson, Wachtel 71)

In Trilogy and Art & Lies, H.D. and Winterson delineate the defects inherent in the destructive side of society, and propose art as a saving force for both the individual and humanity. This project of “exploring psyche or soul of humanity and reaching out to confront the questions of history, traditions and myth place [them] squarely in the mainstream of ‘established’ modern literature” (“Buried” 47). The idea of art as a means to salvation is not particular to H.D.’s characteristic melding of psychoanalysis and esoteric religious traditions. Friedman has discussed how “H. D. wove the science and religion of the psyche together to produce an art that was both deeply personal and broadly based in religious traditions” (Psyche 12), and Rosemergy pursues Winterson’s philosophical bent as she “interweaves autobiography, history, satire, myths and fantasy to feed the spirit” (248). Pykett has described this “sacralisation of art [a]s characteristic of much Modernist art and theorising about art” (57). As she noted, there is within Art & Lies an “implicit acceptance of the Arnoldian vision (mediated through T.S. Eliot) of poetry as the religion of the future….Poetry (or literary art) has certainly become the religion of Winterson’s secular ‘future’” (57).

Winterson defends her new-found faith in art by arguing that art is not new, rather a new way of presenting eternal truths:

Invenire, Inventum, it means ‘To come upon’… Not to devise or contrive or fabricate but to find that which exists…. Invention then would return to us forms not killed through too much use. Art does it. (AL 199)

One element Winterson ‘found’ in the second volume of Trilogy, and which she employed in her own work, is the book carried by “Our Lady”: 

102
she carries a book but it is not
the tome of the ancient wisdom,

the pages, I imagine, are the blank pages
of the unwritten volume of the new;…

she is the counter-coin-side
of primitive terror;

she is not-fear, she is not-war (Collected 570)

In *Art & Lies*, it is Handel who carries the book. It has been handed down to him from
the Cardinal and contains excerpts from many past works, some banned by the Vatican.
The blank pages represent the works of literature and art yet to be written/created by the
“initiates”, the artists. The book represents the continuum that is art, including the art
which is yet to come. For Winterson, “The Book; fabulous, unlikely, beyond wealth, a
talisman against time, an inventing and a remembrance” (202), is all books; all art, for
within the book, Handel “keeps pressed between the pages” “the white rose, La Mortola”
(187). These roses reflect the white roses carried by Sappho, representing Beauty, and,
further, the arts, and have their origin in Sappho’s verses and H.D.’s early poetry. In her
poem about D.H. Lawrence, “Priest”, we find it representing beauty, juxtaposed with
death, itself, its erotic force, resisting death:

She is dead,
but there is beauty,
a white rose; (Collected 421)

Sappho carries her words, her poems, white roses, but Handel and Picasso, too, bring
their arts of music and painting with them. Winterson unites them, and accords them an
elevated place in the role of humanity, because, “[t]wo things significantly distinguish
human beings from the other animals; an interest in the past and the possibility of
language. Brought together they make a third : Art” (AL 137).

H.D. and Winterson have each expressed their faith in the healing power of art
and the role of the poet-prophet in changing the direction of history away from the death
drive. Love, compassion and *eros* are the preferred moral goals. With Handel, Picasso, and Sappho, Winterson has given us three redeeming prophets of the type envisioned by H.D.:

Two or three people, with healthy bodies and the right sort of receiving brains [i.e., artists], could turn the whole tide of human thought, could direct lightning flashes of electric power to slash across and destroy the world of dead, murky thought. Two or three people gathered together in the name of truth, beauty, over-mind consciousness could bring the whole force of this power back into the world. (*Notes* 27)

This “power” is the creative power of *eros*. Winterson names these three people after three artists for whose work she feels a personal affinity: Handel (music), Picasso (painting), and Sappho (poetry). They are both individual characters and symbols of their branches of the arts. By naming her three protagonists after three artists, Winterson prioritizes the arts within the realm of human endeavor because, “naming is important to me, and we do find as we go along in the book that of course these names are not the real names of anybody, which is a game I like to play, because what *is* your identity?” (Winterson, Wachtel 68).

Linking the creative and amorous aspects of *eros*, H.D. declared, “There is no great art period without great lovers” (*Notes* 21). In “find[ing] that whic[h] exists,” Winterson revives three great artists/lovers from the past. Notably, two of Winterson’s protagonists are named for Picasso, as notorious womanizer, and Sappho, whose name and home island have come to symbolize lesbian sexual identity: “Say my name and you say sex” (*AL* 51). Like H.D.’s Helen, Sappho speaks with her own voice to spread the wisdom of her eros-centered worldview. As an artist and seer who worships erotic power, Winterson enacts Sappho’s poetics.

Romantic love, although ‘diluted into paperback form’ and marketed in millions of copies, still exists somewhere, ‘in the original, written on tablets of stone’. Love, like art, is liberating; it is a form of self transcendence: (Pykett 56)

While she poses the question, ‘How shall we live?’ in order to provoke the debate about where our society is headed, the ultimate message delivered by Winterson as poet-prophet is that *eros*, the loving and creative force, is more powerful in us than the death
drive. We find the same sentiment expressed by H.D. in her poem about the female artist, “The Dancer”:

    dare further,
stare with me
into the face of Death,
and say,
    Love is stronger. (Collected 448)

It will be the creative force of eros, in all its aspects, which will overcome the spiritual death surrounding Handel, Picasso, and Sappho at the end of Art & Lies.

New Jerusalem

In order to create her own story of metamorphosis, H.D. wove together fragments of various myths, legend, and iconographies. Repeatedly, she used images centered on the life cycle of the butterfly to portray the return from death to life. After a phase of living death, the soul returns as a butterfly. By using the double meaning of psyche as soul and butterfly, she implies the rebirth from their living death of the souls of London.

The three books of Trilogy each possess symbolic names. The Walls Do Not Fall is the segment wherein the state of siege under which London was suffering during the Blitz is described. It reflects the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings), and Blake’s “Jerusalem”, in which those who “fled not but… remain to guard the Western Wall…the Four Walls of Jerusalem.” The inhabitants of London are those who “fled not” and they are holding the “Western Wall” against the forces of Nazi Germany. The second book is Tribute to the Angels and is meant to honor the horrors in the form of the seven angels of the Apocalypse who must come before the resurrection. Within this book, she catalogs the gemstones which represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve gates of Jerusalem in Revelations, so that we know we are at the coming of the New Jerusalem. The third part is The Flowering of the Rod, and is meant to be a sign of redemption and rebirth.
In re-working ancient iconographies into “a healing vision” (Taylor 175) and her own story of redemption wherein there is “no more death,” she employed Sir James George Frazer’s dying and reviving gods (commonly known as “dying and rising” gods) and goddesses (their female counterparts), weaving their symbolic names into a tapestry of rebirth. Within her new myth, H.D. blurs the distinctions between parent-child pairs and couples in ancient mythologies until she can re-imagine Mary as the bride of Christ and as herself, with or without the Child. By the close of the poem, the baby Jesus is born and we are given the image of Mary holding the newborn Jesus. S/he has come to represent the incarnation of all the gods named: Tammuz-Ishtar, Adonis-Aphrodite, Atthis-Cybele (Nana) Osiris-Isis (Ra). They have been rolled into one Blakean “emanation” and it is this rebirth of hope, love, eros: Mary/Jesus/Amen/Christos/Osiris, which has come to pass. She has appeared several times earlier in the work, her relationship to “the Child” not necessary to her existence, “but the Lamb was not with her/either as Bridegroom or Child” (Collected 571). She is, herself, the incarnation of the New Jerusalem of John of Patmos:

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city (Rev 17:18)

And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband. (Rev 21:2)

She is the embodiment of the New Jerusalem, and her arrival means that an era of suffering is over:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are True and Faithful. (Rev. 21:4-5)

The artist is commanded to write the vision of the new age, one where there is “no more death”. Within her own work of art, Trilogy, H.D., acting as poet-prophet, announces this commandment.

H.D. “creates a new myth of redemption …that reaches out now to cover all the ‘smouldering cities’ of Europe-- not only London, but other ‘broken’ cities that need
redemption, in other lands. It is a universal myth of forgiveness and healing” (Martz xxxv- xxxvi). *Trilogy* is a work written during a world-shattering war to remind us of our humanity:

The last [section of *Trilogy*] deals with resurrection—a good theme for the after-war or the end of the war. I had started making it a Victory poem but Victory is such a problem—I mean, there is so little real victory—a great deal, yes, but I mean there is the devastation everywhere. So I just thought the best thing was resurrection [sic]—a rising-out or above all the dreary waste and sorrow.” (qtd. in Taylor 174)

In the final part of *Trilogy*, “The Flowering of the Rod”, H.D, elaborates on the theme of rebirth with her vision of a blossoming apple tree among the smouldering ruins after an air raid:

a half-burnt-out apple-tree
blossoming;

this is the flowering of the rood,
this is the flowering of the wood, (561)

A “rood” refers to the “Dream of the Rood”, wherein the rood is called a “most wondrous tree ”, “glory’s tree”, and “the Healer's tree”, as well as the rood or cross of Christ’s crucifixion. At the conclusion of this medieval poem/inscription: “Hope was renewed/ with glory and gladness to those who there burning endured” (Glenn ll.148 -9). In *The Flowering of the Rod*, there is resurrection, as the *psyches* relinquish all that has burdened them and find new ways out of the underworld in which they have been living, bringing with them a new blossoming of spring, the mythological season of rebirth:

*Trilogy* as a whole, then, points to a way out of war by attempting the fullest examination of the forces that lead to war, and, ultimately, the forces that can lead to peace, of any work by any woman writer of this period. It is part of a wave of poems attempting to come to terms with a world appearing to have lost all moral values and stability. Norman Pearson viewed *Angels* as the first of the peace poems even before peace had been achieved (Taylor 175)
This “peace[] poem [written] even before peace had been achieved” represents a faith, even in the midst of war, in an end to the war and a defeat of the forces of death. With the completion of *Trilogy*, H.D. created a work of art which is to bring new life and hope for a better world to a people weary of war and death.

Having also configured London as a “dead city”, Winterson will also have to revive it. In order to do this, she plays off H.D.’s use of images of the New Jerusalem, but will rely more on heavily Blake’s work for her interpretation of deliverance. The hymn, “Jerusalem,” which was created from Blake’s lines had, by the writing of *Art & Lies*, attained the status of an unofficial national anthem in England. It was (and is) sung not only in church, but in pubs, and by English football and rugby fans at international matches. The idea of England as the New Jerusalem was well-entrenched in the minds of Winterson’s contemporaries. There were other artists at the time who questioned its use as a nationalist, rather than humanist, anthem. For example, the English folk singer, Billy Bragg, recorded a version of the song in 1990 on an EP entitled “The Internationale.” In the liner notes, he explains:

My belief that Jerusalem is a left wing anthem has gotten me into arguments….William Blake was a radical and a visionary. A friend of Thomas Paine, he was harassed by the Establishment of the day, eventually being arrested for sedition. Written at the time of the Industrial Revolution, I believe this song is an attack on the new breed of capitalists that Blake saw in his midst. It asks how can the morals of Christ be compatible with the morality of exploitation, both of people and of the environment.

This reclamation of Blake as an icon of those opposed to rampant globalization and its attendant problems may have made it an even more attractive image for Winterson’s anti-Establishment and pro-arts work. For Blake, the redemption would be a renaissance of the arts as well as of the spirit. In his one-page work, “Laocoön”, Blake had proclaimed the arts to be the highest possible calling:

Jesus & his Apostles & Disciples were all Artists
Their Works were destroyd by the Seven Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia.
Antichrist Science
SCIENCE is the Tree of DEATH
ART is the Tree of LIFE
In *Art & Lies*, art will indeed be the tree of life; that which brings with it forgiveness and redemption; it will bring the ultimate victory. Winterson appropriates the term “Victory” which H.D. had used in *Helen in Egypt* as an end to war and in *Tribute to Freud* as the goddess of victory, but also as Nike, goddess of myth and art: “I call her Niké, Victory” (81) and “There was Victory, our sign on the wall, our hieroglyph, our writing” (*Tribute* 134). In this way, H.D. re-works the meaning of “victory”, stealing it from the clutch of war and re-endowing it with attributes of art and positive myth-making. Winterson also take liberties with various mythological traditions and will make use of Pallas Athena (of which Nike was one Athenian epithet) in order to add an attribute of erotic love (*eros*) into the mix. To do this, she will play with the names and legend of Admiral Horatio Nelson and Lady Emma Hamilton. Picasso, whose surname is Hamilton, finds in Sappho her “Nelson”, and claims their love as “Victory”:

You told me your name was Nelson, but that was much later, long after I knew mine was Hamilton….
‘Victory’ I said that night.
‘Victory as I climbed the long climb back to my studio.
‘Victory.’ the word undressed me….
‘Victory.’ I picked up my paint brush and began. (*AL* 45)

Picasso’s private victory is the revival of her creative spirit, the resumption of her painting, and it is propelled by the arrival in her life of the love of Sappho. She will have both aspects of *eros* to revive her besieged spirit. There is one other use Winterson makes of the icon of Lord Nelson. Other than his love affair with Lady Hamilton, the other element of Nelson’s legend which Winterson deftly inserts into *Art & Lies* comes from the prayer which he offered up before his decisive victory at sea over the French (*saving England*). It begins:

May The Great God whom I worship grant to my country and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature of the British Fleet. (Nelson par. 1)

This idea of “humanity after victory” reflects Winterson’s final victory: a return of “humanity”, of compassion, into the world at the saving of England.
The way forward is shown to Winterson’s protagonists by the light which figures so prominently in the imagery of *Art & Lies*. It is the light of insight gained and hope restored, the light which burns away pain and doubt, which cleanses the spirit, which enlightens the psyche. The conception of that light as self-knowledge, of “enlightenment” has already been discussed in a previous chapter. Its origins are to be found in H.D.’s poems, “Projector I” and “Projector II”, and it is a powerful force which dispels doubt and fear, and brings and a new vision of hope:

…we… /… greet / light / in new attribute, / insidious fire;  
light reasserts / his power / reclaims the lost;  
in a new blaze of splendour  
light… batters gloom,…

Yet still he moves, /…this shaft of light,…  
vision returns / and with new vision  
fresh / hope / to the impotent; … (Projector I 349, 351-52)

This is his [the sun-god’s] gift; /light,  
light that sears and breaks / us  
from old doubts / and fears / and lassitudes; …

This is his gift; / light,  
light / a wave / that sweeps / us  
from old fears / and powers / and disenchantments;  
this is his gift,  
light /bearing us aloft,  
enthusiastic,  
into realms of magic;  
old forms dispersed (Projector II 353, 354-355)

The “old forms dispersed,” a new era, a new story is about to begin. It is one of healing and rebirth; of resurrection and renaissance of the spirit; a new beginning:

…everyone in the book finds a particular redemption which is right for them, and Picasso in her own story leaves behind a loveless, privileged childhood and cuts loose and learns how to heal herself. To learn how to heal yourself seems to me to be the most important thing that you can do because at that moment you are genuinely self-reliant...Both Handel and Sappho arrive at a resolution in their own lives...I am not interested
in…‘closure.’… there’s always another journey which is beginning at the end of the book. (Winterson, Wachtel 72)

She asks that we begin to think about ourselves and the world around us in a new way:

*Art & Lies* is a journey into deep inner space, and the characters in the book are not characters in the physical sense that we know them on the street or perhaps even in our own lives. They are consciousnesses. They are ways of talking about ourselves…(Winterson, Wachtel 67)

and poses the question for us, “[How shall I live?]” It’s an individual answer…I do think it has to be asked, and if people then begin to ponder on it and ask it of themselves, then that is a good thing” (Winterson, Wachtel 71).

Resisting the spiritual death which she sees in our society, Winterson takes up “the Word”, for, “Art[‘s] true effort is to open to us dimensions of the spirit and of the self that normally lie smothered under the weight of living” (*Art Objects* 137). Having freed her tortured artists from their imprisoning pasts, Winterson now allows them to proceed toward free expression, and she expects that they will lead the way for humanity though a revival of the arts and literature in western culture. She and H.D. want to examine the past and liberate the spirit, creating a future founded in life and creation, not on death. They, and Handel, Picasso, and Sappho fight on the side of beauty and hope in the struggle for the soul of society, and against the deadening drive of materialism, ignorance, and apathy (which Winterson characterizes as “From the Greek A Pathos. Want of feeling” (*AL* 14).

In the end, the rebirth is about starting to live again. The psyche (the soul/butterfly) emerges from the temporary death of isolation and goes forth to a renaissance. It is the spirit of the artist, reborn, reaching out toward the future, predicting its redemption, exulting in the victory of life over death. There is hope that “we will be saved yet” (*Collected* 491). H.D. said that we were “at the cross-roads,/ the tide is turning”; she called us to “go forward/… let us go down to the sea”, and so Handel, Picasso and Sappho go. They travel in H.D.’s train (from her poem “R.A.F.”), where “thoughts in the train, /rushed forward, backward” (*Collected* 490). They are the survivors of a dead city. As H.D. proclaimed for her fellow Londoners:
we have shown
that we could stand;
we have withstood
the anger, frustration,
bitter fire of destruction…

and mount higher
to love-resurrection. (Collected 578)

Directing us toward this “love-resurrection” is the goal of both writers. So, in her writings, Winterson is creating the change she wishes to see in the world. She writes not only in order to bring out visions of the suffering we hide from each other and ourselves, but, more importantly, to offer up visions of how the world might feel, if we only gave ourselves the chance.

Leaving the train, the three “survivors” head towards “the cliffs, the sea, the white beach, and the light” (172). The clouds of repression will soon burst and there is, “[a]cross the dying sky a veneer of light” (187). Handel’s memory of Picasso’s birth and his deeply-buried memories of abuse and castration burst forth. We have a complete picture of what led these three to this moment, and, “It was not too late” (206). Handel, wrapped in the light, his heart opens, flooding with eros. He cannot resist the resurgence of emotion. It streams out: “[h]e began to sing” (206). He sang the “Trio” from Der Rosenkavalier, an artistic expression of compassion and forgiveness. Sappho and Picasso stand together, finding inspiration in the moment. These artists will answer H.D.’s call in Trilogy to “light a new fire …/chant new paeans to the new Sun/ of regeneration” (524). They will, like Osiris, “relate[] resurrection myth/ and resurrection reality” (540). They have learned that that “many waters can not quench love’s fire”. They have rediscovered the power of eros for regeneration, and understand that “only love is holy and love’s ecstasy” (583). They have heard Blake’s admonition in “Laocoön”: “What can be Created Can be Destroyed”, and, heeding T.S. Eliot’s words, which Winterson repeats as a choral refrain, “That which is only living can only die”, they have come to know that, “Love is stronger than Death” (Tribute 156); eros defeats death; “The word returns in love.” (AL 205)
CONCLUSION

If truth is that which lasts, then art has
proved truer than any other human endeavour.
What is certain is that pictures and poetry
and music are not only marks in time but marks
through time, of their own time and ours, not
antique or historical, but living as they ever
did, exuberantly, untired.  (Introductory epigram from *Art Objects*)

In her fiction, Jeanette Winterson views her literary output as part of an artistic
continuum.  Specifically, she situates herself directly into the lineage of both the avant-
garde and high modernists.  She takes as her building material the works of both groups,
but, in her own *oeuvre*, comes down squarely on the side of the avant-garde.  Availing
herself of the experimental gains made during the modernist era, Winterson shreds the
hegemony of the male master narrative.  Not only are her protagonists lesbian and gay,
but eunuchs and transvestites.  They are living and dead, now and past and forever.  They
will not remain within the confines of traditional narrative, nor even within the expanded
bounds demarcated by her modernist literary forebears.

In *Art & Lies*, she unites themes and motifs from the works of H.D., spinning her
own web of experimental and radical literature.  The three protagonists are each on an
interior quest, searching for self-knowledge and psychological healing.  They struggle
with their pasts, and will seek redemption in their arts.  Within the narrative, Sappho’s
great poetic gift will be re-stimulated, and Winterson will write new sapphic verse for us.
Placing herself into a line of poet-prophets who sought to re-direct the world’s energies,
she envisions traveling toward a new England, a New Jerusalem: one which values
people over profits, art above money, live over death.

Following H.D.’s lead into the creative application of Freud’s therapeutic
techniques of association and reflective self-analysis, Winterson takes as her guide the
maxim which H.D. had invoked in *Tribute to Freud*, “Know thyself.” In *Notes on Thought and Vision*, H.D. writes of moving on beyond the pain of an inflicted psychic wound:

There are two ways of escaping the pain and despair of life, and of the rarest, most subtle dangerous and ensnaring gift that life can bring us, relationship with another person--love. One way is to kill that love in one’s heart. To kill love--to kill life. The other way is to accept that love, to accept the snare, to accept the pricks, the thistle. To accept life--but that is dangerous. It is also dangerous not to accept life. To every man and woman in the world it is given at some time or another, in some form or another, to make the choice. (39)

That choice comes as the protagonists of *Art & Lies* embark on a quest to remember who they are, where they come from. In order to “know thyself”, one must shine the light of remembering and reflection into the shadowy spaces of the past. As Picasso says, “Better to go forward than to retreat. Better to fight the hurt than to flee from it” (*AL* 135). The unfolding narrative is the journey through the memories of Handel, Picasso, and Sappho.

In order to begin to escape past demons, one must question the status quo. For that break with one’s previous position, occasionally one must leave behind the family or social structure which keeps one in a painful place. Jan Rosemergy found that Winterson’s questors often had to make the “decision to choose freedom of self, even at the cost of exile from the world [they have] known” (250). She continues that, even at the end of the book, the “quest is not completed” (251), or, as Winterson put it, “there’s always another journey which is beginning at the end of the book” (Winterson, Wachtel 72). This is a new way of life, a new sense of self, a new beginning.

Not losing her sense of humor among the horrors which befall her protagonists, Winterson plays with a notion which H.D. had used in writing about her analysis with Freud. H.D. tweaks Freud’s nose by quoting him as saying of his statue of Pallas Athené that “she is perfect, only she has lost her spear” (*Tribute* 104). This comment is meant to deflect his theory of women and their inherent penis-envy. H.D. disagreed with many of Freud’s theories, especially those pertaining to women. Winterson will carry this refutation even further and retaliate with Handel’s castration. Not only do Sappho and Picasso refuse the phallus, but even Handel does not lament the loss of his “manhood.”
H.D. and Winterson undertake projects of “re-visioning” within their artist creations. They will endeavor to reclaim female images, re-visioning them as strong and active subjects who refuse to occupy the role of object which has been assigned them by history. They work to “furnish[] stories of female strength and survival” (my emphases) (“Spell” 65). H.D. “re-visioned” major female icons, rescuing them from centuries of male literary traditions. This involves changing historical/literary female characters from subject to object. In *Helen in Egypt*, she operates on Helen of Troy; in *Trilogy*, it is the image of Mary Magdalene. They are reclaimed from their status as wanton women and given voices and agency of their own. Helen is no longer responsible for the Trojan War and its deadly consequences. Her status as vamp had been surpassed only by Eve’s; H.D. returns her to a place of dignity and honor. Mary Magdala in H.D.’s *Trilogy* is echoed by Winterson’s Sappho. She is the woman with the reputation as an “outcast/whore” who has played an important role in the culture of the Western world, but whose importance has been “disappeared” from our cultural consciousness.

In working with the remnants of Sappho, “the one Greek woman poet whose work is known today,…the only Hellenic literary ancestor who can become a female model” (Dehler 34), both H.D. and Winterson re-weave her story. They use what H.D. called a “palimpsest,” wherein Sappho’s words and images are both erased and present at the same time. In *Art & Lies*, Winterson (and H.D., in *The Wise Sappho*) throws into sharp relief the fact that the volumes of poetry by Sappho have been allowed to vanish. In some cases they were literally thrown on the scrap-heap of society, as was the case with the papyrus copies of her works which were discovered in fields in Oxyrhynchos, Egypt around the turn of the twentieth century.

As envisioned by Winterson, Sappho ceases to be an icon of female sexuality, in all of its negative connotations, and becomes the eloquent genius and empowered lover of women that she originally appeared to be. And, thankfully, she is finally allowed to compose again. New poetry is created in the sections wherein Sappho writes erotic love poetry to, and of, Picasso/Sophia:

This love is neither wild nor free. You have trained it where it grows and shaped me to it. I am the rose pinned to the rock, the white rose against the rock, I am the petals double-borne, white points of love. I am the
closed white hand that opens under the sun of you, that is fragrant in the scent of you, that bows beneath the knife and falls in summer drifts as you pass. (61)

We are given the sense that the voice of Sappho has returned; that the spaces in her body of poetry have been filled in. As Margaret Reynolds wrote in *The History of Sappho*, “if you want to find the real Sappho, then you must turn to the fictions that are in *Art & Lies*” (27).

H.D. and Winterson seek to question the direction modern materialism is taking our culture. A major part of this undertaking is the recognition of the importance of the arts in fashioning our societies. As Winterson asserts:

>If we admit that language has power over us, not only through what it says but also through what it is, we come closer to understanding the importance of poetry and its function in a healthy society. (*Art Objects* 76)

Seeing themselves as visionaries, as poet-prophets, they will counter what they see as a culture of death, with the promotion of *eros*, a creative and loving force:

>We know that the universe is infinite, expanding and strangely complete, that it lacks nothing we need, but in spite of that knowledge, the tragic paradigm of human life is lack, loss, finality, a positive doomsaying that has not been repealed by technology or medical science. The arts stand in the way of this doomsaying. Art objects. The nouns become an active force not a collector’s item. Art objects. (*Art Objects* 19)

For Winterson, the importance of art cannot be over-stated, and she will reiterate this time and again within *Art & Lies*. The creative power of *eros* is a major element of our humanity:

>Even those from whom art has been stolen away by tyranny, by poverty, began to make it again. If the arts did not exist, at every moment, someone would begin to create them, in song, out of dust and mud, and although the artifacts might be destroyed, the energy that creates them [eros]is not destroyed. (*Art Objects* 20)

The art employed by Winterson and H.D. is the art of the “Word,” but they are conscious of it as an art. Susan Stanford Friedman asserted that with “the *Trilogy*, which can serve
'as both primer and profound expression of the modernist spirit, H.D. sought to discover or create through the ‘Word’ some ordering pattern that could redeem the surrounding ruin (Psyche 8). Winterson asserts that, “[l]ike Romanticism, Modernism was a poet’s revolution, the virtues of a poetic sensibility are uppermost (imagination, invention, density of language, wit, intensity, great delicacy) and what returns is play, pose, and experiment” (Art Objects 31).

As H.D and the modernists moved their culture into the twentieth century, responding to age-old questions and contemporary problems, so Winterson strives to continue the evolution of literature:

What I am seeking to do in my work is to make a form that answers to twenty-first-century needs. A form that is not ‘a poem’ as we usually understand the term, and not ‘a novel’ as the term is defined by its own genesis. I do not write novels. The novel form is finished. That does not mean we should give up reading nineteenth-century novels, we should read them avidly and often. What we must do is give up writing them. (Art Objects 191)

Winterson sees herself as struggling against even those “experts” whom she perceives should be aiding artists in this undertaking:

Of the critical establishment, whose job it is to make a clearing in the woods where writer and reader can meet on level ground, we might be forgiven for noticing that they plant more obstacles than they remove. Academics, who are sometimes critics, and often reviewers, are notorious fence-sitters, afraid of ridicule, afraid of risk, the risk and ridicule that the true waiter faces every time she publishes. Unlike writers, academics draw a salary and this will not be taken away from them if they back a wild horse. They do not back wild horses; they record the virtues of nags long past their prime. (Art Objects 191-92)

Winterson succeeds in writing a new entry onto the blank pages of the book of literature. Respecting the innovations of H.D. and her fellow imagists, Winterson’s Sappho proclaims, “I hope that the real solid world of images will prevail” (AL 143). She, with them, finds the “novel is dead”. The nineteenth century was its time, but the modernist work is the primary creation of the twentieth century and the way into the twenty-first.
It is from the arts of the twentieth century that Winterson draws her inspiration. She invokes the names of the artists Handel and Picasso in order to reiterate that she views literature as one of the creative arts (along with music and painting), and herself as an artist:

To assume that Modernism has no real relevance to the way that we need to be developing fiction now, is to condemn writers and readers to a dingy Victorian twilight. To say that the experimental novel is dead is to say that literature is dead. Literature is experimental. Once the novel was novel; if we cannot continue to alter it, to expand its boundaries without dropping it into even greater formlessness than the shape tempts, then we can only museum it. Literature is not a museum it is a living thing. Modernism has happened and it was the mainstream….We can only look for writers who know what tradition is, who understand Modernism within that tradition, and who are committed to a fresh development of language and to new forms of writing. (Art Objects 176-77)

Picasso was also a major modernist innovator, one who knew the intellectual foundation upon which art had been constructed up to that point. He would take that tradition and rupture and renew it, allowing for much of the art of the last century to be realized:

Picasso had a sense of an artistic tradition reaching back to the Renaissance, an enclosed world of its own from which it was not enough merely to depart but from which it was imperative to burst forth into an all-embracing modernity and make a fresh start…That was his principal intellectual discovery, between 1906 and 1908. (Lévy 5)

Picasso’s name invites us to notice that the lives of Winterson’s three protagonists are constructed as a cubist work; it is a complete picture formed of smaller, vivid pieces. The memories and the present events and actions are pasted together as in a collage. This modernist method of representation is commonplace now, but was revolutionary when Picasso first employed it. He was followed in this pursuit by modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, whose portrait of Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse is a cubist construction. Similarly, H.D. used the term “palimpsest” to refer to a multi-layered, multi-faceted work. Friedman asserted that, “[H.D.] weaves together the meditation with the essay, the parable with the prose poem, the aphorism with the prophecy, the autobiographical with the philosophical and religious. The text is a fabric of brief
fragments, blocks loosely stitched by juxtaposition” (Penelope 11). Art & Lies is so composed. It is an interweaving of literature from the Western canon, but it reclaims those stories and experiments for a new generation of readers.

In Art & Lies, this stylistic borrowing serves as a technique for the depiction of memory. The act of remembering serves to uncover the past; more is revealed with each poetic morsel. As the layered pieces of memory are peeled back, new insights into the psyche are revealed. As each narrative piece is added, the psychological portraits of the protagonists become more complete.

Musical allusion is another innovation Winterson works into her book. She has stated that the “Trio” from Richard Strauss’ and Hugo von Hoffmannsthals opera, Der Rosenkavalier, “is the proper end to the book.” For her, it is “music of surrender and understanding-- the point reached at the end of the book by Handel, Picasso and Sappho” (Winterson Art & Lies). This was a bold stylistic choice, but, as she sees herself creating a piece of experimental art, it is wholly justified within her literary venture. By including the “Trio”, Winterson echoes H.D.’s insertion into Tribute to Freud of Goethe’s “Mignon,” which had been set to music by Friedrich Heinrich Himmel. It also mirrors the “compositional nature of H.D.’s autobiographical, experimental writing…[which in their turn] honor the presence of collage in modernism itself, as well as in the traditional femmage of women’s scrapbooks and needlework, from which so many of the innovations of modernism sprung” (Penelope xii).

Another parallel to this appropriation of the “Trio” work may be drawn with the piece of wall-paper which Picasso pasted onto his painting “Still Life with a Cane Chair” and, so created collage. It “was his first collage, but, more importantly, it was a breaking away from the ‘noble’ medium in art and a manifesto for the new craft, in which the optical effects of painting were to gain strength from a range of contrasting materials and textures” (Lévy 10). Winterson’s use of collage is no less startling or innovative. The music of the “Trio” is meant to transport us further into an emotional place. It is borrowing a piece directly, placing it in a new context and imbuing it with a new set of relations; reinvesting it with the power to affect us anew.

Picasso’s work is also invoked by the image of London as “a charnel house racked with the dead” (AL 64). Although Winterson’s dead are not physically, but
psychologically, dead, her phrase echoes Picasso’s” anti-war piece. The theme of the death of innocents/innocence is invoked. Lorraine Lévy explains that:

[The Charnel House] is a requiem for massacred innocents. Whenever Picasso painted death, his purpose was always to understand its meaning. The Charnel House denounces a world unhinged in which murder came down on innocent people; as in Guernica, it fell from the sky, but the picture is a direct question to us: what kind of victory is this that we are living out? As yet nothing has been achieved. (Lévy 14)

“What kind of victory is this?”; “How shall we live?” The answer is not directly given within Art & Lies, but we are steered along a particular course. We must look within ourselves and see with new eyes the images of the past. The “proper end” to the book, is the “Trio”. It is a piece of compassion and letting go; of love being more important than possession or possessions. Our trio of Handel, Picasso, and Sappho will form a new family of affinity. They are “the keepers of the secret, / carriers, the spinners/ of the rare intangible thread/ that binds all humanity/ to ancient wisdom” (Trilogy 522-23). They are the artists who want to guide us out of a cultural wasteland. The past does not have to rule the future. Its wounds can be overcome; healing can take place with courage and an application of love. We have but to follow the guidance of our artist-prophets. They will lead us out of the city of the dead, and into a renaissance of human feeling, human endeavor, human existence. The arts will be the salvation of humankind. This is her guiding principle; this is her art. This is Winterson’s remedy in Art & Lies, as it was H.D.’s in Trilogy; as it was Picasso’s in “The Charnel House”: “Art must stand up…‘to the ocean of pain and death’” (Lévy 13).


124


Hardin, Michael. “Dissolving the Reader/Author Binary: Sylvia Molloy’s Certificate of Absence, Helena Parente Cunha’s Woman Between Mirrors, and Jeanette


Shiffer, Celia. “‘You see, I am no stranger to love’: Jeanette Winterson and the Extasy of the Word.” *CRITIQUE: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, Fall 2004 v46 i1 p31 (22).


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Karen L. Morian

Education

Florida State University: Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities (April, 2006)
Dissertation title: *The Wisest Sappho: Thoughts and Visions of H.D. in Jeanette Winterson’s Art & Lies*
Dissertation Director: William J. Cloonan

Florida State University: Master of Arts  (French, 1996)
Stetson University: Bachelor of Arts  (French, 1983)

Teaching Interests

French: Basic and Intermediate language acquisition; Contemporary French culture; Grammar and Composition; the History of Western literature, culture, and thought; Women’s Literature; the historical and contemporary role of France in Africa.
International Studies: Literatures of the Americas; the History and Peoples of Africa; the development of Western European thought and Literature.
Women’s Studies: Literature and theory, especially literary representations of and by women of color; the Women Modernists and their successors.
Film: Multicultural issues and identities within American and international film; the History of Film.

Research Interests

I anticipate continuing the explorations which led to my dissertation by developing into a book my thesis that, with her first seven books, Jeanette Winterson has created a cycle of literature which encompasses a re-visiting of the Modernist undertaking. I believe that Winterson seeks to reopen the issues raised by the radical modernists, such as their ideas on society and the place of the individual in it, and to remove from Modernism the charge of elitism by rendering their works, aesthetics, and ideas accessible to the contemporary reader.
In addition to this major undertaking, I foresee continuing the interest (shown below) in the areas of women’s literature and multicultural representations in literature and film.
Teaching Experience

North Florida Community College (2005)

*General Humanities I* (Gordon Rule course)
An introduction to the thought, values, and arts of both Western and non-Western cultures from Mesopotamia to the European Gothic period.
I selected the readings, artwork, and music; created and graded the quizzes, tests, and essays; employed interactive media to bring outside images into the classroom.

*Developmental English*
This course was designed to prepare re-entering students for academic writing requirements, including elements of grammar and essay-writing.

Florida State University, Program in the Humanities (1997-2000)
(all these courses are ‘Gordon Rule’ courses)

*Multicultural Dimensions of Film and 20th Century Culture*
This course explores the diversity within American culture by focusing on film as a key medium for shaping social and cultural attitudes and values. While the primary emphasis is on the themes of race, gender, class, and sexuality, the analysis and appreciation of film as a uniquely modern art form is also undertaken.
I was a member of the committee which selected the films and theoretical readings and created the syllabus. In the classroom, I facilitated discussions on these critical issues, and created and graded quizzes, tests, and essays.
*Please note that this course was constructed differently (different films, readings and critical theories) each year, even though its title remained unchanged.*

*Humanities: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*
A Liberal Studies course which provides an introduction to the thought, values, and arts of Western culture from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.

*Humanities: 18th-Century Romanticism to Postmodernism*
A Liberal Studies course which provides an introduction to the thought, values, and arts of Western culture from the Romantic period to the present.
As the instructor of these courses, I selected the readings, artwork, and music for them; created and graded quizzes, tests, and essays, in order to bring historical ideas about art and life into the present-day lives of my students, and helped them see our world in different ways.
Teaching Experience (continued)

Florida State University, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
Instructor (1991-97)

**Beginning and Intermediate French courses**
A course designed for my students to achieve a basic, but working, knowledge of French. I created and graded in-class and homework assignments, tests, quizzes and essays. I participated in the selection of a new textbook for these courses and mentored new graduate teaching assistants.

**Graduate Reading Knowledge in French**
A course which prepares doctoral students to read secondary literature in their various disciplines in French. I created the syllabus, selected the readings, and assessed students’ comprehension in-class; I created and graded the final reading comprehension exam.

Reims, France: Instructor of High School English (1993-94)
As a solo instructor, I prepared the syllabus and materials, designed and graded classroom and homework assignments; assessed students’ written and oral comprehension.
As a guest lecturer, I worked from materials furnished on short notice to create in-class instruction and homework assignments.
As an instructor of students with special needs, I aided students in writing and performing theater skits, and in studying the English lyrics in their favorite pop songs.

Presentations

*Love Me Tender: Images of Violence in the Works of Jeanette Winterson*
24th Annual International Conference on Film and Literature (1999)

*The Measure of Love: Amorous Issues of Modernist Gender in Virginia’s Orlando and Jeanette Winterson’s Written on the Body*
25th Annual International Conference on Film and Literature (2000)

*Island Quests: The Search for Identity in Annie John and Praisesong for the Widow.*
National Association of African American Studies Conference (1999)

*Seeking Acceptance: The Creation of a “Californio” Identity in The Squatter and the Don*
National Association of Hispanic & Latino Studies Conference (1999)
Further Academic Experience

Florida State University: Fellow, Preparing Future Faculty Program (1996-2000, 2005)
As a fellow, I attended professional workshops and trainings, and participated in campus visits to various types of institutions for the purposes of determining the shape and scope of my academic career.

Florida State University: Director, Center for Participant Education (1993)
As interim summer Director, I enlisted volunteer instructors and enrolled students in the free classes which the center provides to the community at large.

Florida State University: Assistant Director, Foreign Language Lab (1992-93)
As Assistant Director, I supervised the Language Lab in the absence if the Director, led orientation sessions for both new instructors and students, and supervised work-study employees. I also administered the State of Florida Teacher Certification examination for prospective French teachers.

Professional Associations
Modern Language Association
American Association of University Women

Civic Involvement
Volunteer and Member of the ‘Women Build’ Committee: Tallahassee Habitat for Humanity (2005)

Administrative and Development Staff: American Friends Service Committee (2002-04)

Staff/Construction Supervisor: Tallahassee Habitat for Humanity (1999-2001)

Volunteer (Volunteers for Peace) Ravensbruck Women’s Concentration Camp (2000)

Volunteer Supervisor and Crew Leader: Mother’s Day Women’s Build (1998, 1999)
Madison County (KY) Habitat for Humanity