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Persuasiveness of the text: An analysis of Virginia Woolf's "Three Guineas"

Carl William-John Linder
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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PERSUASIVENESS OF THE TEXT: AN ANALYSIS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF'S

THREE GUINEAS

by

Carl William-John Lindner

Bachelor of Arts

2009

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

**Master of Arts Degree in English
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts**

**Graduate College
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Carl William-John Lindner

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Examination Committee Chair



Dean of the Graduate College



Examination Committee Member



Examination Committee Member



Graduate College Faculty Representative

ABSTRACT

Persuasiveness of the Text: An Analysis of Virginia Woolf's

Three Guineas

by

Carl Lindner, Graduate Student

Dr. Beth Rosenberg, Examination Committee Chair

Professor of English

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This analysis is a consideration of the *Three Guineas* by Virginia Woolf and deals with her use of endnotes and citations throughout the essay-novel, and their persuasive role in regards to the text. This paper will investigate this paratextual source material and its purposeful inclusion into the work. As mnemonic components and logical evidence, the textual citations are subservient to the persuasive quality of the text and the arrangement of her argument. After separating historical elements from the rhetorical aspects of the essay-novel, the paper explores Virginia Woolf's use of Classical rhetorical strategies in constructing her argument in *Three Guineas*. Next, the persuasive quality of *Three Guineas* is considered through Woolf's effective deployment of various aspects of patriarchal language against itself within the work. Ultimately this paper shows, with her systematic usurpation of language, Woolf actually creates one of the most persuasive and rhetorical works of the last century.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PERSUASIVENESS OF THE TEXT

Preface

Before the commencement of this study, I wish to explain that this project is as thoroughly grounded in the feminist movement as much as possible using both feminist critical theory and performing a feminist rhetorical analysis of *Three Guineas*. The subjects and approaches I will be using directly reflect this feminist foundation of criticism and inquiry. As a male, even one of the twenty-first century, my views and opinions in regards to any feminist work will likely come under intense scrutiny for precisely that reason. This is doubly so when considering such a criticized work as Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, which was often lambasted by the men of her day, even her male confidants, and by current reviewers of the work.

Virginia Woolf made a series of arguments about the connection between the public and private spheres and their link to the rise and perpetuation of fascism in Europe throughout the 1930s. Thus, my critical task involves a feminist rhetorical analysis of the argument and the material in the “scholarly” footnotes to explore the design of her argument and the subversion of the patriarchal hierarchy inherent in any rhetorical argument. The aim of this dual inquiry is to produce a cohesive interpretation of all aspects of the work, while also adding layers of nuance, depth, and insight to our present

understanding of *Three Guineas*, with the hope that Woolf's efforts will be greater appreciated for their ingenuity and intricacy.

Terminology: "Rhetoric," Rhetorical Criticism," and Rhetorical Criticism from a
Feminine Perspective

I would like to begin by defining the word "rhetoric" because understanding of this term, and others I am going to use, is often shaded by multiple mixed meanings that are far removed from my usage of the term here. Even Woolf felt "a word without a meaning is a dead word, a corrupt word" (*TG* 121). Of course, thought on the real definition of "rhetoric" has interested scholars from Greco-Roman antiquity to the current century. As Patricia Bizzell states in her introduction to *The Rhetorical Tradition*: "[R]hetoric in its various incarnations has been a powerful force in public affairs and in education for most of its existence since the fifth century B.C.E., when it developed in Greek probate courts and flourished under Greek Democracy" (1). Truthfully, there are almost an infinite number of meanings for rhetoric including "the practice of oratory; the study of the strategies of effective oratory; the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade" (Bizzell 1).

In the vernacular, rhetoric is commonly considered as a speech act of pomposity and grandiloquence that is often used in reference to political leaders and politicians discussed in mainstream media. In many ways, this understanding of rhetoric is similar to Virginia Woolf's assertion that you can "fire off your rhetoric, but we have to face realities" (*TG* 45). While it is true that the word "rhetoric" and "speech" are often used as a synonym for one another, the added connection to pretentiousness is based on

seemingly on a superficial understanding of the historical usage of the term “rhetoric.” Our English noun “rhetoric” comes from the French *rhetorique* but stems ultimately from the Greek feminine adjective *rhētorikē* which is the elliptical of *rhētorikē tekhnē* or “the art of the rhetor.” Alluding to Patricia Bizzell and her introduction once more, in Greco-Roman thought, rhetoric is “first, and foremost, the art of persuasive speaking” and not speaking with flowery and superfluous diction (2). As such, rhetoric can perhaps be defined as the human effort of an orator to induce the cooperation of a listening audience.

Nevertheless, while Bizzell stresses the importance of persuasion in public speaking in the growth of rhetorical study, she is also quick to point out that the awareness of rhetoric quickly extended “its scope by looking into the various uses of discourse that might be considered persuasive” in whatever form they might exist (2). This is similar to what Robert Scott and Bernard Brock discuss in their introduction to *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism*: “[w]hen living voice was the only practical public means to induce cooperation, speech nearly exhausted the possibilities of rhetoric” (7). Humorously enough, even at the time of the great Greek philosophers of Plato and Aristotle, most of their accumulated work was not passed on in spoken form but in written text. Furthermore, Scott and Brock point out that “the printing press ended that circumstance” of speech oriented rhetoric and now “the forms of presentation stagger the capacity of speech to contain them” (7). Therefore, rhetoric cannot be confined to oration, but must refer to any discourse that is persuasive in any regard.

When I use the term “rhetoric” in any of its forms in this study, I do so in agreement with the notion that any discourse, written or spoken, which is inherently persuasive, can be considered rhetoric. The speaker, or author, only needs to be the

originator of the discourse, regardless of the medium of transmission, to his or her given audience. Moreover, I agree with Kenneth Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* when he asserts that “persuasion involves choice, will; it is directed to a [man or woman] only insofar as [he or she] is free” (50). Only by embedding with the inherent opportunity of choice within discourse allows for the existence of boundaries between conventional requests, physical coercion, and actual rhetorical discourse. And as Burke points out, we should more accurately speak of “persuasion to attitude rather than persuasion to out-and-out action” (50). Even when the practical choice of action is restricted, Burke notes that rhetoric seeks “to have a formative effect upon attitude” and it is the speaker’s ability “to induce states of mind [in the] readers, even though the kinds of assent evoked have no overt, practical outcome,” which defines a discourse as persuasive (50). Action is not required for an argument to be persuasive, only the choice to act is required. But this ability to “induce a state of mind” has to be rated and judged in some fashion. A methodology of some form needs to be constructed to adequately evaluate the discourse in an unbiased fashion. Only through critical analysis of an argument, interpreting it, and judging it, will a discourse be designated rhetorical rather than coercive.

This brings us to a formative discussion of “rhetorical criticism” and what such a critical system entails. The history of rhetorical criticism is a long one, and one that has as many schools of thought. While the approach I will apply to Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas* is loosely based on a social-historical approach, the fact that Woolf’s essay-novel is unique for a variety of aspects, my own approach to the text cannot be entirely limited to what any particular school of rhetoric determines to be “rhetorical criticism.” One of the most unusual aspects of Woolf’s *Three Guineas* is its questionable genre

demarcation. The work's non-fictional evidence is juxtaposed with its fictional narrative structure to create a unique system that goes beyond what many schools of rhetorical criticism typically address. Kenneth Burke discusses how criticism of persuasion itself can include the "purely logical demonstration as part of it; or might distinguish between appeals to reason and appeals to emotion, sentiment, ignorance, prejudice, and the like" in order to reserve the art of persuasion to less rationally based arguments (51). However, solely examining the logical or emotional devices the author uses to persuade the listener does not always conclusively, or properly, lead to an accurate interpretation of the work's "persuasiveness." A comprehensive critical system requires far more analysis and evaluation than the listing and examination of appeals, proofs, topics, or tropes, when considering the power of the work to convince. While the theoretical framework need not be complicated, the arrangement should be systematic and cohesive.

M.H. Abrams argued, in his work *The Mirror and the Lamp*, any critical theory, whatever the language for analysis, discriminates "four elements in the total situation of the work of art" and these are: the *work* or the artistic product itself; the *artist* as the artificer of the artifact; the *universe* from which the art is derived; and the *audience* as the spectators who are addressed (6). Nevertheless, according to Abrams, all theories "exhibit a discernible orientation" toward only one element insofar as the critic derives his or her principal criteria for analyzing a work of art (Abrams 6). The degree by which they exist in correspondence with one another determines the general inclinations of the theory. These four elements are taken by Abrams and used as the foundation for four primary categories of theory: Mimetic, Pragmatic, Expressive, and Objective. While he grounds rhetoric thoroughly in pragmatic theory, for its focus on the audience, he also uses

Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato in nearly all the sections to various degrees for examples of the various categories. Certainly, I agree that rhetorical criticism is Pragmatic to some degree with its attention to *kairos* and a distinct focus on the audience. Nevertheless, since rhetoric is a discourse between two parties, the listener and the speaker, any critic would be remiss if he or she focused solely on one without consideration of the other. In addition, the structure and principles of rhetoric depend on the proofs and *topoi* derived mimetically from nature and the universe and are equally important. Moreover, any examination of tropes or schemes would justifiably be considered an objective focus on the work alone. Therefore, it seems Rhetorical criticism contains all the fundamental elements of criticism in Abrams' scheme, but does not incline itself to any specific one of them. Unlike other criticism, rhetorical criticism is universal.

However, since an objective and structural examination of the tropes and schemes *Three Guineas* employs could be a work within itself, I shall focus on the remaining elements Abrams delineates and addresses them in turn. When I make use of rhetorical criticism within this project it is used to address three primary lines of inquiry: how well the work situates itself within the universe of the early twentieth-century; what opinion Woolf is trying to express about war, life, etc.; and finally how the work effectively engages us, as the audience, in persuading our opinion. Of course, even with our more universal definition of rhetoric, many critics would still consider the enterprise of conducting a rhetorical interpretation of a feminist text, at best, inherently oxymoronic in nature and, at worst, impossible. This is due to underlying assumptions about what rhetoric is and how it functions. Rhetoric, when considering its social and public aspects, is often ascribed universally to the masculine domain and public sphere.

Margaret Morgan observes in “A Rhetorical Context for Virginia Woolf” how any use of Classical precepts is hazardous “if one considers the Classical model of rhetoric, with its male orator figure, using language as a tool to sway a ‘female’ audience” (16). While this seems a rather arbitrary or pedestrian distinction, there is little evidence to the contrary. For Morgan, and many others, the Classical precepts of rhetoric on which a discourse is typically considered rhetorical – control, order, reason, and hierarchy – would not apply to Virginia Woolf’s works since she seems to organize her arguments “along the principles of subjectivity and non-linearity, and focuses on feeling and intuition above reason” (Morgan 16). Any attempt to systematize or analyze her work rhetorically would be an effort in futility because there is little arrangement, let alone any symmetry of design as rationally conceived in order of importance. Thus, any attempt, on our part, to use Classical distinctions to define Woolf’s *Three Guineas* would, likewise, be fruitless and only serve to reinforce and perpetuate the patriarchal structure of literature and education – something Woolf was arguing against.

However, James Hoban, along with a host of critics such as Jane Marcus and Krista Ratcliffe, have remarked upon Woolf’s marginalized relationship to the traditions of Classical rhetoric. Apparently, despite Morgan’s assertion, Woolf’s work can be analyzed along Classical lines, even though the work does not inherently lend itself to the interpretation. Returning to *A Rhetoric of Motives* by Kenneth Burke, you can persuade someone “only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his” (55). This slight overlook on pronoun use by Burke is key to understanding how Woolf could be analyzed rhetorically since even she is required to use “his language” and identify her ways with his in order to

be successful. Burke's commentary discuss that "the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect," he or she is only capable of changing that opinion "only insofar as he yields to that audiences opinion in other respects" (56). Burke's concept of rhetoric hinges on identification, a recognition of common interests between speaker and listener.

Rhetoric preserves or alters social order only by influencing the way people perceive that social order. Even if the rhetoric is feminist in conceptualization, it will still need to be designed to operate within the patriarchal language structure of argumentation in the traditional sense if it hopes to have any persuasiveness. So, Woolf's argument can still be analyzed along Classical Greco-Roman lines to some degree. But, as I mentioned earlier, the shortcomings of a simply structural approach are the same deficiencies of a simple Classical approach to the text: both fail to explicate the relevance of the rhetorical analyses. Beyond identifying and naming the genre, arrangement, or style of the material, there is little examination of how the material functions effectively as rhetoric. Such an analysis absolutely neglects the "why" of the rhetorical act. We would only grasp the design and not the purpose and ultimately fail to answer how she uses that design to express her own opinions or appropriates typical values for her own ends. We would only grasp the form of the argument without understanding the effectiveness of Woolf's destabilizing use of persuasion.

Burke's construction of dialogue ideally seeks "to attain a higher order of truth, as the speakers, in competing with one another, cooperate towards an end transcending their individual positions" (53). However, Woolf's discourse in *Three Guineas* is not only competing with the social order, but also undermining its very foundations. As such, the

Classical modes of persuasion can serve as part of our paradigm only if we systematically widen our focus beyond the ways Woolf uses persuasive structures to express herself and convince her audience, in order to analyze the way she deploys the structure of patriarchal language against itself. A feminist rhetorical critique of Woolf's *Three Guineas* must then do the following: to examine the situation which provided the opportunity for the argument, analyze Woolf's discourse rhetorically to clearly understand how she expresses her argument, methodically detail Woolf's emasculation of patriarchal language pragmatically to persuade the audience, and finally determine how effectively she is able to persuade. This tiered structure allows for the rigid application of the Classical precepts while, at the same time, testing the limits of the rhetorical approach. This organization allows me to get to the heart of the function of rhetoric, where Woolf's concerns about power are most evident.

Prior Criticism

When discussing the numerous critical approaches to Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, it seems important to break them into three primary categories: Historical, Political, and Narratological. Several critical examinations of the *Three Guineas* move across these boundaries between the categories to some degree. However, by and large, critics have relegated their work to one of these specific analytical approaches to *Three Guineas*. Until very recently, the last twenty years or so, critics generally neglected *Three Guineas* due to the backlash of criticism it received from the establishment when it was first published. Not until much of Virginia Woolf's fictional works had been sufficiently dredged, did critics turn again to her non-fiction and, in particular, *Three Guineas* as

sources of insight. Little surprise then, that even greater interest in the work came about with the rise in New Historicism and historiography in the later part of this last century as the field of feminism and, in particular, women's history gradually solidified. One of the most logical and basic methods for understanding the work is as a historical document that provides a poignant feminist analysis of all political and social institutions of Great Britain – including, but not limited to, the religious, judicial, familial and military institutions. She sought to attack all the tiers of hierarchy that perpetuated inequality and domination.

Beyond the accusations Woolf raises against the institutionalized injustice the British legal, educational, and social systems of her day, critical work in this field has centered on elucidating the relation between *Three Guineas* and its immediate unpublished predecessor *The Pargiters* or its connection to its sibling work *The Years*. Charles Hoffman's essay "Virginia Woolf's Manuscript Revisions of 'The Years'" is a good example of this field. One of the first critics to study Woolf's manuscripts, Hoffman traces the construction of *The Years* out of the shattered shambles of Woolf's unpublished work *The Pargiters*. Discussing *Three Guineas* almost as a mere afterthought, little more than the refuse left over from Woolf's construction of *The Years*, the priority of the scholarship rests on how *Three Guineas* relates to its sibling rather than examining the text as an excellent work in its own right. This marginalization is actually quite common, even Julia Briggs, who expends scholarly effort on both works in her book *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life*, views *Three Guineas* as more of a subset of Woolf's primary work in *The Years*.

In addition, some critics concentrate on attaching Woolf's ideas in *Three Guineas* to larger and more prevalent movements and groups both during and preceding her lifetime. Kathryn Harvey's essay "Politics 'through different eyes': *Three Guineas* and Writings by Members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," published in 1995, is a chief example of this historiographic focus. Harvey points out there are many contemporaries of Woolf who are protesting along a similar line, such as Helena Swanwick, Kathleen Innes, and Catherine Marshall of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (235). Since Woolf's polemic requires a considerable amount of research (the notes and references alone amount to about forty pages) Harvey concludes that much of the ideas within the work itself are actually pulled verbatim from other sources. Even Woolf's "unique" concept of the "Outsider's Society" elaborated on in the last section of *Three Guineas* is not a fictional creation, but the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (239).

Interconnected associations between the greater women's movement and Woolf do not always tread so closely to an argument of plagiarism. Vara Neverow argues in her "Footnoting of the Influence of Josephine Butler on *Three Guineas*" that Woolf uses the opinions of Josephine Butler to inform her argument on a deeper level. Through an examination of Woolf's own footnotes, as they progress through the novel, Neverow catalogs the numerous times Butler is mentioned but never cited directly (14). The chief aim of Neverow's investigation is to thoroughly ground *Three Guineas* within the great political tradition of the women's movement in England (14). The allusions and direct correlation between Woolf and Butler are seen principally as a way for Woolf to move

beyond the univocal constraints of authorial and patriarchal language to a more inclusive and democratic approach to authority (19).

More recently, Celia Marshik, in her essay “Virginia Woolf and Feminist Intellectual History: The Case of Josephine Butler and *Three Guineas*,” concludes that “Butler also provides historical legitimization” for many of the more controversial arguments within *Three Guineas* (92). Examining Woolf’s notes and research, Marshik argues that “there is little evidence to indicate Woolf read Butler’s texts before she began taking the notes that led to *Three Guineas*” (91). Josephine Butler’s inclusion within the text is seen as the result of Woolf’s admiration for Butler rather than a purposeful attack on authorial authority. Marshik contends that Woolf uses Butler’s life to provide “facts, evidence, and testimony” to buttress the arguments within the text of *Three Guineas* and not as a foundation for those arguments (93). For this reason, Marshik feels that “Butler becomes almost one-dimensional within the confines of Woolf’s book” (93).

While establishing the historical site of the text is important, the reception of *Three Guineas* by critics over the last hundred years also supplies an interesting glimpse into the political polarization the work has caused. When a work has been both applauded for its veracity and condemned for its haranguing tonal quality, the disparity of opinion does need some examination. When considering the polarization of views, Merry M. Pawlowski’s “On Feminine Subjectivity and Fascist Ideology: The ‘Sex-War’ Between Virginia Woolf and Wyndham Lewis” provides a nice dichotomy in representative views in attempts to show how Woolf’s politics impacted the establishment and caused the public outcry against it. One of the men most critical of Woolf’s work was Wyndham Lewis, whom Woolf quotes in *Three Guineas*. Tracing Lewis’ roots through the proto-

fascist society of *Action Française*, and other societies based on Nietzschean misogyny, Pawlowski explores the sources that codify the perception that feminism, in any form, is an attack against society as a whole (245).

The divergence between Woolf's view on society and society views, as Wyndham Lewis exemplifies, is pivotal to Woolf's arguments in *Three Guineas*. The dissimilitude of perspective is also important outside the text and is examined extensively by various authors. For instance, Brenda R. Silver asserts, in her article "The Authority of Anger: *Three Guineas* as a Case Study," that *Three Guineas* is nothing short of the perfect example of "the history of the exclusions and denials experienced by this group of women" (342). The adverse criticism lodged against the work from a variety of quarters illustrates to Silver how *Three Guineas* not only "insists on women's historically different experience of culture as well as social and political institutions" (342). With Woolf staking claim to being a "bridge dweller," Silver contends that Woolf demonstrates both women's liminal status in society and upsets any positive attachments to the "centuries-old procession of educated men whose desire for possessions, power, hierarchy, and honors" are the direct cause of war (344).

Woolf's idiosyncratic views of the political climate, as they are expressed in her *Three Guineas*, obviously demonstrate a significant split from her contemporary's thought on such topics as the threat of fascism and its roots with social perceptions. In particular, it seems as if Woolf stands as an encapsulation of the counter-hegemonic forces, at least according to Jeanette McVicker's study, "Woolf in the Context of Fascism: Ideology, Hegemony and the Public Sphere." Arguing from a particularly detailed Marxist perspective, McVicker attempts to show how Woolf figures in the early

twentieth-century change from the “repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one: from rule based primarily on acquiescence to superior force, to rule based on consent supplemented with some measure of repression” (31). The ultimate role Woolf plays is a complicated one since she is offering a critique of the dominant culture’s institutional patriarchy but is, in fact, implicated by means of her class within the hegemony of that dominant culture (32). McVicker views the “Outsider’s Society” illustrated in *Three Guineas* as only a politically idealized creation that cannot exist until the struggle for a truly free society inclusive of everyone is achieved (34).

Although not directly dealing with hegemony in a technical or critical sense, Stephanie Zappa, in her personal critique “Woolf, Women, and War: From Statement in *Three Guineas* to Impression in *Jacob’s Room*,” provides a nice antithesis to McVicker’s essay. The key to her line of argument is based on the premise that in “much of [Woolf’s] fiction and many essays, she calls up details in characters and events, most notably where we do not expect to find them, revealing the startling range of effects of a militarized society on its individual citizens” (275). In *Three Guineas* “her use of multiple points of view provides a springboard to illustrate how perception (and therefore reality) is in flux, and how it both alters and is altered by a society” (277). This changing of perception, and the loss of centralized authority within the text, allows for a more open contention to the central politic of war-driven, war-thinking, society in which Woolf existed (277). Moreover, they provide a way for Woolf to state her political views of reality more thoroughly without constraints.

Consideration of this concept of voice, or attempt to identify voice in the narrative components of Woolf’s *Three Guineas*, has come under increasing scrutiny as a more

audience-centered critical thought has prevailed. Therefore, we would be remiss to ignore this field of inquiry, particularly since most rhetorical criticism is a direct descendent of this investigation. But to focus on the empowerment of the reader within any work is a difficult issue to completely or comprehensively analyze due to its inherent relational instability. In her book, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere*, Melba Cuddy-Keane spends a great deal of time on how “Woolf concentrates on the dialogic relation between the reader and text, prompting the reader not simply to the literary work but to engage in conversation with it” (132). Since Woolf approaches literature as a living thing, Cuddy Keane assumes that Woolf “directs our attention to the multiplicity and plurality of the text’s meanings, and to the dynamic dialogic relation between writer and reader” (133). Only in so doing does Woolf keep the reader from falling victim to authorial domination so reminiscent of the political domination of Fascism she is fighting against (133).

In a similar vein with Cuddy-Keane’s dynamic dialogic relation between reader and narrator, Beth Rosenberg, in her book *Virginia Woolf and Samuel Johnson: Common Readers*, takes this dialogic environment a little further by attaching the concept directly to Woolf’s high regard of the dramatic form. Woolf uses this interaction pivotally in *Three Guineas* as a source of authority through the creation of “a cacophony of voices within which the reader is to extract meaning” (103). While Woolf’s authorial voice is composed of a myriad of voices that have come before her, the listening reader is also composed of both “the implied reader who is ‘a little grey’” and “the actual reader who is interested in the history of women’s education” (103-4). Through this, Rosenberg argues that Woolf breaks the audience down into different kinds of audiences, each internally

and externally a function of the other, interlinked within a multilayered pattern unique unto itself (105).

In many ways, Karin E. Westman's "History as Drama: Towards a feminist Materialist Historiography" could be seen as taking Rosenberg's ideas a step further by placing Woolf's interest in the dramatic form within the historical context of Bertolt Brecht's plays (335). Westman's argument is that Woolf's interest in drama played into her desire to write history and create a feminist historiography of Great Britain (335). According to Westman, much of Woolf's criticism and essay reviews seem to insist on a distinctly dialogic narrative structure which would include the individual's own voice in relation to the historian (336). Westman feels this creation of a dramatically sustained dialogue directly correlates to the strategy of alienation employed by Brecht (337). Woolf's tactic forces her reader to step back from the characters' experiences, and evaluate his or her present relationship to the historical narrative of the novel the end result of which, according to Westman, is a distinct dialogic feminist historiography (342).

Persuasiveness of the Text: An Analysis of

Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*

In Chapter 2, "What It Is and What It Is Not: The Historical Construction of *Three Guineas*," I examine how *Three Guineas* came into existence as a direct result of the historical situation unfolding in Europe and Virginia Woolf's own personal history. To this end, I engage in a close reading of her diary entries, in parallel and tandem with the rise of fascism in Europe, focusing a particular eye on any concrete or material

correlations between the real world militarization of Europe and *Three Guineas*. Such historical and contemporary connections are necessary in order to fully ground the operations of the work within the early part of the twentieth-century. By providing direct correlation between Woolf's creation of the text and her social and political surroundings in England, I attempt to demonstrate how Woolf moves her work away from being merely an essay elaborating the circumstances of the fictional family in *The Years* to an essay expatiating the presumptions underlying the fictional reality of patriarchy in British society.

In Chapter 3, "An Apologia or Something More: A Rhetorical Critique of *Three Guineas*," I assert that Woolf constructs *Three Guineas* around the five canons of Classical rhetoric as an attempt to bridge the chasm of gendered perspectives between her audience and herself. First, I will endeavor to analyze the structure of the argument itself and then consider how it functions as a catharsis of her own strong repressed emotions towards imperial and patriarchal oppression. Once again, based on a close reading of the text as well as extra-textual sources found in her diaries and her manuscripts, I hope to disclose the unique structure and strategy of her argument. In so doing, we will be able understand Woolf's argument against the subtext of the text of society and fully address her purposeful design.

In Chapter 4, "Citation and Response: Feminist Subversion of textual authority in *Three Guineas*," I explore how Woolf's persuasiveness functions within the text by analyzing the way she effectively deploys the structure of patriarchal language against itself in consistent and conscious ways. By examining the plurality of authorial voice and the multiple audiences ascribed within the text, I hope to shed some light on the

discursive struggle between text and paratext within *Three Guineas*. As in previous chapters, a close reading of *Three Guineas* will yield a wealth of textual evidence that supports my position that Woolf's perpetual use of scholarly citations is directly designed to appropriate typically ascribed patriarchal values and styles to affect the audience in such a way that they both objectify the work and critically examine their own relation to the hierarchal structure of society.

In the final chapter, "Persuasion and the Text: The Quality of Rhetoric in *Three Guineas*," I conclude ultimately that, with her systematic and conscious usurpation of language, Woolf actually creates one of the most persuasive and rhetorical works of the last century. I turn to the realm of greater scholarly investigation. In particular, I probe the possibility that Woolf is attempting to create a dialogic feminist historiography that includes the audience in the formation of the text. Finally, I address some areas that should be considered in a later rhetorical critique either by myself, or others, but are too intricate to be examined appropriately within this project. Such areas of investigation include Woolf's use of logical appeals or construction of generative rhetorical strategies within the narrative structure and how she establishes her ethical supremacy or authority within *Three Guineas*. Finally, some brief thoughts on Woolf's purposeful use of logical or rational fallacies to emphasize and accent particularly critical evidence in her argument.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS IT AND WHAT IT IS NOT: THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF *THREE GUINEAS*

After reading Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* for the first time, or any complex composition for that matter, the first question which often comes to our minds is: What exactly is this text? An answer, in some form, should readily come to mind. Unfortunately, such an answer does not come easily when looking at *Three Guineas*. While there are perhaps many reasons for this, it should be understood that such questioning on our part stems from a conscious desire to "know" what lies before us and to categorize what we have not yet explored with what we already have knowledge of. *Three Guineas* is an innovative work that, if it may boldly be said, is singular in its conception and there is no other work with which it can be compared. Naturally, with such an unanswerable question, the scholarship on this level is correspondingly vast, but not necessarily the most uniform. Is *Three Guineas* a work of non-fiction – a feminist polemic – as some have asserted? Or is this a work a piece of pacifist propaganda, a fiction, which clouds the issues it claims to explain? Julia Briggs notes, as have other critics, *Three Guineas* is further from fiction than most of her work, yet at the same time is a more consciously contrived creation than anything she had previous done (318).

I will also add that it is one of Woolf's most historically grounded works. The notebooks for *Three Guineas* found in the Virginia Woolf manuscripts from the Monks House Papers at the University of Sussex exemplify the amount of research and the sheer scope of historical documentation Woolf uses in constructing her argument. The press cuttings and extracts she collected, or copied directly, account for three bound volumes of well over 180 pages of documentation about the position of women within British society during the 1930s. The progressive shifting in the focus of the notebooks from the relationship between men and women, through a extensive pivot toward the lack of university education for women, to the eventual focal point centering on the politics of fascism, not only show how her original conception gradually transforms, but how consciously she set about providing evidence.

For this reason, not only is the text historically grounded, but the historical ground covers the course of nearly a decade while Woolf worked on *Three Guineas* until its publication on June 2, 1938 as well as the accumulation of fifty-six years of experience in life. The result is a work that attempts spans equally the lifetime of Woolf and the minutiae of the 1930s in Great Britain. Unfortunately, even though the evidence of this expansive undertaking is readily apparent, the reader is no closer to answering the original question: What is *Three Guineas*? To answer it effectively, we have to trace both the history of the work itself and the historical events that led to its creation. Only in recognizing where the text came from can we truly understand what *Three Guineas* is as a text and be able to take a closer look at the rhetorical quality of it.

The particles of written contemplative thought that lead to *Three Guineas*, as well as what would come to be *The Years*, both came into being on January 20, 1931, as she

was taking a bath, with a single thought: to create “a sequel to a Room of Ones Own – about the sexual life of women: to be called Professions for Women” (*Diary* 4:6). Woolf was surely contemplating the speech she was to give on the following evening. The speech, given to the National Society for Women’s Service, took place with two hundred people in attendance and Woolf as the second speaker. Afterward, she felt little save that her speech was “to compressed & allusive” for her taste (*D.* 4:7). The National Society for Women's Service was directly descended from the first British women's suffrage committee and the secretary, Pippa Stachey, was an old friend of Woolf’s along with her younger brother Lytton Stachey (Briggs 269). The society’s focus was a professional one, and the primary topic dealt with at the meeting was the difficulties women faced in the workplace (Briggs 269). The connection between Woolf conceptualization in her bath and the society meeting is hardly circumstantial.

However, even though she was ultimately intrigued by her new idea, “too much excited, alas, to get on with *The Waves*,” she eventually was able to shake off “the obsession of Opening the Door” a few days later on the 26th of January in order to finish her work on *The Waves*. After Leonard had declared *The Waves* “a masterpiece” and “the best of [her] books” on July 19, 1931, she began offhandedly to work on what would later become *The Years* and *Three Guineas* throughout the remainder of the year (*Diary* 4:36). Although Woolf used a variety of working names for both works, the title she eventually settled on was *The Pargiters* for this early stage when both works were still a single entity. During the next year and a half Woolf worked occasionally on her “sequel” while working on other projects such as *Common Reader: Second Series*, which was completed in late 1932, and *Flush: A Biography*, which Woolf published in 1933. Often she rotated

between all three of the works. For instance, on the 3rd of September while “waiting for breakfast,” Woolf “read a chapter on Montaigne” and “wrote up a whole chapter of my Tap at the Door or whatever it is, just as I was hoping to let my mind slide off on to a second Common Reader, & the Elizabethans” (*D.* 4:42).

Even as she was working on all these things, the sequel Woolf first conceived of in the bath continued to expand and mature in her mind. Woolf’s mind was constantly “set running upon A Knock on the Door (whats its name?)” and she was “quivering & itching to write” (*D.* 4:75, 77). While she has “collected enough powder to blow up St. Pauls” and even had the idea of incorporating pictures into the text as early as February 16, 1932, she did not begin writing in earnest until the middle of October (*D.* 4:77). According to Woolf’s diary, it was on November 2nd when the conception of the complete work based on her ideas finally took shape: “I have entirely remodeled my ‘Essay’. It’s to be an Essay-Novel, called *The Pargiters* – & it’s to take in everything, sex, education, life, &c; & come, with the most powerful & agile leaps, like a chamois, across the precipices from 1880 to here & now” (*D.* 4:129).

Within a month Virginia Woolf finished the first part of her essay-novel and by December 19, 1932 she had written some 60,320 words in what she considered to be “by far the quickest going of any of [her] books: come far ahead of *Orlando* or *The Lighthouse*” (*D.* 4:131-2). Even though she felt intensely excited about the work, for a time after this initial surge of writing, in which Woolf had nearly “written [herself] to the verge of total extinction,” she focused again on her other works (*D.* 4:132). Much like *The Waves* before it, what would become *The Years* and *Three Guineas* was rewritten at

least four times and the multiple rewrites and the revisions took her well into 1935 due to numerous events in her own life as well as the complexity of the work.

Over the course of 1931 and throughout the early years of working on *Three Guineas*, Woolf suffered repeated sickness, both mental and physical, where she spent more than “a few days of bed & headache & overpowering sleep, sleep descending inexorable” as she was “Trembling under the sense of complete failure” in regards to *The Waves* (D. 4:41, 43). In addition, her good friend Lytton Stachey, soon after her presentation at the National Society for Women’s Service, began a downward decline in health throughout 1931. As Woolf questioned whether she shall “ever ‘write’ again,” Lytton passes away on the 21st of January in 1932 with “the globe of the future perpetually smashed” (D. 4:64). Obviously, Lytton’s death had a significant impact on Woolf’s mental state since *Flush: A Biography* was written specifically for Lytton and actually was meant to be somewhat of an inside joke that the biography is about a dog.

In addition, as 1932 progresses, Woolf deals with the suicide of Dora Carrington on March 11th who chose not to face life without Lytton Stachey. Woolf remarks in her diary, when they went to see Dora Carrington the day before her suicide that “she was very quiet & showed no desire for us to stay” (D. 4:82). With stoic resolve that belies the emotions she shows in the prior paragraphs, Woolf bluntly records the tragic event of the next morning: “the gardener heard a noise in her bedroom. He went in & found she had shot herself through the thigh” (D. 4:83). On August 4, 1932, Woolf loses another associate when Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson dies along with his “fine charming spirit” (D. 4:120). The repeated instances of fainting and heart trouble grew near the end of 1932. Dr. Rendel advises Woolf to rest and restrict her activity because she is “putting a

strain on [her] heart, which of course gives out, at the Ivy, or in the garden, though there's nothing wrong" even while she is exhausting herself with writing (*D.* 4:129). The repeated deaths of her close friends hit her hard and were one of the many reasons *Three Guineas* took so long to be written and eventually published. Woolf's attempt to work on multiple projects at once also did not help matters and is often cited as the reason why Woolf's works of this period are of a poorer quality than her previous works in *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

While Woolf's life is heavily laden with sadness and despair, the world was bracing for other, more detrimental events. Already, within the preceding decade, fascism had taken a firm hold in Italy. Benito Mussolini, who considered himself an "authoritarian and aristocratic socialist," had been elected to the Italian parliament under Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti along with thirty-eight other fascists in May of 1921 (Payne 99). By 1931, what once was a republic was now a fascist dictatorship when he declared "I, and I alone, assume the political, moral, and historical responsibility for all that has happened" and takes on full executive responsibility for the government (Payne 115). Mussolini's ambitions for expansion and imperialism had not diminished during his extended time in office. Between 1928 and 1932 nearly 60,000 of the 225,000 inhabitants of the Cyrenaica region in Libya had lost their lives while Mussolini ruthlessly expanded Italy's control over the region (Payne 233).

In Germany, the Reichstag elections of 1930 proved an eight hundred percent increase in the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (Nazi) vote that accounted for 171 seats in parliament (Payne 165). During the electoral campaigns of 1932, the Nazi party membership was a staggering 450,000, more than any other political party, with

women accounting for nearly eight percent of the party members (Payne 168). Such events outside Great Britain had a decisive impact inside the country as well. Nazi-type parties were formed in Great Britain. One such group was the British Union of Fascists formed by Sir Oswald Mosley in 1932, which, on the surface, appeared more like an extreme right-wing group than a truly fascist regime (Payne 304). Preaching peace and prosperity, the British Union of Fascists was concerned with overcoming the social, economic, and cultural decadence of Great Britain and had both a platform of extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism (Payne 305).

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of the German government as the leader of the “legal” parliamentary coalition (Payne 174). In order to outflank and seriously throttle potential rivals both within the party and outside it, Hitler had his elite *Waffen-Schutzstaffel* (Waffen-SS) squads murder approximately one hundred political figures in what is known as the “Blood Purge” on June 30, 1934 (Payne 176). By August 2nd, Hitler was both president and chancellor of the German government, asserting complete control over every facet of politics (Payne 177). The long march toward World War II began here in the early years of the 1930s. Woolf collected quite a few newspaper clippings about Hitler, ranging from comments on Nazi Blood-Race Theory to women within the Nazi party, both of which played a crucial role in how Woolf shapes her argument and explains why she desperately wants women in Britain to maintain a sense of distance and indifference.

When 1935 began, the revision process was clarified when her original impulse to write a sequel to *A Room of One's Own* was jettisoned from her initial essay-novel into a scheme for a separate book. On January 1st she commented that she “wants to write On

being despised” and how she “must finish *Ordinary People*” before she can begin (*Diary* 4:271). These two working titles represent the final separation for the essay-novel into an essay, eventually *Three Guineas*, and a novel, later *The Years*. However, Woolf had begun working on compacting her original work *The Pargiters* from as early as 1933 when she described on February 2nd how she was “leaving out the interchapters – compacting them in the text; & project an appendix of dates” (*D.* 4:146). Although perhaps not wanting to admit it to herself, *The Pargiters* had been defeatingly long even in 1933, and Woolf recognized she had to “come to grips” with the “20 years in one chapter problem” that plagued her as the work took on the form of “a series of great balloons” (*D.* 4:142). Fortunately, Woolf’s decision to write two separate works allowed her to expel the more didactic sequences in the first draft of *The Pargiters* - discussions of patriotism and the condition of women - and defer them to later exploration (Briggs 290).

By October of 1935, her sequel to *A Room of One’s Own* underwent another metamorphosis. The text increased in its scope from strictly focusing on the sexual lives of women into a new entity about “The Next War” as a result of the “Labour Party at Brighton” (*D.* 4:346). Possibly due to her own concern and outrage, Woolf felt her thoughts on *Three Guineas* “at any moment becomes absolutely wild, like being harnessed by a shark” as she dashed off scene after scene of the text (*D.* 4:348). Unfortunately, she had not yet resolved the novel portion of her original conception in *The Years*, which had become “as an inaccessible Rocky Island,” and she knew that her “next book, *Professions*, *The Next War*, will need some courage” if it was to be

completed (*D.* 4:361, 354). Another year passed before Woolf finally solved the crisis of *The Years* and was able to turn her attention to *Three Guineas* again.

On March 10, 1935, Virginia realized her relationship with Vita, Victoria Mary Sackville-West, had come to an end, “not with a quarrel, not with a bang, but as ripe fruit falls” even though Woolf remembered her voice “was as enchanting as ever” (*D.* 4:287). Sackville-West’s inability to inherit land or property figures heavily in the part of *Three Guineas* that deals with how much of England really belongs to English women outside of marriage. During this year, Virginia Woolf travelled extensively and often was gone from her usual places of residence in England. Of particular note is Leonard and Virginia’s trip to Germany in May, which started with their crossing into Holland. They spent a week there before continuing to Germany. When they finally passed through customs into Germany they came across “ranks of children with red flags” and banners that proclaimed, “The Jew is our enemy” (*D.* 4:311). As might be expected, this left both Leonard and Virginia with “nerves rather frayed” (*D.* 4:311). In addition to this trip, a smaller trip to Bristol, in July 1935, to deliver the opening address for The Roger Fry Memorial Exhibition at the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, left Woolf with “a curious sense of complete failure” (*D.* 4:331). Both trips solidified Woolf’s growing disgust with fascism. Even though her diaries indicate no lasting ill affects from the trip, the experience with the German protesters surely remained in the back of her mind.

More importantly, perhaps, was her “growing” interest in politics, particular on September 4th when she noted in her diary that it was “the most critical day since Aug 4th 1914” for the League of Nations and Europe with “writings chalked up all over the walls” (*D.* 4:337). Rearmament and support for the League of Nations became key issues at the

1935 Labour Party meeting that Leonard and Virginia had attended on the 1st of October, although Virginia “refused to go again” the next morning because she had been “so thrown out of [her] stride” (*D.* 4:345). This was partially due to Woolf witnessing the resignation of George Lansbury, who was the Leader of the Labour Party, due to “Bevin’s attack on Lansbury” amid growing concern for the situation abroad in Germany and Italy (*D.* 4:345). Woolf’s “sympathies were with Salter who preached nonresistance” toward the growing threats (*D.* 4:345). Notwithstanding Woolf’s interest in politics, her concern was balanced with her growing concern over Hogarth press on December 3rd when her friend Cecil Day-Lewis was advised by his agent to leave the press for a larger firm, and she “revises the question of the Press” and when they “will now decide on a date & stop it” (*D.* 4:356).

However, her attention is not diverted for long. Fascism was on the rise in Europe in 1935 and several events could not have escaped Woolf’s notice. Mussolini mounted a full-scale invasion of Ethiopia on October 3, 1935 with over six hundred thousand troops (Payne 234). In response, the League of Nations branded Italy as an aggressor and imposed economic sanctions on the state with little effect (Payne 234). In Germany, propaganda was already having an effect on the “present and future mothers of the race” (Payne 195). Although women played a significant role in the Nazi party’s rise to power, most fascists were as contemptuous of women as they were of homosexuals and felt that women should remain in their “proper place” (Passmore 125). In addition, one of the major goals of the Nazi party was to increase the Aryan birth rate and they released propaganda that largely succeeded in both enforcing the subordinate status of women while increasing births (Payne 195).

This twofold attack on women was mirrored more litigiously with attacks on racial grounds. While the Enabling Act of 1933 had restricted Jewish employment in the civil service and professions, in 1935 laws were passed that forbid Jews from marrying or having sexual relations with Aryans (Passmore 112). Moreover, The Law for the Prevention for Hereditarily Diseased Progeny, passed in 1933, was fully implemented by 1935 and permitted compulsory sterilization of certain categories of the population (Passmore 112). These laws, and the propaganda that enabled their passage, set the stage for the creation of ghettos and eventual concentration camps across Germany beginning in 1937. The laws passed to remove presumed racial-degenerates from the public sphere and the propaganda attacking women's position in that same sphere are the primary reason Woolf discusses domination in the private sphere so heavily in *Three Guineas*. She believes that patriarchal control of the home is only a small step away from fascist control of the state as was acutely demonstrated in Germany at the time.

Within this ever more turbulent and charged political and social atmosphere, Woolf strove desperately to finish *The Years*, which was finally published in early March of 1937. As she worked on the final proofs of *The Years*, Woolf turned her attention again to writing *Three Guineas* on January 28, 1937 "without more palaver" and with the hope that "it might be roughed in by Easter" (*Diary* 5:52). By February 18th, she had thirty-eight pages completed and had "used up that vein momentarily & want a few days change" (*D.* 5:55). Up until the end of May she had spent the majority of her time "re-copying & to some extent re-writing" what she had already completed previous on the work throughout the last half decade (*D.* 5:90).

By June she finally conceived of *Three Guineas* “as 3 chapters suddenly” and revised her hopes about finishing it until she “might have it done by August” because “theres a terrible lot of reasoning [for her] & fitting in of the right quotations” had proven more difficult than she had first thought (*D.* 5:100). Unfortunately, war came home to Woolf in the midst of her work when Julian, the eldest son of her sister Vanessa Bell, decided to enlist for Spain, “dog obstinate about driving an ambulance” (*D.* 5:80). When news arrived on July 20th that Julian had died, struck by a shell fragment two days prior, Woolf devoted herself to her grief stricken sister Vanessa for several weeks (*D.* 5:104). When Woolf finally returned to work on August 6, 1937, she finished composing the last chapter even though “its stiff & cold” now with the death of Julian hanging over her (*D.* 5:105).

At last, on October 12, 1937, over five years after she had conceived of the project, she announced in her diary that “ten minutes ago I wrote what I think is the last page of 3 G[uineas]” (*D.* 5:112). From October of 1937 through January of 1938, when the work was finally sent to the typist, Woolf constantly revised her text. By the time February rolled around, all was “now down for final corrections” where she could “make it more compact & the notes shorter & sharper” (*D.* 5:126). From February 7th until March 10th Woolf was “working 5 hours a day to finish off those proofs” of *Three Guineas* and expending considerable effort on the footnotes she intended to add.

Unlike the time taken on the work itself, the footnotes for the text must have been completed in early April since Woolf sent off the final proofs on April 28th. *Three Guineas* was published on June 2, 1938 with Woolf commenting: “I had said my say: take it or leave it; I’m quit of that; free for fresh adventures – at the age of 56” (*D.* 5:133).

While the text had grown and changed over the intervening years, Woolf still felt, even at the very end of writing *Three Guineas*, that she “wanted – how violently – how persistently, pressingly compulsorily [she] cant say – to write this book” (*D.* 5:133). Now that she had finished it, the readers are left to interpret it favorably, or unfavorably, as is their custom.

The last years of working on *Three Guineas*, as was only briefly glimpsed by Virginia Woolf’s loss of her nephew, were not any easier on the Woolfs than the previous half decade. During this time, Woolf gave up writing articles for the newspapers entirely because she felt that she “at once adapts what [she is] going to say” into her work on *Three Guineas* (*D.* 5:3). While she finished revising the *The Years* she suffered repeated headaches that kept her “entirely submerged” for days on end, forcing her to be in and out of bed constantly (*D.* 5:3). Such was her state that she simply refused to see anyone. During the month of March, she was nearly on the verge of insanity as she worked incessantly on *Three Guineas* and finished *The Years* (*D.* 5:13). In fact, large sections of her life are missing from her diaries during this year as she constantly suffered from headaches or working on revision. In her diary on June 11, 1936 she noted that she had suffered “almost catastrophic illness” and the months prior had been the worst since her nervous break down and attempted suicide of 1913 (*D.* 5:24). That such serious difficulties paralleled the events of the world seems more than circumstantial in retrospect.

During this time of upheaval in her own life, the situation in Europe is slowly degrades further toward war. In February of 1936, the Gestapo was placed above the regular court system and could do virtually whatever they wanted without repercussion

(Payne 185). On March 7, 1936, German troops occupied the Rhineland, which was, in effect, German's entire western frontier (Payne 358). In direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles Germany began military mobilization which was met, surprisingly, with limited Western reaction or resistance (Payne 358). By May of 1936, Italy conquered the main part of Ethiopia with only one thousand Italian lives lost and decided to continue their military expansion (Payne 234). Farther west, the Spanish Civil War erupted in Spain in July 1936 with the final victory by the Franco regime coming in April 1939 (Payne 430). Franco led a military uprising against the democratically-elected Spanish republican government and, by the end of the ensuing Civil War, he had established a dictatorship which lasted until his death in 1975 (Passmore 77). Rearmament in Britain, and the rest of Europe, rapidly accelerated toward war in 1937 even though direct confrontation did not begin in earnest until the occupation and annexation of Austria on March 10, 1938. By May 30, 1938, Hitler had set his sights on eliminating Czechoslovakia as an entity entirely (Payne 358). Poland was next, and world war was only a step away. Because of the faltering peace between the European nations, Virginia Woolf's pacifism and view that war could be prevented seems not only overly optimistic today but a tragic fallacy. The timing of the publication in 1938 is perhaps the greatest irony of *Three Guineas*. Had the work been published earlier it might have had more of an impact than it did.

However, what would become *The Years* and *Three Guineas* was rewritten at least four times and re-imagined countless more. The eight volumes of manuscript notebooks that exist in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of the New York Public Library reveal the metamorphosis of the text as Woolf moved from the concept of

the essay-novel to the eventual divergence into two separate works. The first notebook in the set, dated the 11th of October 1932, is boldly entitled “The Pargiters,” and contains the subtitle “A Novel-Essay based upon a paper read to the London / National Society for Women's Service” (*Pargiters* 5). True to her original concept, the essay passages formed a lecture that began with: “When your Secretary asked me to come here tonight to give you some account of my professional experience...” (*Pargiters* 5).

While the link between feminism and pacifism is not a new one for Woolf, or for other feminists of her generation, the proof for their direct historical connection to patriarchy and fascism was not as easily found as Woolf perhaps thought it would be (Briggs 318). The multiple volumes of research notebooks contain a plethora of sources on such a variety of topics that if they had not been so consciously organized, the patriarchal pattern of perceptions would scarcely be seen. Woolf remarked offhandedly, though not without purpose, that if “you want to know any fact about politics you must read at least three different papers, compare at least three different versions of the same fact, and come in the end to your own conclusion” (*TG* 114). If you want to truly explore “history in the raw” you have to excavate the “largely untapped aid to understanding of human motives which is provided in our age by biography and autobiography” (*TG* 9). To accomplish this, Woolf spends a great deal of time, especially in her interweaving of sources and blending of voices.

Woolf research shows how she arranged her cuttings so they commented on one another, multiplying each other's meanings in order to provide a method of juxtaposition to create a “hierarchy of representations” (Briggs 318). The methodical scrapbooking she continued to do throughout the entire period provides the starting point for many of the

lines of argument as well as the illustrations on which those arguments depended (Briggs 318). Likewise, the pictures, the photos described and contrasted in the text, and the words of the multitude are all structured to enfold around each other (Briggs 318). Ultimately, the original design she envisioned collapsed on itself due to the sheer amount of information Woolf attempted to supply between the fictional sections of *The Pargiters*. The pattern of continuity Woolf endeavored to attain, for so many years, between the fictional sections eventually lost their cohesiveness.

In Woolf's unique conception, the essay portion of the essay-novel is meant primarily to provide definition and explanation to the fictional text and specific details about the figurative meanings inherent in the novel portion (Genette 325). In many ways, the essay is a footnote to the novel. Applying Gerard Genette's definition of a footnote from *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, the essay portions, of variable length, are placed directly opposite and keyed to the scenes depicting the fictional lives of the Pargiters' family (319). The two portions of the text corroborates and supplements each other as the novel provides the examples and the essay providing the explanation through a presentation from a supporting, authoritative speaker (Genette 325). As a discursive point in the text, based on Genette's discussion, it seems that Woolf had hoped to use the essay to mention the uncertainties and complexities of the relational situations in the novel and provide additional arguments or attempts to forestall objections against her own purpose in both parts (326). Unfortunately, the novel portion became dispersed too thinly as the essay became more voluminous *Three Guineas*. The footnote to *The Pargiters* effectively estranged itself from the actual fictional discourse and subverts it to serve its own purposes. The fictional connections between the novel sections are

shattered by this effect and the reader is then lost in a haphazard situation that jars them from one scene to the next with no perceivable connection. The original intent is sabotaged by the now reigning primacy of the overarching essay.

Although Woolf was unsuccessful in balancing the external and the internal to show continuity of past with present in *The Pargiters*, much of her original intent for both her sequel to *A Room of One's Own* and her concept of the essay-novel remains, although it exists as separate works. Since she was “infinitely delighting in facts for a change & in possession of quantities beyond counting,” her primary focus for both works is on the externality of events and social interactions even though she occasionally felt “the tug to vision” (*Diary* 4:129). Woolf’s focus on the themes of money, family, patriarchy, and education are still explicit in both works as well despite the separation. In addition, she manages, between the two works, to provide some interaction of fact and fiction. She remains true to the historical facts meticulously detailed in *Three Guineas* as she continued illustrating her scenes in *The Years*. This connection to history, and their connected past, allow the works still function together even though discrepancies exist between them – *Three Guineas* reflects events after the completion and publication of *The Years*.

Even though *Three Guineas* evolved and flourished beyond its roots, Woolf remains truthful, at least in part, to the original design – it is part of “an Essay-Novel” meant “to take in everything, sex, education, life, &c” (*Diary* 4:129). However, *Three Guineas* is hardly a short, formal piece of writing to which the common definition of essay usually refers, especially since it ranges into the hundreds of pages. What was originally an essay dealing with the “sexual life of women” expands to become an anti-

fascist pamphlet about “The Next War,” which would eventually become one of the most systematic and researched explorations of the ties between fascism, patriotism, and patriarchy that has ever been coherently voiced (*D.* 4:6, 346). *Three Guineas* no longer functions as an interchapter interlude between narrative points, commenting on the fiction with fact, but functions as “statements of fact addressed to the eye” (*TG* 14). The text brings forth the historical, social, and economic facts of life to comment on the illustrated “fictions” which patriarchy puts forth. *Three Guineas* still comments on the internal lives of the English, but the text is no longer limited to the fictional characters within the novel *The Years*, it encompasses all of the text of society as a whole. Woolf’s purpose grew to show how women “were fighting the tyranny of the patriarchal state” and men who “are fighting the tyranny of the Fascist state” are fighting the same battle and “fighting for the same reasons” (*TG* 121).

Woolf, by her division of the two works, seemed to realize she no longer needed her fictional creations to demonstrate her evidence. The proof was all around her. The fact that “war is an abomination” and the certainty of the “photographs of more dead bodies, of more ruined houses” no longer needed to be figuratively demonstrated, but simply stated (*TG* 14, 50). The text of *Three Guineas* changed its form, and the text on which it comments changed its focus, but the footnote to society itself that *Three Guineas* represents never changes. And a footnote *Three Guineas* is if it provides three things to the reader: justification for the positions adopted in work, a demonstration of the novelty of the results, and an indication of how these findings will solve a problem that arises from other works (Gilbert 116). If we are to accept these three primary purposes of providing footnotes, then *Three Guineas* has not changed much since its inception in

1931. After all, *Three Guineas* not only justifies the work it was originally apart of in *The Pargiters*, and later *The Years*, but justifies Woolf's stance that war is inextricably linked to patriotism and patriarchy.

Three Guineas is a footnote to society and to its original text. Historically speaking, Virginia Woolf's work in *Three Guineas* is more of a transformation or mutation of her original idea through permutations that grow closer and closer to the "truth" of the situation Woolf is really trying to express. Woolf seeks to expose the facts about the "fiction" of reality and its underlying suppositions. While we have explained what the text is, we must now consider other aspects of the work and, in particular, examine whether or not *Three Guineas* is a piece of rhetoric. Only when we have established conclusively that Woolf is attempting to create a political apologia can we hope to probe the more intricate matters of its argument and its subversion of the rhetoric of patriarchy.

CHAPTER 3

AN APOLOGIA AND SOMETHING MORE: A RHETORICAL CRITIQUE OF *THREE GUINEAS*

Since we have ascertained, to a limited degree, what Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* is, as it is situated in its relationship to history and *The Years*, we must move to examining how well it expresses Woolf's beliefs in a persuasive way. The line of argument here turns toward the more fundamental aspects of the work, but no less important, than our previous inquiry. The question remains: "What exactly is *Three Guineas*?" While it is obvious this essay is a written discourse, whether it is inherently persuasive, or can be considered rhetoric, is another matter entirely. Did Woolf intentionally design *Three Guineas* to be a political apologia or a Classical persuasive piece in defense of her opinions? And, if *Three Guineas* is persuasive, how is the work structured and what is she trying to persuade us about? These are not rhetorical questions but serious issues, even though they seemingly have obvious answers. The issues go beyond the historical considerations of the "original" concept and focus both on Woolf's opinions and the way in which she vindicates her position. So, we will first examine briefly Woolf's perceived relation to politics and her experience with rhetoric, in particular Classical rhetoric because she had limited formal education, to see if there are possible connections that can be drawn. Then, we will move onto exploring how Woolf

systematically constructed her work. However, it can be difficult to ascertain her views and how she defends her position given the complexity of the piece and the ambiguity she infuses the work.

And ambiguity is not limited strictly to the work itself, but encompasses the author as well. Although she has widely been regarded as an innovator of literary and narrative style, only within the last few decades has the politics of Woolf seen more examination beyond their strong link to the feminist movement. This view of her stems, at least partially, from the impressions of her close associates. Leonard Woolf considered Virginia to be “the least political animal that has lived since Aristotle invented the definition” (27). And while it is doubtful that such commentary was purposeful or meant to be malicious in any degree, such comments from trusted sources do cause confusion. In line with Leonard Woolf, Bell maintained it was only after Hitler’s Blood Purge of June 30, 1934 that “Virginia became imaginatively aware of what was happening in Germany” (178). Even though Quentin assures us that “Virginia, like a great many people in this country, felt that Germany was in the hands of thugs,” Bell still firmly claims, “she was much more worried about her novel” (179). Although Bell ironically fails to mention that the novel Virginia Woolf was working on was *The Pargiters*, Virginia Woolf herself may not be entirely blameless for this naïve perspective. She had always maintained a sort of critical aloofness from political situations. In her letters to Clive Bell on the 15th and 20th of April in 1908, she maintains “I can’t believe in wars and politics,” and wonders “how people can live that life, and why they should write about it, or why in the last instance I should spend one moment or one drop of ink over it – it is all a chain of rusty iron to me. I am the slave at the end” (*Letters* 1:324-6).

This apparent apathy might not have anything to do with politics in general, but with her feeling that she is “a slave at the end” no matter what the politics since she, as a woman, is bound into the system grounded on patriarchy and domination. However, Woolf’s writings seem to bear evidence of a consistent concern for the patriarchal foundations on which society in Great Britain is built. As Woolf notes in *A Room of One’s Own*, if a woman decides to enter into politics, if “she begins to tell the truth, the figure in the looking-glass shrinks...How is he to go on giving judgment...unless he can see himself...at least twice the size he really is” (35-36). If he cannot see himself in this inflated size then he is liable to lash out, without consideration, from a sense of injured merit against the one who brought the discrepancy to light. The conflict between apparent apathy, seen by her contemporaries, and the commitment to politics, on her own part, in her essays and work are the main cause of the variance of interpretation.

As we have previously discussed, the best way to determine when and if a work is persuasive thorough critical analysis of the argument put forward in the discourse. Although no one has previously done an extensive analysis of rhetoric in Woolf’s *Three Guineas*, there is some precedent for approaching Woolf’s work from a Classical perspective. There are occasions, such as in 1934, where Woolf mentions such things as “reading *Antigone*. How powerful that spell is still – Greek, an emotion different from any other. I will read Plotinus: Herodotus: Homer I think,” even though she does not elaborate on her thoughts about these authors further in the entry (*Diary* 4:257). Her comments and thoughts are not limited to her reading diaries, but appear in her essays and some of her major works such as the *Common Reader*. While working on the *Common Reader* Woolf mentions in her diary how some “diversions in Greece and

Russia – in reading through English literature will no doubt do good to my fictitious brain” (*D.* 4:74).

Interestingly enough, such “diversions in Greece” appear in both series of the *Common Reader*. In regards to Plato’s dialogues, however tedious the translation of it may be, Woolf felt to read them is “to love knowledge better” and that “in these dialogues we are made to seek truth with every part of us” (*Common Reader* 51, 53). This is high praise from such a prodigious person. For Woolf to claim that “it is to the Greeks that we turn when we are sick of the vagueness, of the confusion, [...] of our own age” seems to indicate a desire to use Classical thought, to return to it, rather than a hatred of those old world traditions (*CR* 59). Moreover, these quotes imply a large amount of reading in the Classical texts of Greece – most of which are on or about rhetoric. Taken along side comments such as, “I now feel a strong desire to stop reading [the Faerie Queene]: to read Cicero’s letters,” they seem to indicate that she was not only familiar with Classical literature but also enjoys their contents (*Diary* 4:282-3). After all, Plato and Socrates are often the first recorded, and perhaps greatest, rhetoricians of Greece, and Cicero was one of the foremost political and judicial rhetoricians in the Roman Empire. Furthermore, such offhand remarks seem to also contradict her husband’s assertion that she was wholly uninterested in politics.

Considering the fact that Virginia Woolf had the means at her disposal to use Classical rhetoric, it stands to reason that, should a need arise, she would employ it to its fullest extent. I believe *Three Guineas*, based on the evidence already supplied, gave Woolf a unique opportunity to use her knowledge of and skill in Greek writing and language in a way that was not typically open to her when composing her other works. In

the Classical tradition, rhetoric, as an art, is divided into five distinct categories or “canons” that provide both an analytical outline for critical examination and a generative pattern for construction of an argument. We have to look no farther afield than Cicero, who Woolf obviously read for a description of these rhetorical canons, “and these are the divisions of it, as numerous writers have laid them down: Invention; Arrangement; Elocution; Memory; Delivery” (*De Inv.* 1.7). Each division serves a particular purpose:

Invention, is the conceiving of topics either true or probable, which may make one's cause appear probable; Arrangement, is the distribution of the topics which have been thus conceived with regular order; Elocution is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the topics so conceived; Memory is the lasting sense in the mind of the matters and words corresponding to the reception of these topics. (*De Inv.* 1.7)

These four are generally the most discussed because they are viewed as the most important and complex of the five canons. Even within the canons of rhetoric there is some preference, some hierarchy, in the parts. As for the last, Delivery, it “is a regulating of the voice and body in a manner suitable to the dignity of the subjects spoken of and of the language employed” (*De Inv.* 1.7).

These categories are long standing and rhetorical treatises of all centuries use them in some shape or form and to a lesser or greater degree. If it can be determined critically that *Three Guineas* has the basic canons of rhetoric, then *Three Guineas* must be rhetorical and, by necessity, will show how Woolf intentionally formulated this work to be a rhetorically persuasive argument. More importantly, such an inquiry also sheds light on why Woolf constructed the argument this way and what she is essentially arguing.

Nevertheless, to do a full scale analysis of all the canons is simply outside the grasp of this project. Since rhetoric is often reduced to Elocution, or style, alone more often than would seem fathomable and the sheer scope of style can reduce an argument to nothing more than artful expression and superficial ornamentation, I will not delve into the style of the work as a whole. Because Delivery is closely aligned with style, I will not be pursuing it in my investigation either. Instead, I will focus on other three remaining canons since they determine whether or not a work is rhetorical along Classical lines.

Invention is the first of these and, as the name implies, concerns finding or inventing something to say in an argument. Cicero considered Invention “the most important of all the divisions, and which applies to every description of cause in which an orator can be engaged” (*De Inv.* 1.7). Certainly this makes sense, since how you state a case is directly connected to the case at hand, or to put it in another way, “the argument is not adapted to the statement of the case, but the statement of the case is adapted to the argument” (*De Inv.* 1.10). Invention describes the creation of the persuasive core of rhetoric which, obviously, is an important procedure. The primary way for finding an argument is through the process of determining the *stasis*. Stasis can be easily defined as the basis or cause of the argument in question. Generally, one would ask certain questions in order to arrive at the point at issue in the debate “since every cause, then, has a certain essential basis” and the basis is “the first conflict of the causes” in a particular case (Quint. 3.6). By determining the original cause, the argument can be thoroughly grounded. In Classical thought there are four general kinds of conflict: Conjectural, Definitional, Qualitative, and Translative (Quint. 3.6). Of particularly interest for us is

which of these kinds of stasis Virginia Woolf uses as the basis of her argument and the conflict that it causes between the two sides of the discourse.

The purpose of the work, though not necessarily providing the grounds for contention, is to attempt to answer, “how in her opinion war can be prevented” (TG 5). However, there is obvious contention between the narrator and the recipient who is “a little grey on the temples” (TG 6). This contention is “a precipice, a gulf so deeply cut between [them] that for three years and more [the narrator has] been sitting on [her] side wondering whether it is any use to speak across it” (TG 6). The disagreement laid out by the narrator seems to be Definitional, or semantic, since “we look at the same things, we see them differently” (TG 7). This statement is particularly revealing since correctly defining a term or a phrase is only achieved through successful and correct communicating of ideas. Within the first section of *Three Guineas*, what war is and the causes of war are debated beyond “the result of impersonal forces” and the narrator goes so far as to consider defining war as “a profession; a source of happiness and excitement” (TG 9-10). But she does not limit herself to only one concept and questions all terms socially ascribed to war including the definition of “patriotism.” Even though “what patriotism means to an educated man and what duties it imposes on him” are easily defined, what it means for women is defined as something wholly different (TG 12). According to the speaker, even “the word ‘influence’ then has changed” when considering the changes in the state of women and their abilities with the public and private spheres.

Within the second chapter of *Three Guineas*, the basis for the argument seems to take on a more Qualitative stasis as it moves from problematic designation to more the

intangible issue of value as the basis of the argument. The narrator is arguing quite plainly that, “sex distinction seems...possessed of a curious leaden quality, liable to keep any name to which it is fastened circling in the lower spheres” (*TG* 59). Now, the question under debate is whether women are “untrustworthy; unsatisfactory; so lacking in the necessary ability that it is to the public interest to keep them to the lower grades” (*TG* 59). Keeping women away from the public sphere grounds itself on the contradiction that women are both not capable of obtaining offices and some of the best skilled and valuable workers in the workforce. The quality of women’s work is questioned as well as the compensation that they receive for that work both inside and outside the home. Clearly within the second chapter at the very least, Woolf sets up a qualitative stasis for her argument.

In the final chapter of *Three Guineas*, the appropriateness of the request made by the letter is finally called into question. The requests made by the honorary treasurer for the pacifist society are “that we should sign a manifesto pledging ourselves ‘to protect culture and intellectual liberty’; that we should join a certain society, devoted to certain measures whose aim is to preserve peace, and finally that we should subscribe to that society” (*TG* 102). However, while the narrator agrees with some of the conditions, she refuses others. Namely she refuses to “fill up a form and become members of [anti-fascist] society” (*TG* 123). The basis of the argument here seems to be Translative stasis since the discord rests on the appropriateness of the venue rather than the request itself. The narrator concludes, “different we are, as facts have proved, both in sex and in education” (*TG* 123). To join the pacifist society as requested would be to sacrifice “that difference, as we have already said, that our help can come, if help we can, to protect

liberty, to prevent war” (*TG* 123). To do what the treasurer asks is impossible given the understanding of the situation already established.

This movement from Definitional to Qualitative and, finally, to Translative stasis mirrors the complexity of the argument at hand, and also reflects the scale of complexity of stasis as well. Definitional is by far the easiest form of stasis to use and identify, whereas Translative is much more difficult to recognize and to formulate an argument around. Since Woolf composed *Three Guineas* over the course of some seven years, and eventually organizes the text into the three-tiered structure the chapters represent, the fact that each chapter has its own basis or grounding unique to its discussion, as separated from its siblings, should come at no surprise. The ascribed hierarchy in complexity of stasis inscribed within the actual arrangement of the text seems to be a conscious decision on the part of the author. Therefore, since the composition is not a non-linear conglomeration of issues, nor does the organization appear to be an unconscious because it is too systematic, the invention of the argument seems thoroughly grounded from a rhetorical perspective.

Arrangement is a much more deliberate process than Invention, even if Invention has its own requirements of construction, since Arrangement concerns itself with how to order the discourse in the most persuasive manner. Cicero outlined the steps that any speaker must take in arguing a case, such as the one found in *Three Guineas*, order to be persuasive:

We must begin by winning the favorable attention of our audience; then we must state the facts of the case, then determine the point at issue, then establish the charge we are bringing, then refute the arguments of our opponent; and finally in

our peroration amplify and emphasize all that can be said on our side of the case and weaken and invalidate the points which tell for the opposite side.

(*De Or.* 1.31.143)

In judging the basis of each of the chapters it must be assumed Woolf is actually bringing three cases before us, as readers, and the barrister to whom the narrator is addressing intentionally. At the very least, it could be imagined that she is arguing three entirely different aspects of a multifaceted case. Each of these three cases then, while part of the larger whole, must have these basic parts: Introduction, Statement of Facts, Proof, Refutation, and Conclusion. To exhaustively judge this work in its entirety, we would have to break down the organizational bonds between the chapters and analyze them individually by performing three distinct inspections of arrangement. However, our purpose is not to examine all meticulously, but to determine whether the document is persuasive and how it functions as a whole. Since the document is a cohesive unit, as well as a conglomeration of individual arguments, the entirety of *Three Guineas*, as Woolf constructs it, must also have the five parts of arrangement as well as each level of the argument.

The narrator begins *Three Guineas* with an apology, “three years is a long time to leave a letter unanswered” (*TG* 5). This three-year delay in answering obviously measures the shift from a feminist to an anti-fascist polemic (Briggs 328). However, this apology serves a more rhetorical purpose as well. The Introduction, or the *exordium*, should do more than announce the subject and the purpose of the discourse, in this case “How in your opinion are we to prevent war?” (*TG* 3). As Cicero put it: “[A]n exordium is an address bringing the mind of the hearer into a suitable state to receive the rest of the

speech; and that will be effected if it has rendered him well disposed towards the speaker” (*De Inv.* 1.15). The speaker must put forth a favorable self-image, and respectable character, a positive ethos, in order to establish credibility with the audience.

For this reason, the “exordium is divided into two portions, first of all a beginning, and secondly language calculated to enable the orator to work his way into the good graces of his hearers” (*De Inv.* 1.15). Opening with an apology serves as an introduction to the subject and also puts the audience, the barrister, in a more correct and upright position of honor. The narrator puts it bluntly enough: “[A] whole page could be filled with excuses and apologies; declarations of unfitness, incompetence, lack of knowledge, and experience” (*TG* 5). The narrator is deprecating to the audience and asking for their approval to continue to explain her tardiness in responding. In addition to making the audience more agreeable, she explains the difficulty in responding is “so fundamental that it may well prove impossible for you to understand or for us to explain” (*TG* 5). The cause of the delay, as the speaker puts forth is due to her inability to communicate comprehensively and clearly. In short, the cause “is entangled in a multitude of circumstances hard to be thoroughly acquainted with” (*De Inv.* 1.15).

Instead of providing pages of excuses, she fills pages with a detailed examination of why she has had so much trouble with the topic at hand. Nearly half of the first chapter deals with “simply statements of facts” (*TG* 14). Indeed, it appears that the narrator is hoping that “we can appeal to facts” in order to understand both the argument and to provide a solution to the problem (*TG* 22). This Statements of Facts, the *narratio*, clearly “consists in the persuasive exposition of that which either has been done, or is supposed to have been done, or, to quote the definition given by Apollodorus, is a speech

instructing the audience as to the nature of the case in dispute” (Quint. 4.2). The speaker not only provides a narrative account of both the differences between men and women, but also focuses on those differences as they directly illuminate the nature of the issue at hand.

She explains “to scribble a name on a sheet of paper is easy; to attend a meeting where pacific opinions are more or less rhetorically reiterated to people who already believe in this is also easy,” but to write a check and to give a guinea to support a cause is not so easy, even if it is “a cheap way of quieting what may conveniently be called one’s conscience” (*TG* 15). The nature of the problem is quite apparent in *Three Guineas*, both why it is not easy for the narrator to give a guinea, but also why it is difficult to answer the original question of “How in your opinion are we to prevent war?” (3). Any suggestion a woman puts forth is limited by her power to support that opinion. The narrator carefully lays out how women “have no weapon with which to enforce [their] will” except “the weapon of independent opinion based upon independent income” (*TG* 16, 50). As she explains, even this weapon of independent opinion, “upon which we have been counting to help you to prevent war is not, to put it mildly, a very powerful weapon” (*TG* 51). Negating the fact that women make substantially less than men in the professional world, the tenuous position women operate under, with the very real possibility of losing their rights and ability to keep their job, severely confines their actual power considerably.

What proof does the narrator of *Three Guineas* have to back up her claims? She has an extensive array at her disposal. Courtesy of Woolf’s exhaustive research on the subject, the narrator can bring to bear everything from statistics that encompass Women’s

societies to *Whitaker's Almanack*, even to Whitehall and the government itself. She includes such verifiable sources as the Prime Minister who states “women in the Civil Services are not untrustworthy” and Mr. H. G. Wells, who says, “There has been no perceptible woman’s movement to resist the practical obliteration of their freedom by Fascists or Nazis (*TG* 59, 54). To say it is difficult to argue against her logical arguments, her various proofs of the inequality, and the perilous situation of women with the public sphere, is an understatement. Nearly all of chapter two is devoted to providing Proof, the *confirmatio*, and, as Cicero put it, adding “belief, and authority, and corroboration to [her] cause” (*De Inv.* 1.24). Every statement made by the narrator is seemingly “confirmed by some argument or other, either by that which is derived from persons, or by that which is deduced from circumstances” (*De Inv.* 1.24).

Furthermore, she refutes nearly all of the arguments lodged against women and their abilities. The Refutation, or *refutatio*, is devoted to answering the counterarguments of one's opponent. Cicero explains:

All argumentation is reprehended when anything, whether it be one thing only, or more than one of those positions which are assumed, is not granted; or if, though they are granted, it is denied that the conclusion legitimately follows from them; or if it is shown that the very kind of argumentation is faulty (*De Inv.* 1.42)

In *Three Guineas*, the narrator responds to all perceived counterclaims as she proceeds in her explanation of how the “daughters of educated men received an unpaid-for education at the hands of poverty, chastity, derision, and freedom from unreal loyalties” (*TG* 95). For poverty, she refutes the idea that women possess “a stocking full of guineas safely hoarded under her bed at home” (*TG* 52). For freedom from unreal loyalties, she

demonstrates: “As a women, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world” (*TG* 129). Finally, she replies to the most damaging argument against women entering the public sphere – they will become little less than men. Her response is simple: “[I]f you refuse to be separated from the four great teachers of the daughters of educated men...but combine them with some wealth, some knowledge, and some service to real loyalties then you can enter the professions” (*TG* 96). With no undeserved recognition on this point, Woolf does a remarkable job of showing all counterarguments within her scope as faulty or inconsequential.

The final section of any argument, according to Classical design, is the Conclusion, which is also known as the *peroratio*. True to its name, “the conclusion is the end and terminating of the whole oration” (*De Inv.* 1.52). As the final part of any discourse, the conclusion has three parts: enumeration, indignation, and complaint (*De Inv.* 1.52). Enumeration is the final summing up of the matters discussed by collecting together the various scattered and diffused points into a cohesive whole (*De Inv.* 1.52). In the final chapter of *Three Guineas*, Woolf enumerates the three requests made by the honorary treasurer and barrister – to sign a letter to the newspapers, to join his society, and to subscribe funds – and discusses how she will fulfill his requests both spoken and unspoken. The narrator remarks that the recipient does not simply want her to sign the manifesto but “at least to put your promise into practice” (*TG* 118). Accordingly, the narrator will form an “Outsiders’ Society” that would “consist of educated men’s daughters working in their own class” (*TG* 126).

In addition to the enumeration, there is the indignation in which “great hatred is excited against a man, or great dislike of some proceeding is originated” (*De Inv.* 1.53).

Woolf remarks how “abroad the monster has come more openly to the surface” and “he had widened his scope” (*TG* 122). There is a connection made between men in women in mutual hatred: “they were fighting the tyranny of the patriarchal state as you are fighting the tyranny of the Fascist state” (*TG* 121). Seemingly to the best of her abilities she brings her great anger and outrage forward in this last section of the text that reflects, to a greater degree, the “horror and disgust” in the first chapter of the work (*TG* 14). However, the narrator never seeks to move the hearers to pity in this final section, there is no Complaint.

As specified by Cicero, the Complaint serves “to render the disposition of the hearer gentle and merciful, in order that it may the more easily be influenced by pity” (*De Inv.* 1.55). Nevertheless, the narrator’s consideration of “infantile fixation” and the satisfaction the dominator derives from dominance, does not seem to evoke pity in the barrister whom she seems to be directly attacking within the closing pages of the text (*TG* 154). The “we” used at the end of the text when she declares “we are both determined to do what we can to destroy the evil” seems mocking considering she does not have much faith in men (*TG* 169). This is especially so when the narrator says, “you by your methods, we by ours,” since she attacks, even to the end, the barrister’s methods for stopping fascism on a number of levels (*TG* 169). This superficiality at the end does not bring the audience to side with the narrator, but rather cause them to reject her pleas and not “interpret those words as [she] does” (*TG* 170). If there is any place in the text where she can outright fail, it is here at the very closing of her work. If her purpose is to convince and induce a state of mind in the audience, with the possibility of choosing to take action in response as Burke demarcates as the primary requirement of a persuasive

piece, it makes little sense to antagonize that audience (50). For a speaker to willingly provoke an audience, and further alienate themselves rather than identifying as much as possible with the audience, severely curtails the persuasive impact of the work.

When considering how well the text is arranged along the Classical mode of construction, and how each part of the arrangement is interconnected with the others to such a degree that the argument functions on a holistic, as well as sectional, level the persuasiveness and the intent of Woolf can hardly be questioned. However, we have discussed only two of the five possible canons and it seems foolhardy to draw a conclusive decision as yet until we investigate one final canon of rhetoric: Memory. Much like Arrangement, Memory is a conscious device used by a rhetorician to further their own argument and defend their position. When we speak of Memory, we are not referring solely to mnemonics that would assist in remembering or recalling a speech. As an authority, Cicero defines Memory as “the lasting sense in the mind of the matters and words corresponding to the reception of these topics” (*De Inv.* 1.7). However, it was Quintilian who observed “indeed it is not without good reason that Memory has been called the treasure-house of eloquence” (11.2). Quintilian regarded Memory highly because “our whole education depends upon memory, and we shall receive instruction all in vain if all we hear slips from us” (11.2). Since it is the power of Memory alone that brings before us the facts that we must always hold ready for immediate use, some rhetoricians add Memory as part of Invention in the list of canons and effectively relegate it to the margins of rhetoric (Quint. 11.2).

While Memory can be tied to the improvisational necessities of a speaker, it also includes the ability to have a vast deal of information on hand and to bring it forth

appropriately and effectively in a given situation. Therefore, Memory moves beyond the orator, and includes consideration of how the audience will retain things in their mind, for only then can the audience determine the appropriateness and lasting impact of the information provided. Therefore, Memory is both an analysis of the mnemonics that the speaker uses and the methods used to insure the audience retains information. When strictly considering the author and her mnemonic devices, little needs to be said about where and how she manages to bring forth such a prodigious amount of information to bear on the subject under discussion in *Three Guineas*. We need only to refer back to her three volumes of notebooks as reference. Likewise, her prolific quotations do not need to be mentioned as evidence since they are too numerous to count and are mentioned elsewhere.

However, the repetitive usage of the quotes does prove interesting when in considered it in regards to its effect on the audience. For instance, the quote by Mary Kingsley, “I don’t know if I ever revealed the facts to you that being allowed to learn German was *all* the paid-for education I ever had,” appears numerous times throughout the text and at least once in every chapter (*TG* 7, 30, 94, 103). This repetition of quotes, in addition to other phrases throughout the text, does more than simply solidify the information in the audience’s mind – it also persuades the audience on an incredibly subtle and cunning level. The audience is actually memorizing the quotations while they are working their way through the text without their realization of that fact. Surely, it is no accident that “spending £300,000,000 annually upon arms” is repeated eight times in the course of the text (*TG* 11, 41, 56, 72, 82, 83, 88, 125). Woolf’s narrator uses these images to insinuate how money-as-power manifests itself as interconnected with sexism,

classism, and fascism within British society to such a degree that it is almost impossible to notice it without calling direct attention to the situation (Ratcliffe, "Rhetoric" 409). Additionally, repetition of the term "daughters of educated men" more times than is possible to count, sometimes several times per page, also calls attention to another facet of British society (*TG* 6, 16, 18). Chiefly such repetition of a phrase demonstrates how a woman's identity is entirely dependent on their relation to men by highlighting the subordinate status of the word "daughter" to the words "women" and "men" (Ratcliffe, "Rhetoric" 409). These subtle, but obviously apparent cues to the audience allow for Woolf, and her narrator, to be much more convincing while at the same time reinforcing their combined beliefs.

Three Guineas provides an excellent case study for a political apologia or a persuasive piece in defense of her opinions true to Classical design. The basis of her arguments, the arrangement of those arguments, and the attempt to incur remembrance of those same arguments by the audience, clearly dictates that Woolf meant for *Three Guineas* to function rhetorically. However, our analysis thus far attempts only to explain "how" the text functions rhetorically, and now we must turn a discussion of "what" she is actually expressing. Opinions range from the text being a blueprint for a contemporary feminist polemic to anti-fascist propaganda. Of course, these propositions are well-grounded, both in the historical background of the text and Woolf's other works. However, I believe what Woolf is trying to express in *Three Guineas* has much more to do with how she is expressing it.

Obviously, based on the how closely the text pulls from the time period in which it was written, the perspective of *Three Guineas* is historical since, as Woolf herself put

it, “we cannot understand the present if we isolate it from the past” (*Pargiters* 5). Even the subject seems relatively straightforward as an attempt to answer, “How in your opinion are we to prevent war?” (*TG* 5). Nevertheless, the speaker, who defines herself throughout as an “educated man’s daughter,” explains how such a seemingly trivial question is impossible to answer due to the “gulf so deeply cut between” the two sexes (*TG* 18, 6). The historical exclusion of the vast majority of women regardless of financial situation, which has left them with limited access and insufficient experience, has made communication on such issues as how to prevent war almost incomprehensible to those who would otherwise occupy the same level of society. Barred from receiving an education, entering the professions, or holding positions that could alter political policies by men, women obviously view such concepts as patriotism, honor, and wars from an entirely different perspective.

The male perspective of the topics that are associated directly, but more often indirectly, with war are irrevocably stained by the predominant society’s values which are my no means lightly tinged by patriarchal dominance. There is an underlying foundation that both connects the terms but also maintains their preeminent standing and value within society. The concepts, for they are associated with a myriad of other perceptions and are not just mere words, are more often subconsciously assimilated as any ideology is without conscientious, let alone critical, thought. Woolf is well aware that she needs to separate the bonds between the foundation and the superstructure and is more than willing to “celebrate this occasion by cremating the corpse” (*TG* 121). This is why her early chapter has a Definitional stasis and why she is not negligent in reminding her readers of this initial basis throughout the text and how it is more fitting “to destroy

an old word, a vicious and corrupt word that had done much harm in its day and is now obsolete" (*TG* 120). However, she also realizes that she cannot do so alone, but needs the support of all her sisters of educated men.

Women have had a historically different experience of culture, as well as social and political institutions, since only during part of Woolf's lifetime had "the door of the private house was thrown open" for women to come forth into the light of the public sphere (*TG* 20). Only recently were women finally allowed to participate in the decision-making process associated with war as Woolf clearly and diligently records the change that "educated man's daughter has now at her disposal an influence which is different from any influence that she has possessed before" (*TG* 21). This influence is money, pure and simple. Even though this new influence is by no means secure or assured, women have a newfound strength just the same: They possess the power of indifference. Because a woman now has money, she no longer has to resort to using "whatever charm or beauty she possesses to flatter and cajole the busy men" nor is she required to consciously "accept their views, and fall in with their decrees because it was only so that she could wheedle them into giving her the means to marry or marriage itself" (*TG* 48-9).

Equally important, because women have been excluded for so long, they are also outsiders declaring: "As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world" (*TG* 129). This power of indifference and their position as outsiders, in addition to the lessons learned in the private house "at the hands of poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties," provide her a unique understanding of war (*TG* 95). Her placement allows her to provide the barrister neither the expected answer nor even the obvious answer, but the best answer to the present

situation. Only with this newfound power women possess has it become possible “not merely to burn a certain corrupt word, but to speak freely without fear of flattery” (*TG* 142). There is no longer a need for “the silence inspired by fear” that previously reduced women’s “boasted freedom to a farce” (*TG* 142). Woolf is earnestly entreating the daughters of educated men to take a stand again, not for the right to earn a living nor for the vote but for ridding society of the rhetoric that maintains their subservience under patriarchal dominance.

The answer to stop war lies in understanding that “the public and the private worlds are inseparable connected; that the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and the servilities of the other” (*TG* 168). The solution is not to address the external issues of the public sphere, but rather the internal *modus operandi* that causes the situation in the first place. Superficial changes will not alleviate the impetus that propels Europe to war any more than white washing a tomb hides the fact that it is full of rotting bones. The narrator is attempting to reveal this fact to the listener and explain how women are “fighting the same enemy that you are fighting and for the same reasons” (*TG* 121). While men are asking for aid and support in “fighting the tyranny of the Fascist state,” they are failing to acknowledge it is just another facet of a broader, greater war against “the tyranny of the patriarchal state” and domination everywhere it lurks (*TG* 121). The dominance and hierarchy in the public sphere, that is the prelude to fascism and war, is the same dominance and hierarchy in the private sphere. Only when the aggressive dominance of the masculine and enforced servility of the feminine in society is rectified can there be any hope of preventing war. This profound insight lies at the heart of the intricately interwoven arguments made at every point in *Three Guineas*.

While the honorary treasurer suggests “certain practical measures” to help prevent war, Woolf’s narrator is looking at how to solve the deeper problems of society that the barrister has never even considered. He asks the narrator to sign a manifesto that pledges her “to protect culture and intellectual liberty,” to join a society “whose aim is to preserve peace,” and, finally, to provide monetary contributions to that society (*TG* 105).

However, the narrator instead replies to two other requests for support before she even considers the anti-fascist society. And she is not solely expressing what she is doing, nor is she simply explaining her rationale behind such decisions, but hoping to convince the reader to do likewise. The narrator explains that only in giving a guinea to each of these organizations can she meet the pledge “to protect culture and intellectual property” since through these can women achieve the liberty and freedom that is required to help men prevent war (*TG* 105). These causes are the only ones that will solve the deeper, and in Woolf’s mind, more pressing issues at hand – chiefly re-writing the subtext of society so that war is no longer looked on as “an outlet for manly qualities” or a “source of happiness” (*TG* 10). Woolf’s ambition and desire is to have the audience consent to this decision and not simply understand it.

To maintain freedom for all and for this new position, she is willing to send her last guinea to the pacifist society, providing “the guinea as a free gift, given freely,” to help fight tyranny and dictatorship in the public sphere since it remains connected to the private (*TG* 120). But in the same strain, she will not “fill up the form and become members of [the] society” since doing so would negate their difference and their objective freedom to criticize the social system (*TG* 123). No, the narrator calls women to join a society that has “no honorary treasurer, for it would need no funds” and have “no

office, no committee, no secretary” (TG 126). In short, she calls on all women to join her in a society that has no hierarchy and no power structure and makes all equal and gives power to all in order to make sure they maintain their separate perspective. Such a society allows for women to “refuse all methods of advertising merit” and to “hold that ridicule, obscurity, and censure are preferable, for psychological reasons, to fame and praise” (TG 97). Moreover, belonging to this society that maintains women’s separation allows for the narrator examine the “infantile fixation” to crave dominance and force submission as the root cause for all our suffering (TG 154). And finally, this position of separation but association also explains why Woolf purposefully chose to construct the text around Classical precepts.

Three Guineas is a piece of Classical rhetoric, and thus unequivocally hierarchical. The text is structured on various levels in order of importance and increasing complexity. Paradoxically, as Woolf continues unrelentingly to attack the subtext of the text of patriarchal society, *Three Guineas* grows ever more hierarchal in form. The argument made by the narrator is against just such a structure even though she is still communicating within that self-same structure. What she is arguing is that tyranny and domination exist on all levels of society, public and private, and she is using the text, and the argument in the text, to illustrate her position. There is a duality inherent in the construction of *Three Guineas*. While the narrator is challenging the reigning truths, she is using a Classical mode of conveying those truths against itself. Woolf systematically divides the house against itself so that the underlying assumptions of society are made manifest and can no longer stand on their own without criticism. By pointing out the despotic supports that hold up the system of British society, and the innate connection

between the public and private, Woolf eliminates their effectiveness as logical or rationale arguments in both spheres. By providing monetary assistance to societies that have the ability to assault those buttressing pillars, Woolf attempts to level the entirety of the patriarchal structure. Finally, by writing in the mode of Classical rhetoric as a means of deconstructing the text of society, Woolf subverts the entire discourse and calling attention to the subtext that upholds the patriarchy.

The subtext of society rests squarely on the political rhetoric of the public sphere. By using this rhetoric, she is co-opting the system to uphold and enforce her own revised version of the system. The argument in *Three Guineas* is directly attacking the footnotes of society even though it is a footnote on society against the footnotes of society. In explaining the underlying foundational dynamics of the society and using that society and the rhetoric that maintains its dominance as evidence against itself, the subtext of dominance in the text of society is shown clearly inscribed in every aspect of life – both public and private. Since we have already explored *Three Guineas* and its history as a footnote to *The Years* and later society as Woolf sought to expose the facts about the “fiction” of reality, and we now have concluded our examination of her structured attack against the footnotes of society that maintain the patriarchy, we can finally move on to the most interesting aspect of her work that is only hinted here briefly – probing Woolf’s multilayered subversion of the power structure of rhetoric and patriarchy in order to persuade her audience the merits of her claims.

CHAPTER 4

CITATION AND RESPONSE: FEMINIST SUBVERSION OF TEXTUAL AUTHORITY IN *THREE GUINEAS*

Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* is exceedingly complex and is exasperatingly persuasive. What once was little more than a footnote to the fictional creation of *The Years* lies before us as a work that can stand on its own with exceptional clarity. *Three Guineas* became a footnote to the text of society, a devastatingly cunning commentary on the perceived understandings of British society in Woolf's day. The purpose of the text is to reveal patriarchal dominance in society, and the structure is designed to destabilize the power structure on which that dominance stands. She even designed her argument along Classical lines in order to co-opt the means of conveyance of patriarchal and hierarchal designs. Finally, we must now pragmatically examine how she effectively engages the audience in persuading a change of opinion and choice. After all, if she is solely using a hierarchically-structured argument against the patriarchal structure of British society, the system seems self-defeating. The end result of this final section, then, is to determine whether Woolf's destabilizing use of persuasion is successful and if the argument produces its intended result. First I would like to consider some fallacies associated with the language in the work, particularly the tone, before we move on to consider how she augments and subverts the hierarchal structure at every point to further her appeal.

If critical acceptance of this work is any judge, *Three Guineas* never achieves what it set out to do. Woolf's controversial critique of her culture set off a series of rhetorical attacks and counterattacks that left the text in near obscurity for over fifty years until it experienced a renewed interest and widespread revival in the later part of the twentieth century (Silver 340). The visceral response by readers to this work has much to do with Woolf's anger in her text and the battle she wages and fosters through the tone of the narrator's voice, and it also is a result of the perceived hypocrisy of the narrator on some subjects under consideration (Silver 341). Although Woolf attacks the many "forms of brain prostitution" including when "we use art to propagate political opinions," she appears to contradict her own argument against propaganda since *Three Guineas* is often assumed to be nothing more than a piece of propaganda (*TG* 112, 202). If Woolf feels literature will supposedly suffer "the same mutilation that the mule has suffered" when coupled to propaganda, it makes little sense that she would use her own art for propagandistic purposes (*TG* 202). Yet, more than one critique has concluded exactly that – that *Three Guineas* is strictly a socialist, pacifist, and feminist polemic, little better than the Third Reich's public releases, and this is why her work has met such opposition (Marcus 103).

Modern critics, such as Jane Marcus, believe that Virginia Woolf should be forgiven for her apparent hypocrisy because she felt that her cause is just and her point of view remained unheard in the daily press (103). Moreover, Marcus and others argue Woolf is supposedly uncertain of the proper relations between art and propaganda or "truth of fact" and "truth of fiction" (102). This conclusion is highly suspect given her skill and recognition both as an essayist and as an artist. To assume that her point of view

is singular and unheard of in the press is disconcerting. Her entire purpose in *Three Guineas* is not to create something out of nothing, or spontaneously generate facts, but to bring what already is seen, but marginal, to the foreground to show the inherent connections that link the lesser concern to the greater situation. Furthermore, her information, which is entirely based upon press clippings and secondary sources such as biographies, hardly seems biased and misleading in nature but presents an accurate assessment of a situation connected to a serious problem. If anything, she attempts to fight against the propaganda of patriarchy in order to reveal the false “truth” that the hierarchal nature of British society constructs. For this reason, her work was viewed unfavorably by the society of the time. The issue that disturbed the critics of Woolf’s day is not that *Three Guineas* is propaganda or hypocritical, but the timing of its publication (Marcus 106). At a time when women had supposedly won the right to vote and were entering the professions, what need was there for a feminist text like *Three Guineas*? Moreover, a text speaking of peace, when war was on the horizon, surely upset more than a few in the establishment.

The men of her time perceived her tone in *Three Guineas* as exceedingly hostile to them personally because the reigning patriarchal discourse of the last century had constructed truths that condemned anger, particularly women’s anger as the overflow of powerful emotions without reason (Silver 340). Brenda Silver notes that, as a life long pacifist, Woolf reacted to the ominous sense of foreboding, as war crept closer, with a building sense of frustration and anger – anger that everything she values was threatened with extinction (345). Based on Woolf’s diaries and letters, Silver feels that Woolf sought, with ever-greater urgency, to confront the self-destructive tendencies of her

culture head-on by documenting its persuasiveness and source within the ideological precepts held so dearly by society (345). Woolf carefully paints a devastatingly accurate portrait of how the sub-text of society governs all external aspects of that society. With intricate strokes of vivid detail, Woolf demonstrates how British society is not so far removed from the atrocities of Germany as it would like to believe. To have the underlying precepts of a culture laid bare, in all their gory and violent detail, not unlike the photographs of “dead children” and “ruined houses,” would surely also have at least unnerved the critics of her time if not provoked them to outrage (*TG* 14). Not surprisingly then, Woolf did not expect many people, either men and women, to view her work in a favorable light and “expect[ed] some very angry reviews from men” and “from women too” not to mention the comments from “the clergy” (*Diary* 5:146). Her suspicions were not far off the mark as critics begun assaulting and disparaging the work’s sources and information soon after publication in attempt to deny the argument in *Three Guineas* any plausible authority.

While the angry tone, pervasive throughout the work, can be ascribed to Woolf’s own mounting anger, it can also be a result of her struggle to find a strong voice with which to speak in the public realm. What is viewed as an arrogant and egotistical quality, may truly reflect women’s limited authoritative power in the public sphere. *Three Guineas* inscribes Woolf’s passionate desire to speak out in response to the events occurring around her, but without a true position from which to speak effectively. This explains both why her work, although a rhetorical argument, is constructed under the auspices of a series of epistolary responses and why she forms her argument around Classical traditions. At this time, writing letters were often the only approved form or

mode of expression for women of Woolf's class. By providing and writing a series of letters to various representatives and societies, Marcus explains that Woolf was able to respond freely from a relatively safe position without direct censure against her inclusion of her own opinions, as she might be if *Three Guineas* were more formal (110). Letters are informal, and they do not have the same stylistically strict guidelines expository forms of presentation require such as essays.

The explanation of Woolf's use of Classical structure is more complicated but easily explained through Burke's concept of rhetoric. For Burke, rhetoric hinges on identification and recognition of common interests between speaker and listener. Rhetoric can alter social order only by influencing the way people perceive that social order. This is no easy task, especially if we accept the difference of viewpoints established by Woolf's narratorial voice within the text. In her 1920 essay, "Men and Women," Woolf explores the difficulty women have in articulating their feelings in the language that is slanted toward the patriarchal (195). Within this essay, she attempts to formulate a way that women may be able to read and write within the confines of such an inhospitable linguistic setting. Woolf concludes her essay by proposing the following strategies: "[T]ry the accepted forms. . .discard the unfit. . .create others which are more fitting" ("Men and Women" 195).

While all these strategies position women within the language of men, they do recognize the possibilities for women's subversive agency within "traditional" language (Ratcliffe, *Anglo-American* 42). Even though women are imprisoned within the phallogocentric in order to communicate, Woolf believes women can construct their own subject positions successfully within that patriarchal linguistic structure (Ratcliffe,

“Rhetoric” 401). This explains Woolf’s willingness to use the Classical design within *Three Guineas*, since it is generally considered the “accepted form” for debate or discussion. By using a Classical structure for her argument, even if she is co-opting it for her own ends, Woolf negates potential criticism against the apologia’s critical framework since it is inline with expected norms.

With the style and the argument protected from direct attack on the grounds of function and design, Woolf goes a step further to provide an impregnable position of authority from which she can argue her point – a democratic majority. While there appears to be a sustained and singular point of view between a female narrator and the male honorary treasurer, *Three Guineas* is not just a series of letters, but also a series of letters within letters where the person with whom the narrator is speaking is constantly displaced and shifting (Rosenberg 103). Mary Kingsley’s words, “I don’t know if I ever revealed to you the fact that being allowed to learn German was *all* the paid-for education I ever had,” and Josephine Butler’s proclamation, “Our claim was no claim of women’s rights only...it was a claim for the rights of all – all men and women” are no longer individualized voices (*TG* 6, 121). There is no authorial “I”, there is simply “we” in the text – the “daughters of educated men” (*TG* 6). Furthermore, the narrator decimates Mr. H.G. Wells, Mr. Whitaker, and the rest of the proponents of patriarchy by showing their opinions to be inaccurate, or mocking them outright, and reducing the audience from a force of many to an audience of one.

This reversal contradicts the typical structure of rhetorical discourse and hints that Woolf is doing more than a cursory examination of the text would indicate. Instead of one person speaking to a majority of skeptics, as is the common in rhetorical or political

speeches, the dynamics are reversed in *Three Guineas*. The narrator is part of the majority speaking to the lone skeptic – the many are speaking to the one. The narrator shall “speak for us” and the multitude, represented by the one, who is a voice of all (*TG* 6). This is not without conscious thought, with women having no perceived position of authority to speak, the narrator’s only option is to insist that the male correspondent acknowledge the validity, the authority, of women's perceptions and voices because only then can the opinions be taken seriously (Silver 345). Woolf’s innovative use of this narrative technique, as exemplified by the intricate layering of voices and shifting narrative identities, suggests that Woolf is adopting conventions and then actively adapting them to create a unique rhetorical strategy that needs further exploration.

Speaking of *Three Guineas*, Woolf feels the text “will strike very sharp & clear on a hot iron” on the inequality of women in education and societal opportunity, unlike her work in the *The Years* which is “entirely muted & obscured” (*Diary* 5:68). She deviously proclaims, “my immensely careful planning” in *Three Guineas* “won’t be balked by time of life &c. as I have made certain” (*D.* 5:68). Although she neglects to mention how this planning will be made manifest, the comment does suggest a conscious political strategy or objective in using the traditional structure beyond the mere necessity to communicate effectively. But such cognizant construction is not readily apparent since “secrecy is essential” for women (*TG* 141). As the narrator explains, “we must still hide what we are doing and thinking even though what we are doing and thinking is for our common cause” (*TG* 141). Since the text conclusively has a Classical design, the careful planning is very likely the reimagining of Classical forms through modification or destabilization of that design.

As I have already mentioned, Woolf's use of repetition and memory plays a decidedly modified purpose in the persuasiveness of the text. While she is using memorization as an aid, the information she is using for memorization directly calls attention to the Subconscious reinforcement of hierarchy established in British society. The repetition of key phrases challenges both the linear logic of the dominant discourse of rhetoric, by forcing the audience to recall earlier sections, and also challenges the assumptions of that dominant discourse in a direct way. By providing the concrete evidence that contradicts presumed beliefs in a systematically repetitive way and juxtaposing those facts with the presumptions, which are mentioned only once, Woolf is attempting to reverse the sub-conscious domination of patriarchal thinking and assert a new ideology as pervasively as possible. By rule of substitution of accepted principles with newer, and equally reinforced ideals, Woolf asserts a new ideology with multiple levels of persuasiveness.

In addition, to draw from Thomas Farrell's work on "The Female and Male Modes of Rhetoric," the repetition coincides with the more "additive" style or open-ended quality of the discourse in *Three Guineas* standing in stark contrast to the typically conclusive boundaries and close-ended quality of Classical rhetoric (913). We are not speaking here of inductive or deductive organization, since both amount to a closed system of representation and denote arrangements, but to a mode that "simulates how one might actually reason to a conclusion" (Farrell 909). While the male mode of rhetoric has traditionally been framed, contained, and prepackaged, the indirection provided by *Three Guineas*, through multiple additions and reassertions, actually forms a more open-ended, or generative, discourse that requires audience participation which Farrell ascribes as a

key component of female rhetorical style (909-10). The best example of this additive component of the text is how Woolf uses letters to various representative entities to carefully define her objection to donating a guinea to the cause of the anti-fascist society. The series of letters in *Three Guineas* works through the process of reasoning that the narrator is following while leading the audience through the same line of reasoning simultaneously. The overall conclusion of the argument in the text is forever deferred until it is almost impossible to reject its validity – true to the form indicated by Farrell (909). But the argument, as a whole, does not rest completely on logical and rational support as would seem to be indicated by Woolf's "appeal to facts" (TG 22).

But the emphasis of the argument is not on reason but on an emotional connection between the narrator and the audience – chiefly the desire to avoid war. As we have previously seen, the difficulty in finding a common ground for communication is the most prominent, and singly important issue given or explained in the paragraphs proceeding beyond the apology of the narrator's late response. And communication difficulties continue to take center stage throughout the work for "let it be understood, soberly and rationally between us, that [men] are fighting to gratify a sex instinct which [women] cannot share" (TG 129). Only through examining a photograph from the Spanish revolution, through the emotions that the photograph evokes, can the narrator and barrister meet in the emotional space of their mutual "horror and disgust" (TG 14). The difficulty in communication goes beyond the historical and educational differences between the man and the women, and it is directly connected to a difference between the logical and emotional perspective.

The honorary treasurer, the barrister, who is asking for advice on preventing war, is looking strictly for logical and self-evident solutions, which at no point does the narrator provide. Instead, the narrator embarks on an examination of the emotional in order to provide a shared common ground for understanding and to provide self-effaced solutions (Ratcliffe, "Rhetoric" 407). The narrator provides guineas to organizations that, at some future point, will have an affect on the consummation of war, but the effect is not inherently present or self-evident at the present moment but only in the future. Woolf's argument does not function in the realm where "reasonable" or "logical" people can agree or disagree, but in the realm of emotion that is traditionally rendered speechless (Ratcliffe, "Rhetoric" 407).

The preference of the emotional destabilizes the traditional structure of rhetoric. As a closed system, in which the speaker attempts to account for every component of the speech and every conceivable response of the audience, rhetoric often depreciates or marginalizes the emotional to a great degree because of its unpredictability. Appealing to a person's logical faculties is easier, and generally meets with greater success, because the majority of people, when following an explicit line of logical reasoning accurately presented, will arrive at the same conclusion. However, this is not the case with emotional appeals. They do not, necessarily, have the same assurance of meeting with success. Humans are capricious and often fickle in their emotions. To base an argument solely on emotions is hazardous because one is never sure that if two people "are looking at the same picture" and seeing "the same dead bodies, the same ruined houses" they are feeling the exact same thing to the same degree (*TG* 14). If an argument is judged only quantitatively, the more persuaded minds the better, then appeals to emotions will be

used sparsely if at all. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf is not attempting to convince the multitude, but the one.

However, the expanding of typically marginal emotions can be considered in direct conflict with the systematic use of factual arguments Woolf professes to use repetitively in *Three Guineas*. Generally speaking, facts are usually based on concrete or conclusive evidence pulled dutifully from reliable or “premiere” sources, which sets up a continuum in which certain sources are preferred over sources of lesser “quality”. For an author or speaker it is far more effective to cite an authoritative paper, thus trading on its acknowledged adequacy, than to re-describe the research without adequate proof (Gilbert 116). The result, I could go so far as to say, is particular sources “dominate” lesser sources into obscurity. Woolf cites “lesser” sources as biography – *The Life of Mary Kingsley* by Stephen Gwynn, *The Life of Sophia Jex-Black* by Margaret Todd, or *The Life of Emily Davies* by Barbara Stephen to name only a small handful – and rarely focuses on “higher” forms of reference.

These underused sources, though Virginia Woolf lifts them up as the “largely untapped aid to the understanding of human motives,” are often considered irrelevant in a rhetorical discourse as respectable examples (TG 9). Virginia Woolf is playing with the subtext of her argument in such a way as to sever the subconscious connections between patriotism, domination, and fascism by undercutting their authority to power built on conventional sources. While maintaining the auspices of a Classically organized and structured work, she systematically attacks the underpinnings of the organization. *Three Guineas* then can be seen as both an argument of Classical rhetoric as well as an argument against Classical rhetoric. Thus, her persuasiveness is considered two-fold: she

persuades the dominant through Classical means and she also persuades by disassembling the foundations on which they maintain power. Literally, those who want to attack her have no ground to stand on if they seek to make a rebuttal. However, Woolf is careful not to actively dissuade choice in the text. You can still decide not to agree with her or her narrator, but you will not be able to defend that choice.

It is perhaps important to note at this point that when an author chooses a collection of papers to cite, the author is not only providing support for the argument but also implicitly displaying allegiance to a particular community (Gilbert 117). Moreover, as Gilbert points out in citing particular authors or specific papers, the author can be seen to be making an assertion about the validity of the information in those cited papers (117). While Virginia Woolf does provide a plethora of potential sources, none of them are “conventional” or subscribed sources of inquiry. The one conventional source Woolf uses predominantly in the entire work, *Whitaker’s Almanack*, is the text that Woolf spends the most time attacking as both biased and incomplete. Woolf spends most of chapter two discussing ad nauseam how “the sex distinction seems, to Whitaker, possessed of a curious leaden quality, liable to keep any name to which [Miss.] is fastened circling in the lower spheres” (*TG* 59). The negation of “conventional” sources surely attests to Woolf’s view of their lack of validity. Likewise, Woolf’s prevalent use of biographies and diaries demonstrates her belief in their inherent accuracy in representing the true relations between men and women as well as society at large.

Moreover, the actual amount of marginal evidence Virginia Woolf provides is greater than what exists within the actual text itself. The majority of proof supplied for the argument is as multilayered as the cacophony of voices of the narrator. While the

audience is reduced to one voice that does not mean the audience is always the same person and Woolf has to adjust her approach appropriately. Anticipating and representing a thing existing before it actually does, or *prolepsis*, is something Woolf is capable of using and does so effectively in *Three Guineas* with a startling degree of clarity. This defense by anticipation of possible attack, or the preparation of the potentiality of meaning and propriety of words is a difficult skill to attain but one that is extremely necessary given the situation in which Woolf was writing. Woolf manages this by providing two layers of references and two layers of commentary within a singularly cohesive whole. The unequal bifurcation of intentions, which usually left the text incomplete and the notes incomprehensible to anyone not thoroughly educated, Virginia Woolf reverses in *Three Guineas*.

As Woolf's authorial voice is composed of a myriad of voices that have come before her, the listening reader is also composed of a multiplicity of voices both present and future. Woolf structured *Three Guineas* in such a way that it can interact with different kinds of readers from a variety of divergent backgrounds (Rosenberg 105). Woolf approaches literature as a living thing and, therefore, structures her work to function as dynamic dialogue between writer and reader that is open to the masses (Cuddy-Keane 133). The persuasive quality of the argument in *Three Guineas* rests not on simply providing evidence, but on its ability to provide a multiplicity and plurality of the textual meanings depending on who is actually reading the text. Virginia Woolf does this in a variety of ways, but the most effective way she inscribes diversity is through the footnotes appended to the text.

There exists within *Three Guineas*, two separate texts, the actual polemic itself and the notes with which it is inscribed. The first set of references and the narrative commentary within the essay portion is designed for Virginia Woolf's contemporaries or anyone who has some familiarity, if not intimate knowledge, of those sources based on their proximity to the period in which they are published. The quotations within the essay portion of *Three Guineas* serve one purpose: to persuade the potential reader of Virginia Woolf's time. The second set of quotations, those found in the footnotes, provides both the detail and the elaboration for the argument for readers who have no connection with the sources enabling them to perceive the argument and be persuaded by it without having to be entirely familiar with the sources themselves.

Having such a scholarly device as a footnote is not uncommon in essays or professional editorials but it is generally quite rare in epistolary forms for the simple reason that the structure of letters precludes such devices. Citation systems evolved organically in the humanities discourses in order to provide the reader with the exact formulation of a quoted author's words or explanation of sources (Connors 239). However, quotations are not necessary in letters due to their informality. Nevertheless, such use of footnotes is quite common in *Three Guineas*. For instance, footnotes four through six in chapter one read as follows:

4. *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell*, by John Buchan, pp. 189, 205.

5. *Anthony (Viscount Knebworth)*, by the Earl of Lytton, p. 355.

6. *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by Edmund Blunden, pp. 25, 41.

(TG 173)

The footnotes are a paratextual construct, whether marked by symbols or by a letter or number system, which maintains the coherent reading experience of the reader with the main text as sacrosanct and uninterrupted without bloating it with trivial or unnecessary detail that is better suited to the end of the chapter or work (Connors 238). As such, notes usually contain, in addition to the sources of quotes, definitions or explanations of the terms used in the text as well as the mention of a specific or figurative meaning of a phrase (Genette 325). Woolf uses her notes in this fashion only occasionally, as can be seen in the thirtieth footnote in chapter one regarding the “vain and vicious system of lecturing” (*TG* 46). Within this footnote she qualifies the words “vain and vicious” as only referring “to the sons and daughters of educated men who lecture their brothers and sisters upon English literature” (*TG* 183). However, Woolf does not simply provide explanation or elaboration of terms, but also goes well beyond what would normally be considered a footnote.

At many points, she provides what amount to minor essays on various subjects discussed in the text. One of the largest and most prodigious examples of this is the thirty-eighth footnote for chapter two. In this five-page expose Woolf lambasts the idea of chastity for women. Beginning with attacking St. Paul for his various opinions in regards to women, eventually concluding that “from internal evidence it seems clear that he was a poet and a prophet, but lacked logical power,” she meanders through a variety of more contemporary quotes on the subject (*TG* 197). Her opinions, since there are no citations to support her reasoning other than quotes that elaborate on the benefits of chastity for males and females, are rather opaque and do not flow particularly with the rest of the text from chapter two. Of course, this is not uncommon in expository works,

and many authors create discrete, personal pieces of writings in the footnotes rather than attempt to place such compositions within the body of the text (Connors 241).

Nevertheless, these little essays are not mere collections of facts or literary surveys as would be expected, but prose works in their own right and meant to appeal as pieces of writing beyond the actual polemic (Connors 241). Moreover, the footnotes often extend their relevance beyond the word or phrase to which they are attached to move on to various topics that may or may not have relevance (Genette 321). Take, for example, the tenth footnote in chapter one, tied to the sentence “we have no weapon with which to enforce our will,” which actually discusses the “one essential that the educated woman can supply: children” (*TG* 16, 173). In the twenty-eighth footnote of chapter one, which refers to the narrator’s wish to create an experimental women’s college, but actually discusses how “until the death of Lady Stanley of Alderly, there was not a chapel at Girton” and that “ghosts, it is said, have no cheque books” (*TG* 43, 182).

Beyond issues of relevance, Woolf’s notes to the text of *Three Guineas* quite regularly mention uncertainties or complexities that the author ignored in the text because she feels they would not interest a scholarly reader (Genette 326). The fifteenth footnote in chapter one, tied to “the fact of property,” reasonably explains that “there are no figures available with which to check the facts” in this regard (*TG* 22, 176). The scholarly reader would certainly check the facts themselves rather than refer to the notes for corroboration. Moreover, such scholars would not need the author to explain the difficulties she had in obtaining her “hard facts” since they are intimately familiar with the difficulties involved in “proving” an argument. Many scholars only use the facts that support their argument and rarely, if ever, use facts that may contradict the very point

which they are trying to make. Woolf seems to have no qualms about this nor the fact that she has little information beyond supposition to back up her claims. She is more than willing to concede the point, which would seem quite unbelievable to scholars.

The assumption that the facts provided in the footnotes may not necessarily interest the reader provides another aspect that is often overlooked with footnotes – the notes are an elective reading experience (Connors 238). As Robert Connors explains in “The Rhetoric of Citation Systems,” an author’s use of footnotes provides the reader with the unique choice as to whether they will follow along the back trails and autobiographical asides the notes represent, or ignore them completely (238). The notes are a local detour to other evidence and commentary – a momentary fork in the text leading to a supplementary digression (Genette 327-8). Unfortunately, those in academia in Woolf’s time rarely allowed for this elective reading experience.

Footnotes, because of their segregated nature, tend to invite writers to bifurcate their intentions into two separate and unequal streams according to Connors: “the high street of the text, unspoiled as much as possible by specific reference, and the alleys of the notes which carry the necessary, but less genteel, business of analysis” (222). Citation had developed originally to expand understanding, not limit access to knowledge. Unfortunately, it had since been seized and appropriated by men of learning as an academic exercise strictly relegated to the educational sphere without regard to its original purpose. Only those who were well educated, especially those in academia, had the ability to read the notes with any hope of actually grasping their contents. In other words, the system maintained exclusion from knowledge based on a hierarchy built around the dominant authority in the public sphere. Therefore, Woolf’s use of footnotes

in *Three Guineas*, although singular in occurrence since she does not use them elsewhere, may at first seem odd considering the argument, but makes implicit sense when considering its connection to the patriarchy.

The footnotes to this work serve two purposes: undermining the dominance of hierarchical rhetoric of the citation system and reasserting the elective quality of the footnotes as a choice that does not require a mandate. What makes citation systems so remarkable is they are both a boundary of intellectual activity and the silent foundation upon which it is based. They represent the interconnectivity of all research and literary works while, at the same time, they have the potential to be the place where the author's voice is heard the most clearly and distinctly as an individual. With the heavy formalization of the system – over the ensuing centuries since its inception – it is not surprising that the system is as largely ignored as the connection between public and private dominance due to the degree of separation between. Even now, not to mention at Woolf's time, attempting to use any official citation structure quickly enmeshes you in a controlled arrangement that does not allow for any freedom of expression (Connors 242). Woolf clearly knew this, and it is one of the many reasons why she does not bother to remain within the structure but violates it on every conceivable level.

One of Woolf's chief modes for violating the formalized conventions is through humor. While not operating completely outside of the form, since eighteenth-century tradition reserves the most sarcastic barbs of the discourse for the notes, Woolf truly mocks the form by often using it to provide an antithesis to her own argument rather than further proof as notes are typically conceived (Genette 327). In the twenty-first footnote of the first chapter, when discussing the impact of the church on the founding of a college

for women, in particular as represented in Mary Astell's attempt, Woolf makes the humorous closing statement: "that the Church swallowed the money is an assumption, but one perhaps justified by the history of the church" (*TG* 181). Or in the thirty-first footnote of the same chapter where she remarks casually, "it is difficult to procure exact figures of the sums allowed the daughters of educated men before marriage" when she claims definitively in the text that women manage "£40 to £100 a year" (*TG* 184, 47). What is expected is not found within the notes *Three Guineas* provides and cannot be found anywhere within the notes save the direct reference lines. However, even some of these "references" are questionable. When discussing women attaining the same income and professions as men, Woolf references, in the twentieth footnote in chapter two, Debrett's guide to traditional British etiquette as the source which has little relevance on the argument even though it may well be an accurate source.

Of course, Woolf does not limit herself to simply providing information that contradicts, or calls into question her own claims. If she did, the notes, according to Gerard Genette, would only appear to provide additional arguments or attempts to forestall objections by pointing out the discrepancies in her research and, thus, not stand out as particularly unique or subversive (326). However, Woolf goes further in *Three Guineas* by actively attacking the citation system and its academic prestige by providing trivial or illogical connections between the notes and the text. One of the best examples is on the twenty-seventh footnote for the first chapter, which is attached to a discussion of "figures" from The Times newspaper, about the dearth of money available for scholarships for women. While the reader would naturally expect the footnote to provide

the source of the quote, which is not listed in the text, Woolf instead provides the following information:

The men's scholarship list at Cambridge printed in *The Times* of December 20th, 1937, measures roughly thirty-one inches; the women's scholarship list at Cambridge measures roughly five inches. There are, however, seventeen colleges for men and the list here measured includes only eleven. The thirty-one inches must be increased. There are only two colleges for women; both here are measured. (TG 182)

Instead of statistics or a source, she gives us the facts, measurements to be exact, which do illustrate her point to a degree, but seem rather far afield from the topic at hand. Most would have to re-read the section and take Woolf's comment that "any ironmonger will provide us with a foot-rule" literally when the text in the chapter ascribes only a metaphorical meaning (TG 39).

And the occurrences of illogical connections continue between the polemic and the notes throughout all the chapters of the text. While discussing marriage as the only profession open to women in chapter one, Woolf's narrator makes the offhand remark "that the influence of the pheasant upon love alone deserves a chapter to itself" (TG 48). The thirty-third footnote of that same chapter provides the following observation after the rather humorous supposition:

What despair for the mother of daughters to be told that the one guest whom of all others she secretly desired to invite was a bad shot and totally inadmissible! ("Society and the Season," by Mary, Countess of Lovelace, in *Fifty Years*, 1882-1932, p. 29.) (TG 186)

Woolf, in this case at least, provides a source, but a paragraph quote devoted to the cause and effect of the pheasant serves little more than to provide a laugh to the common reader and the scorn of the scholar. In the fourth footnote of chapter two, for an additional example, Woolf makes the suggestion that:

Those who prefer the society of their own sex at the table would signify the fact, the men, say, by wearing a red, the women by wearing a white rosette, while those who prefer the sexes mixed wore parti-coloured buttonholes of red and white blended. (*TG* 189)

This note is also strangely connected to a discussion about the absolute failure of the women's movement found within the letter to be sent to the honorary treasurer of a society for the professions of women. Instead of further expounding or citing evidence of failure, Woolf instead chooses to discuss the less weighty issue concerning her comment that women "should retire once more to the kitchen" in order to "cook the dinner which [they] may not share...." (*TG* 54).

One of the more humorous footnotes, and perhaps the most telling of her purpose, is the first note ascribed to the third and final chapter in which Woolf comments, "it is to be hoped that some methodical person has made a collection of the various manifestoes and questionnaires issued broadcast during the years 1936-7" for the purposes of ascertaining what exactly is meant by the honorary treasurer's request for protection of intellectual property (*TG* 203). Woolf is, of course, referring to herself in this instance, at far as can be seen, since she is the only one who seems to have amassed such a massive collection of sources.

However, an author, even one as insightful as Virginia Woolf, cannot be sure who will read his or her essay in the present, let alone sometime in the future. This situation is complicated by the fact that Woolf cannot even be sure who will read the footnotes at all. As Genette discusses in one of his own footnotes, hatred of notes is one of the most unchanging emotions, and most common ailments, of readers throughout history due to the perception, propagated by the establishment and reinforced through structure, that a note is the mediocre attached to the beautiful (319). With such uncertainty in regards to the reception of *Three Guineas*, Woolf could only make informed guesses at best about these matters of her work's historical acceptance. However, Woolf seems to have at least attempted to take steps to mitigate this potentiality.

Woolf's provision and incorporation of easily readable and easily understandable information, and through her use of newspaper and biographical sources, allows those who have typically been excluded from reading the footnotes a chance to choose again to read them. Woolf is restoring the choice to the system and, in so doing, undermines the patriarchal authority of the educated men that rests on those self-same footnotes. The citation system and the hierarchy it represents, then, is thoroughly reversed in *Three Guineas*. The argument is a footnote to society against the footnotes of society using the footnotes of the text against themselves. The footnotes of *Three Guineas* are *a footnote of a footnote* and serve the purpose of bolstering Woolf's argument with its own set system of power and reinforcement outside of the dominant ideology. Woolf seems to have truly constructed her own subject position successfully within that patriarchal linguistic structure. In addition, she creates a new form of rhetoric unique to herself and women based on consensus and democratic inclusion of a majority speaking out equally to an

equally voluminous audience in one collective voice and one purpose. She also creates her own sources and references and an entirely new way for constructing both a political argument and a persuasive history.

CHAPTER 5

PERSUASION AND THE TEXT: THE QUALITY OF RHETORIC

IN *THREE GUINEAS*

Finally we have reached a definitive answer as to what Woolf's *Three Guineas* is, what it does, and how persuasive it is as a piece of rhetoric. It seems appropriate that, as we started with Virginia Woolf's earliest construction of *Three Guineas*, through a Classical rhetorical analysis of the series of arguments she makes about the perpetuation of fascism in her polemic, to finally reviewing Woolf's paratextual source material in her scholarly footnotes, we would come full circle to begin again at the very title page of the work. While many of Woolf's titles are ambiguous to some degree, *Three Guineas* is the most concrete and summative title of all her works. Titles such as *The Waves*, or *The Years*, have meaning in regards to the contents found within the binding, whereas *Three Guineas* has meaning both outside and within the text and even in regards to British society itself. According to the endnote provided in the most recent version of the text, a guinea is a name for a gold coin equivalent to one pound and one shilling of British currency (Marcus 224). This coin was put into circulation in 1663, the same year that King Charles II also bought stock in the Royal Adventurers into Africa – the first of many incarnations of the British slave-trading company (Marcus 224). Since Woolf goes to such great lengths to explain the enslavement of women in British Society, the subtle

link to the inhumanity that was the Atlantic triangular trade in human cargo is quite a poignant reminder of the results of enslavement.

Within this one title, there is the domination of patriarchy, of imperialism, and of fascism nicely put into a designation with a multiplicity of meanings. These meanings are furthered by the internal linkage to the three guineas the narrator gives away to three distinct entities fighting against such enslavement. Even though the guinea had long since ceased to exist in the 1930's, certain professional fees, subscriptions to societies, and charities are still levied in guineas, as is the case with answering honorary treasurer of an anti-fascist society (Marcus 224). The sheer wealth of the educated class is a direct result of enslavement on all levels of society – not just abroad, but at home as well. The sacrifices made by women, which have reduced them to bondswomen dependent on men to provide for all aspects of their lives, is little different from the relationship between slave masters and slaves of the last century. However, Woolf is not entirely pessimistic in her perceptions of the situation between men and women. The concept that the guinea, and a woman's ability to give it away to charity, shows the new-found power women have attained in society within the decades prior to the publication of the work and represents women's ability, for the first time, to actually enact change in the public sphere around them. The layers of nuance, depth, and insight within the title alone speak well for the same in the actual text of *Three Guineas*.

As we have seen, *Three Guineas* is a footnote to society and to its original text in *The Years*. The text provides the explanation of the relational situation of men and women, as Woolf saw it during her life, and provides a detailed account of the underlying framework that eventually leads to the degradation of European relations culminating in

war shortly after the work is published. While Woolf is seeking to expose the reality of society, she is, at the same time, actively attempting to persuade that society. In line with what we first established through Burke as to the principle requirements of a persuasive work, she is not attempting to persuade anyone to out-and-out action in any regard, but attempting to persuade and change our perceptions of both society and the high value it places on less than admirable qualities such as dominance and violence (Burke 50).

Woolf well knew that war was coming even as she finished the prints and sent them off to the publisher. I doubt she could have missed the signs as they steadily progressed as we have examined and illustrated. Practical choice in any regard was soon going to be restricted because of war. Although it is probable that Woolf still had some optimism about the situation until outright war broke out. Whether or not this is the case, Woolf had a more far-reaching vision of hope for *Three Guineas* than what she could see slowly dimming around her. Her text is not built solely for the here-and-now of her historical setting, but for us, her future readers, as well. Because of the careful crafting, she is able to achieve a margin of persuasion no matter the outcome of the aggressively escalating events that she found herself in Britain during 1938.

Even though her sights are set beyond her place in time, Woolf still attempts, and with some success, to persuade the society of her day by mimicking, in Burke's words, "his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea" and identifying women's ways with men's ways as closely as she could (55). To this end, *Three Guineas* is designed to function as a piece of Classical rhetoric, but also an argument against itself within itself. In order to argue tyranny and domination exist on all levels of society, public and private, she had to use the text, and the argument in the text, to illustrate her

position by pointing out how even the structure of public discourse despotically supports the inequality within the system of British society. However, she is not perhaps as successful as she had hoped at revealing the connection between the public and private. Because she refuses to yield to the audience's opinion in any respect, she never completely changes the audience's opinion on any one topic, even though she tries desperately and repeatedly to show how they both, the narrator and the barrister, have a mutual interest in preventing war albeit their tactics are different and separately conceived.

Regardless of the effect she has on the audience of her time, Woolf manages to co-opt the structure of patriarchal language in its totality and reverse the hierarchical system on which it bases its power and authority. She takes the typical rhetorical structure and cunningly modifies it to undermine itself all the while allowing those who are outsiders, and have typically been excluded from such a restrictive structure, a chance to choose again and, in so doing, gain power over the patriarchal linguistic structure that confines them. Through consensus and democratic inclusion of a majority speaking out equally for the first time, the majority are finally free. For this reason, beyond all others, her work is one of the greatest political apologies ever conceived and assembled. Does *Three Guineas* appeal to the audience and attempt to induce a change in the state of mind? Absolutely. Does *Three Guineas* provide choice to the audience? Most certainly. Is *Three Guineas* a piece of rhetoric? Most definitely. The answers seem conclusive and the evidence proof positive.

Notwithstanding the importance of this conclusion, there are areas that still need to be examined in regards to *Three Guineas* that would help to solidify the arguments

already made here. One of the most pressing, though certainly not the only issue regarding the historical aspects of the work, is Woolf's use of this modified and subverted version of Classical rhetoric to create a new feminist historiography. In many ways, *Three Guineas* can be seen equally as a response to both the scholarly usurpation and impediment of access to knowledge through the footnotes and through history.

The number of historical works had steadily increased from the late sixteenth century through the eighteenth century with ever-greater rapidity (Woolf, D.R. 648). As the number of histories increased, the generic definition of what identified a historical discourse gradually eroded and grew more formulaic (Woolf 648). Furthering this trend, scholarly genre sorting exercises increasingly distinguished difference based solely on arbitrarily distinguished minutiae of the historical discourses (Woolf 648). The demarcation of "appropriate" territory for the historian separated the functions and sphere of interest occupied by history proper from those occupied by related but distinct scholarly genres (Woolf 648). Unfortunately, as a direct result of this process, history eventually came to occupy a higher position in the hierarchy of intellectual pursuits, not unlike footnotes scholarly preeminence over the text, and gradually excluded other forms of history as trivial and anecdotal (Woolf 649).

There was an ever-greater stress on public career rather than private life with a critical skepticism toward characteristically individual and individualized versions of history (Woolf 649). The hierarchy of history came to mimic and mirror the hierarchy of the patriarchy to a large degree with the political narratives of great events, such as war, and personalities, such as kings, occupying the dominant place in the field (Woolf 649). One of the main reasons, it seems, that Virginia Woolf puts such an emphasis on

individualized history – biography and autobiography – is a direct result of their marginalization. Woolf appears to precisely choose examples to thwart the presumed value of “objective” and “collective” histories, which of course are neither but a simple means of maintaining the system, in order to mitigate their power. The construction of history and the formulation of other aspects of the language of patriarchy desperately need to be examined in contrast to the history portrayed within *Three Guineas* and its active attempt to undermine not just parts of the language and rhetoric of the hierarchy, but all forms of hierarchy.

In addition, Woolf’s use of indirection and generative logic needs some further elucidation, more than this project has achieved, through some appropriate and focused scholarship. After all “a statement is persuasive and credible either because it is directly self-evident or because it appears to be proved from other statements that are so” (Aristotle 1.2.6). The discourse in *Three Guineas* does not “construct its syllogisms out of any haphazard materials” but out of “materials that call for discussion” (Arist. 1.2.6). If the duty of rhetoric is to guide us through “a long chain of reasoning” by presenting us a series of facts and evidence that leads us, deliberately and persuasively, to a particular choice, then this logical construction of proof and evidence should be analyzed (Arist. 1.2.6).

While I briefly mentioned how Woolf’s work stands in stark contrast to the closed system of Classical rhetoric, examination of how Woolf actually uses her argument to reason to a conclusion, and come closer to recreating the process of thinking as it normally occurs in day to day life, is something that would provide greater understanding of the dynamic discourse between the narrator and audience. Moreover, her use of logical

appeals, that is to say, deductive and inductive reasoning along with her devaluation of such forms of reasoning, would reveal the unforeseen fallacies that presumably exist within the work like any argument. By analyzing how she focuses attention toward maintaining this open-ended logic structure, in collaboration with her reasserting the emotional in prominence above the logical, a greater knowledge will be gained of Woolf's construction of an authoritative, authorial, and feminine voice within *Three Guineas*.

Finally, though by no means the least important, I should mention that Woolf, or rather the narrator, as portrayed in *Three Guineas* has never really been examined. While some have discussed the narrator's attempt to gain authority through anger and the antagonizing tone that sometimes pervades the work as a result, few have set about looking concretely at why such an attitude comes across so prevalently. This investigation falls primarily within the realm of the Ethos of a speaker, or the persuasive appeal of one's character to the audience. As Aristotle notes, since "the objective of rhetoric is judgment" we must not only consider the argument as "being demonstrative or persuasive" but must also consider how the speaker establishes herself or himself "as of a certain type and bringing the given of judgment into a certain condition" (Aristotle 2.1).

Aristotle maintains that the speaker needs to appear both knowledgeable about one's subject as well as benevolent to the audience because the "appearance of the speaker to be of a certain kind and his making the audience suppose that he is disposed in a certain way towards them" puts the audience in a "condition that they are themselves disposed in a certain way toward him" (Arist. 2.1). After all, how the audience interprets the speaker makes the greatest difference between whether the speaker's argument, and

the evidence that supports it, is accepted or denied. This is all the more crucial to an understanding of both the adverse and positive critical reaction to Woolf's *Three Guineas*. Investigation into the narrator's persuasive appeal to Ethos might shed some light on the cause of the visceral reaction of audiences to the text and, also, disclose further interlocking constructions within Woolf's purposeful design that have remained otherwise hidden.

While these unexplored areas of Virginia Woolf's work are only vaguely described here, their importance cannot be understated. Comprehensive rhetorical study of *Three Guineas* is key to understanding the underlying persuasiveness and the full extent of Woolf's vision. Without further investigation, the conclusions she draws, and the connections that exist between the private and public sphere, cannot be fully appreciated for their radical insights or their concise analysis of culture and its institutions. Since Woolf purposefully argues her position in a way that is both understandable and ideally suited for communication between the unequal gendered classes that existed, we would be foolish to pass by such a concentrated effort and opportunity without a closer glance.

As it stands now, Woolf employed her knowledge and skill of Classical rhetoric as a weapon of persuasion against the domination of her patriarchal opposition, and it took almost over half a century before it began to receive the attention it rightfully deserves. Even now we are now just barely grasping the full destructive and constructive power Woolf yields and wields in her text. Taking all she knew and all her skill, Woolf has created something unique in all literature. Here is a text that is neither non-fiction nor fiction but a blending of the two that surpasses and disregards all genre boundaries while

undermining hierarchies in an attempt to democratize the reading experience and finally give those who have no position, or a weak position, the place of power and control that has long eluded them.

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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Carl William-John Lindner

Home Address:

2024 Paradise Peak Drive
Las Vegas, Nevada 89134

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, English, May 2004 (*Magna Cum Laude*)
Vanguard University of Southern California

Special Honors and Awards:

2001-2004 Presidential Scholarship (Vanguard University)
2001-2005 Nevada Millennium Scholarship (UNLV English Department)
2001-2004 Dean's List (Vanguard University)

Publications:

"What Things We Do." In *Synecdoche*, Volume 1, Summer 2004. 5-10.
"Triumvirate." In *Synecdoche*, Volume 1, Summer 2004. 30.
"When Thoughts Collide." In *Synecdoche*, Volume 1, Summer 2004. 38.

Thesis Title: Persuasiveness of the Text: An Analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*

Thesis Examination Committee:

Chairperson, Dr. Beth Rosenberg, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Charles Whitney, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Julie Staggers, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Marcia Gallo, Ph.D.