

Defining The Intermodernist Sex/Gender System: Beginning Steps Using *The Mortal Storm* &

Three Guineas

In her book *George Orwell & The Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism In Literary London*, Kristin Bluemel works towards defining what has become known as Intermodernism. Intermodernism is neither, obviously, modernist, or postmodern. Intermodern writers like Mulk Raj Anand, George Orwell, and Storm Jameson are writing between the great wars of the first half of the twentieth century. These writers are “grounded in the experiences of England's working-class and 'working middle-class' cultures” which do not fit into the same categories that popularized, privileged writers like W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, and James Joyce do (Bluemel 2). Writers like Phyllis Bottome and Virginia Woolf certainly fit into the Intermodernist canon. Both are women writers writing from outside the circles of male privilege associated with Eliot and others. Even taking into account Woolf's popularity in many circles, “the writing of women of the 1930's...until recently, remained entirely extraneous to critical thought” (6).

The writing of both Bottome and Woolf has a lot to offer Intermodernism. Bottome's 1938 novel *The Mortal Storm* is an anti-fascist, feminist, call to arms against the rise of the Third Reich. She uses middlebrow romantic fiction to offer a rhetorical argument in favor of stopping Hitler. To give *The Mortal Storm* the critical discussion it deserves, Gayle Rubin's influential 1975 essay *The Traffic In Women: Notes On The “Political Economy” Of Sex* can be applied to the text to close read how the protagonist, Freya Roth, both submits to and eventually defies the patriarchal gender constraints of fascist Germany. Further study can be done in regards to Bottome's rhetorical style next to another 1938 anti-war publication, Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*. Woolf uses narrative as propaganda to tie together the anti-war movement with

feminism. She also offers England a mirror that reflects its own fascist tendencies in its treatment of women. Finally, an examination of the creation of an Intermodernist sex/gender system could, perhaps, come out of a discussion of Woolf and Bottome.

*

An important step, briefly, before examining the varying degree of reaction to fascism which Bottome and Woolf offer is to take a closer look at the background of the general climate towards Jews in England during the thirties¹. Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn's anthology, *Traditions Of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives On Fascism and Race Discourse In Britain*, examines fascism and anti-Semitism before and during the Intermodernist period. In an essay included in the anthology Bryan Cheyette discusses the historiography of anti-Semitism in British literature². Anti-Semitism, Cheyette writes, has “been regarded as something of a marginal phenomenon” (Cheyette 12). On a social level, negative images of Jews in British fiction has been used as a rhetorical means of convincing Jews to assimilate into the larger British culture³. In these works, Cheyette argues, the only way for Jewish characters to succeed is to thrive under British values:

This tradition has recently been dubbed the 'anti-Semitism of tolerance', which validates Jews 'not on the grounds of their Jewish identity, but on the basis of their

1 For more information on Britain's relationship with continental Jews consult Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain & The Jews Of Europe 1939-1945*.

2 In *Jewish Stereotyping & English Literature 1875-1920: Towards A Political Analysis*.

3 Cheyette uses the examples of Fagin in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* in 1838 and the “bad Jew” in Richard Cumberland's 1772 play *The Fashionable Lovers* (13). Closer to the Intermodernist period, Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis' Judeophobia in the 1920's and 1930's is also referenced later in the essay.

conformity to the values and manners of bourgeois English society'. Within this culture, the Jew is represented as either a good self who embodies the values of bourgeois England, or a bad other who denies these values. (13)

The anti-Semitism in, and social acceptance of, England's liberal culture is one which is created "in its own image" (28). In Kushner's contribution to *Traditions Of Intolerance*⁴, he details how the government dealt with Jewish immigration during the Intermodern period up until World War II. The Aliens Act of 1919 gave increased powers to deport "alien Jews" (Kushner 79). Kushner says up to 60,000 refugees fleeing the Nazis in the 1930's were allowed into England temporarily. During World War II only "a trickle of refugees" were allowed to stay (79)⁵.

*

In her 1938 novel *The Mortal Storm*, Phyllis Bottome is using middlebrow romantic and adventure literature to create an anti-fascist novel sounding the call to resist the coming threat from Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. Freya Roth, Bottome's protagonist, is not only a career tracked, educated, woman but also a Jewish woman. Her relationship with the young Communist Hans is the focus of the first half of the novel. Throughout, how Freya engages with her Nazi brothers is also a very important aspect of the narrative. For this essay, the first four chapters will be particularly useful. How Freya deals with her studies, preparations for the party, relations with her immediate family, and her growth into womanhood offers numerous points of insight and engaging opportunities for further close reading.

Freya Roth's development as a woman as the novel unfolds is very important to the

⁴ *The Paradox Of Prejudice: The Impact Of Organized Anti-Semitism In Britain During An Anti-Nazi War*

⁵ Kushner continues by arguing that by sending many holocaust survivors to Australia and Canada, England's actions during the thirties looked "suspiciously like deportation by default" (79).

narrative. Bottome has created a multi dimensional character who begins as an education focused, albeit a tad naive about the world, tomboy and develops into an independent, fully developed, woman. Freya's development in the novel progresses alongside *The Mortal Storm's* anti-fascist, feminist, rhetorical message. To perform an adequate close reading of how Freya develops in the narrative it will be useful to engage with Gayle Rubin's 1975 essay *The Traffic In Women: Notes On The "Political Economy" Of Sex*⁶. While this essay is over thirty years old, it is still a highly influential and useful essay through which to close read feminist texts. In this essay she creates what she refers to as the sex/gender system. Rubin describes it as "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (Rubin 159). Alternative names for the sex/gender system are "patriarchy" and "mode of reproduction" (167)⁷. Through the sex/gender system a fully developed close reading of Freya's development in the narrative can be created.

In *The Mortal Storm*, Freya begins the novel as what Rubin refers to as "raw material" (158). She is an educated, having just finished her first year exams, independent, tomboy who appears to have a fantastic amount of autonomy as to what she does with her life. She wears her hair in an "untidy mop" (Bottome 8). Her Nobel Prize winning father is supportive and encouraging of her intellectual pursuits. He is encouraging of women balancing careers and motherhood, believing that "medicine (is) a singularly suitable profession for a mother" and that motherhood is "quite an asset for a doctor!" (9) Her brothers, Olaf and Emil, "talked of nothing

6 From *Toward An Anthropology Of Women* (Edited By Rayna R. Reiter).

7 For the purposes of this paper, I will mostly refer to the sex/gender system. Rubin offers a closer look at the terms "patriarchy" and "mode of reproduction" on 167-168.

but Hitler” and had become a Brown Shirt and Storm Trooper respectively (3)⁸. Freya's interests are clearly stated immediately as being primarily intellectual; she spends her quarterly allowance on a “perfectly beautiful new microscope” (4).

Freya, at this point in the novel, before her consciousness of the rise of fascism and seriousness of her brother's Nazi affiliations, has the ability to be whatever she desires. Without constraints on her choices her status as a Jewish woman in a misogynistic, patriarchal, society does not mean a lot. As Rubin explains, without this a woman is just a woman:

What is a domesticated woman? A female of the species. The one explanation is as good as the other. A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human Dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money. (158)⁹

Rubin asks next how do these relationships create an oppressed woman? She answers that how a woman identifies with her gender and sexual desires is “a social product” (166). Early in the novel the domesticating social influence of Nazi Germany, the “systematic social apparatus,” has clearly not impacted Freya (158). In a conversation with her mother regarding Fritz, a German

8 The obsession Olaf and Emil have with Hitler and discussing him is explored in a few instances during the novel. Later on Emil expresses great joy at Freya telling him that she discussed Hitler with Hans. An interesting paper topic for another time would be to use Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* to close read the homosocial desires Emil and Olaf feel for their Nazi brethren and Hitler himself.

9 For further discussion of the oppression and domestication of women, please see Rubin's references to the works of Claude Levi-Strauss and Sigmund Freud. She compliments both of their studies for their recognition of the role of sexuality and differences in what men and women experience socially.

boy who has been courting Freya, Freya replies “...that needn't interfere with me at all, need it? I am definitely *not*¹⁰ going to marry – if I do at all – for ages and ages. There's my profession!”

(6) Freya is focused on her career and has no interest in domestic or feminine activities as a product. For capitalists, women are a “reserve labor force” (160). Even in her role as a scientist, surely Freya would still make less money than her male counterparts. Denying marriage and her role as a mother further subjugates what capitalists' desire for women.

Freya continues by stating her objection to stereotypically feminine beauty “enhancements.” While discussing a party with her mother, Frau Roth asks her if she will be getting her hair done for the event. Frau's daughter openly and proudly declares her objections to such activities:

“No,” Freya replied, in that warning voice used by grown-up daughters to repel all maternal advice that deals with their personal appearance, “nor my nails manicured, nor my eyebrows plucked! I think it's pure waste of time and you know I do, so you needn't go on about it!” (8)

The discussion quickly turns to childbirth. As Rubin notes, reproduction is a concern for all cultures “from generation to generation” (165). Much as sex oppression is “part of capitalism's heritage from prior social forms,” information about childbirth and femininity must be passed down from mother to child¹¹. Frau Roth compares the “hard” births of Olaf and Emil to Freya's, which she proclaims she “actually enjoyed” (9). Her mother describes childbirth as an artistic

10 Emphasis from Bottome.

11 At this point in her essay, Rubin is referring to Engel's writing in *The Origin Of The Family, Private Property, & The State*. Rubin also notes, however, that Engel's evidence “renders it quaint to a reader familiar with more recent developments in anthropology” (164). Rubin refers later briefly to Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*, which was the inspiration for Engels' theory.

act, proclaiming “perhaps most of all what makes the pain of childbirth worth while is that a woman feels like an artist when she produces a child” (9). Frau Roth's daughter is introduced to the oppression of the sex/gender system for the first time at this point. Being a woman “had become important to her for the first time” (9). She does not outright reject the passing of information from her mother to her this time around. In her naivety about the world, Freya had never considered the possibility of being both a career woman and a mother. Her mother does not oppose this and notes that her father actively believes motherhood to accentuate the female doctor. Freya's father, during an extended monologue, also argues for education, noting that “knowledge is the best thing one can work for” (13).

Freya's first considerations of her place as a female leads to a rather fascinating beginning of chapter three, especially given Freya's opinion of feminine beauty enhancements from only a few hours before. Gender, Rubin writes, “is a socially imposed division of the sexes” (179). In *Traffic In Women* Rubin discusses what psychoanalysis describes as the process of “how bisexual, androgynous infants are transformed into boys and girls” (185). Freya begins her transition from intellectual, androgynous, tomboy “female” to feminine young “woman” upstairs in her room while trying to decide what to wear to the party. Upon turning the lights on in her room she finds “the dress of (her) dreams” lying on her bed (17). Recovering from her surprise she runs into the hallway and hugs her mother: “I'll get my hair done *now*,” Freya cried, hugging her mother breathlessly, “only I haven't got any money to do it with – and my nails and everything!¹²” (17) Freya quickly returns with hair, “now bland and shining,” and “generous lips” (17).

The emphasis on the word *now* in the above cited conversation is very interesting. Rubin

12 The very interestingly timed italics come from Bottome.

cites Freud's writing of the female oedipal crisis. Freya's recognition of her own so-called castration leads to a magical “new Freya that is not found in sexless creatures. The image in the glass was unforgettably a girl” who was not “a human being anxious to be as near like a boy, as possible” (18). This new, the jury is still out on whether it is improved, Freya readily embraces her feminine nature. While her relationship with her father in regards to the female Oedipal crisis is compelling and worth a close reading, focus can move towards Freya's relationship with her brother Olaf due to his entrance into the scene at this moment. Olaf quickly praises her new, grown up, appearance, and asks her “what under the sun has happened to you?” (18) He then begins the process of teaching this new Freya, who has achieved “normality” so quickly (196). Freya's brother compares the beauty of a woman to the strength of a man. The lines between the sexes are clearly drawn. Taking on the role of the oedipal father while Freya is in such an accepting state of mind, he remarks to her about the burden of responsibility Freya has for her appearance. In an aside, he refers to her previous appearance as a “tragedy” which Freya has “escaped” from (19). This leads Freya to “contently” sigh and ask her brother if she should join her mother in the preparations for the party, to which he “firmly” replies with patriarchal authority:

“Yes I think that you ought,” Olaf replied firmly. “You might have helped her this morning, instead of dashing off for that lecture of yours; a girl should behave like a girl sometimes, even if she has a profession before her! It was different before your exam – no one expected help from you then – but you might sometimes remember *now* that you are the only daughter in the house.” (19)

Again, Bottome puts the italic emphasis on the word *now*. Now Freya is what Rubin refers to as

a “little woman” who is feminine and passive in the receiving of instruction from Olaf (196). Her exams are over and it is time to join her mother in feminine activities like party preparations. She even feels the necessity of telling Olaf about her anatomy grant as a way to “justify her completely for omitting all the things as a daughter and a sister, for the last twelve months, she had left undone” (20). The rest of her family praises Freya's new look as they arrive. Rudi comes into the scene a page later and exclaims to his mother that Freya is “not young any more” (20). Johann Roth encourages his daughter's place as a domesticated woman by offering his opinion that Freya “looks as a young girl very easily *can*, and always *should*” (21). Notice the emphasis from Bottome yet again. Is Bottome complicit with the pressures of the sex/gender system, or simply emphasizing their processes?

Freya's adventures in the sex/gender system continue during her incident with the hare and Hans, the Communist boy she will fall in love with. After escaping the mob with Hans, Freya expresses her anger at the situation she got herself involved in. After wishing that she was dead, Hans scolds her for her remark and makes the point the hare, and both of them, had escaped unharmed from the incident so there is nothing to be concerned about. An argument could be made at this point for the hare being a metaphor for Freya's relationship to Rubin's sex/gender system¹³. With the male peasants reigning down on her, Freya realizes she has no means for escape; “the new found glory of her womanhood was a disability” in this situation (27). The female Oedipal crisis and sex/gender system are very similar to the mob of peasants who surround Freya, of which she makes “no effort to escape” (27)¹⁴. In the face of this mob she is the “little woman” Rubin describes in *Traffic In Women*: “feminine” and “passive” (196). Her

13 Certainly, an argument could also be made for the hare being a metaphor for Hans' eventual fate as well.

14 Freya makes reference again metaphorically to the feeling the hare felt “when the men closed in about her with their sticks” when she is confronted on the train (121).

eventual escape at the end of the novel, much like the hare's escape from the mob, allows Freya to escape the brutality, the psychic death, of the “creation of 'femininity'” in her (196). The hare, which Freya describes as being “so alive” does not “have the life beaten out of it” and neither does Freya (33). She defies, upon realization of her feminine nature, Freudian castration and rebels to become a fully realized woman who does need “attain normality” (196).

*

While all of this is fascinating and makes for a substantial novel if approached singularly as a feminist text, Bottome is also dealing with the larger, contemporary, issues of fascism in Europe and the rise of Adolf Hitler. *The Mortal Storm* is not merely a propaganda piece, however. Bottome created a rhetorical tool to get her anti-fascist message out to the masses. She uses the constraint of popular romantic, adventure, fiction to deliver this message. Bottome's anti-Nazi/fascist message is conveyed via a number of characters. The character of Hans, a Communist boy who Freya falls in love with, is humanized via his treatment and protection of Freya. If the reader finds the character to be pleasurable in that regard, Bottome then has the ability to use him for instructive purposes. One could argue it is Bottome speaking through Hans when he goes on an extended monologue about the differences between Communists and the Nazis:

It is Nazis who suppress knowledge; degrade women; persecute Jews; and drag their people back into the Middle Ages! But in our modern world there is no need to fight and bully, for machines can supply more and more riches, enough for all. None need suffer or be deprived of a good life; except by the will of other men,

who have unfair advantages. (34)

Hans' monologue sounds like a nice summation of the novel's plot and rhetorical plea. Shortly afterwards Olaf offers an alternative viewpoint, proclaiming a Communist to be “a rouge and an atheist, a man who takes God from the hearts of the people; money out of their pocket; honor from women; and innocence from children!” (48) Freya replies that Hans is the exact opposite of what Olaf has just described. If Bottome's rhetorical approach is working and the reader is as engaged in Hans as Freya is, then they will surely believe her over Olaf.

Freya's father continues a few pages later by noting, in regards to Communists and Nazis, that he has known, “good men and women belonging to both parties” (53). Freya, the novel's hero, then thinks to herself that the “Nazis cannot be right...they would do again what we have before, turn the state into an arsenal and prepare a whole nation for Death!” (53) This aligns rather nicely with Hans' earlier monologue about the Nazi party taking Germany back into the middle ages. Her love for Hans seems to be sufficient for her to believe that even if she does not know whether she is a Communist, she knows that Hitler “means war and nothing else but war” and will “lead back into the past – and not on into the future” (71). Freya's continued denial of being constrained by any single label helps her to further evade castration.

Bottome's rhetorical approach is effective and well done, but other approaches were used during the run up to World War II to discuss the growing threat of fascism and Hitler. The same year that Bottome releases *The Mortal Storm*, Virginia Woolf releases her book length essay *Three Guineas*. While Bottome uses romantic literature as a rhetorical device, Woolf uses narrative as propaganda; it is not “pure propaganda” as Lili Hsieh argues in her essay *The Other Side Of The Picture: The Politics Of Affect In Virginia Woolf's Three Guineas* (31). *Three*

Guineas goes a step further than *The Mortal Storm's* feminist and anti-fascist plot to directly tie feminism to the anti fascism movement, urging readers “to see feminist politics and global anti-war politics as one” (Hsieh 22). The two works differ drastically in their approaches: Bottome's novel is a call to arms which tries to persuade the reader to abandon indifference to fascism; Woolf's narrative offer feminine indifference as a solution to fascism.

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf offers her own unique solution for confronting fascism and preventing war¹⁵. She creates what Brenda Silver refers to in her essay *The Authority Of Anger: Three Guineas As Case Study* as “a feminist text that insists on women's historically different experience of culture as well as social and political institutions” (Silver 342). Woolf herself worked during the Intermodern years with the London and National Society For Women's Services, “which lobbied parliament on women's issues” (Vicinus 811). She also did work for the Women's Employment Federation and donated copies of the majority of the books she references in *Three Guineas* to The Fawcett Library. *Three Guineas* is not just an anti war essay, it is, as Naomi Black writes in her book *Virginia Woolf As Feminist*, “a larger and more transformative argument...that the educational and professional structures of public life, which exclude women, are intrinsically hierarchal and oppressive, and therefore the basic causes of war” (Black 89-90). According to Silver, seven years of research went into the creation of *Three Guineas* (345).

The premise of *Three Guineas* is her answer to the question posed by a man: “how in

15 During the Intermodernist period another anti-war narrative was Sigmund Freud's *Why War?* in which Freud tries to answer Albert Einstein's question “what is to be done to rid mankind of the war menace?” (37). More information on Freud's essay and how it compares to Woolf can be found in Elizabeth Abel's *Virginia Woolf & The Fictions Of Psychoanalysis*.

your opinion are we to prevent war?” (Woolf 3). This question comes as a surprise to Woolf due to the fact that war has always been “an affair between men” (Frost 3). She even wonders “since when before has an educated man asked a woman how in her opinion war can be prevented?” (12)¹⁶. Her answer to this question comes through a series of dialogues. Women, according to Woolf, have already been subjected to a form of fascism called patriarchy. This makes it very difficult for women to engage in the fight about fascism abroad when they are already engaged with fascism at home. As an example of this, Woolf offers two quotes, one from an Englishman and another from a German. She does not see the difference between them:

Dictator as we call him when he is Italian or German, who believes that he has the right, whether given by God, nature, sex or race is immaterial, to dictate to other human beings how they shall live; what they shall do. Let us quote again:

“Homes are the real places of the women who are now compelling men to be idle. It is time the Government insisted upon employers giving work to more men.

(53)

Woolf places another quote next to it for examination: “there are two worlds in the life of the nation, the world of men, and the world of women. The woman's world is her family, her husband, her children, and her home” (53). She asks the question of the reader to consider they there is no difference between these statements, whether from an Englishman or German. Both statements are “the voices of dictators” (53). Obviously, she is not saying they are one and the

16 Although *Three Guineas* is the first to look at the correlation between fascism and patriarchy, Frost notes that in the years since many theorists have made this connection. Among those she mentions are Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*, Andrea Dworkin's *Pornography*, and Susan Sontag's essay *Fascinating Fascism*.

same, but that there are deep parallels between the two statements. The women of England, as Patrick Deane argues in his introduction to an excerpt of *Three Guineas* in *History In Our Hands: A Critical Anthology Of Writings On Literature, Culture & Politics From The 1930's*, “have more in common with subject peoples elsewhere in the world than with the male establishment in their own country” (Deane 264). How can England even begin to fight fascism in Europe if it has not conquered fascism on the home front?

For Woolf, an answer for women in regards to how to prevent war is to offer their “complete indifference” (107) to it. She wonders if women should “wish to join that procession...on what terms shall we join that procession?” (62). Women must find a new way, “new words,” “new methods,” to fight fascism (143). Woolf refuses to join the patriarchy's fight about fascism, what Silver refers to as the “tyranny and dictatorship that have enveloped the public sphere” (344). This new method involves the creation of a new, imaginary, society called “the Outsiders' Society” (106). This society will have no offices, committees, meetings or conferences or oaths (106). The women of England, because of their standing in a society that desires their place be in the private sphere, cannot, according to Woolf, understand the desire for conflict which men engage in. She cannot judge his “manly qualities which fighting develops” either negatively or positively after educating herself about the “amount of land, wealth, and property in the possession of her own sex and class in the present” (107). Very little, if anything, of England belongs to her. Due to what she learns about her place in English society, Woolf believes it is the duty of women of England, these outsiders, to just say no to war:

...the outsider will find herself in possession of very good reasons for her indifference. She will find that she has no good reason to ask her brother to fight

on her behalf to protect 'our' country. "Our country," she will say, 'throughout the greater part of its history has treated me as a slave; it has denied me education or any share in its possessions. (108)

If the men of England still choose to fight, they will be "fighting to gratify a sex instinct which I cannot share" to defend a country where she is nothing more than another piece of property (108). The outsider, Woolf writes, has no country; the entire world is her country.

*

According to Matthew Fishburn's essay *Books Are Weapons: Wartime Responses To The Nazi Bookfires Of 1933*, in 1940 *Life* magazine published the paintings and drawings from both British and American school children depicting their feelings about the war. A thirteen year old boy by the name of David Simonson drew a picture of a tank advancing on a woman. A soldier is protecting the woman from it. In a statement that makes one wonder if he had read *Three Guineas*, the child proclaims "the woman at the soldier's feet...is civilization" (Fishburn 224). Both *Three Guineas* and *The Mortal Storm* are created in response to the woman at the soldier's feet in some regard. Bottome's novel is a call to arms for readers to take seriously the growing advancement of the metaphorical Nazi tank. Virginia Woolf offers another solution; the discontinuation of women's role in patriarchal war activities and the advancement of another sort of tank; the knowledge of where women stand in regards to patriarchy's stranglehold over England and how closely a lot of its actions mirror the fascism found in Italy and Germany at the time.

Phyllis Bottome and Virginia Woolf offer drastically different viewpoints and solutions to

the threat of fascism in Europe and abroad. These viewpoints are founded in the role of women and how they interact with, enable, and finally survive and overcome patriarchal fascism in capitalistic societies. Capitalism, as Rubin notes, “is a set of social relations – forms of property” (161). Both Woolf's outsider and Bottome's Freya Roth are treated like property to varying degrees in their texts. I, personally, find neither approach to be “wrong” in any sense. Both have many positive traits which are very admirable. Bottome's novel uses the more pragmatic approach of the romance novel to humanize a Communist character like Hans, discuss the role of women in an increasingly fascist country, and to bring light to the serious danger of leaders like Adolf Hitler. This approach is commendable and obviously fruitful, given the adaptation of Bottome's novel in 1940 as the first response from Hollywood to the Nazi threat. Woolf's *Three Guineas* points the finger at England itself and asks them to consider how their own actions, behaviors, and interactions with women mirror the more apparent fascism of Italy and Germany. This approach, while not as easy to swallow for the average reader, is essential to the fight against fascism in 1938 and in 2007. Before we can fight for the freedom of others we, whether in America or England, must first fight to keep ourselves free.

Intermodernism has a lot to gain from both Bottome and Woolf. Each book offers a vastly different snapshot into the lives of women during the Intermodernist period and in the run up to World War II. Both writers are clearly writing from outside of positions of privilege. Bottome seems to be heading forward towards the coming, impending, fight with the Third Reich. Woolf looks to the past at how women have been treated as second class slaves by even the best meaning of societies. They are offering differing approaches to writing about the middle class and the role of women in a patriarchal society with some fascist tendencies. A closer look

is needed, like the one this paper offers for *The Mortal Storm*, at how women during the Intermodern period are socialized into being cogs in the patriarchal machine. Freya's eventual rejection of patriarchal femininity to have a child whose “mother had Jewish blood in her veins and...father was a Communist” in the mountains is fascinating and very progressive, especially given the constraints of romance literature and the time period's misogynistic bias' (99).

Much like Bottome's call to arms in regards to the Nazi threat in *The Mortal Storm*, another call is needed to further explore how women are socialized during the Intermodern, between war, period. Studies put together by people like Kushner and essays by theorists like Rubin will be very helpful what could eventually become a project to define the Intermodernist sex/gender system. Alongside leading Intermodernist scholar Kristin Bluemel's work and other theorists working in the time period associated with Intermodernism, there is already a great head start out there in Intermodern scholarship. Intermodernist scholars cannot turn back time and change society so that Rubin's goal “of the elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles” can be accomplished or her dream of an androgynous, genderless, society, but they can address and study how an Intermodernist sex/gender system accentuates the study of the period (204). Intermodernism gains a lot by looking at the ways in which characters like Freya Roth developed in their respective works of literature. By close reading Bottome's novel, and narratives like *Three Guineas*, more can be learned about how gender and sexuality is created and passed down not only during the Intermodernist period, but in all patriarchal societies.

Works Cited

- Black, Naomi. Virginia Woolf as Feminist. London: Cornell UP, 2004.
- Bluemel, Kristin. George Orwell & the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London.
New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.
- Bottome, Phyllis. The Mortal Storm. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1998.
- Cheyette, Bryan. "Jewish Stereotyping & English Literature, 1875-1920: Towards a Political
Analysis." Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism & Race
Discourse in Britain. Ed. Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn. Manchester: Manchester
UP, 1989. 12-32.
- Fishburn, Matthew. "Books are Weapons: Wartime Responses to the Nazi Bookfires of 1933."
Book History 10 (2007): 223-251.
- Frost, Laura. "'Every Woman Adores a Fascist': Feminist Visions of Fascism From Three
Guineas to Fear of Flying." Women's Studies 29.1 (2000): 1-17.
- Hsieh, Lili. "The Other Side of the Picture: the Politics of Affect in Virginia Woolf's Three
Guineas." Journal of Narrative Theory 36 (2006): 20-52.
- Kushner, Tony. "The Paradox of Prejudice: the Impact of Organized Anti-Semitism in Britain
During an Anti-Nazi War." Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism
& Race Discourse in Britain. Ed. Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn. Manchester:
Manchester UP, 1989. 72-91.
- Kushner, Tony, and Kenneth Lunn, eds. Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on
Fascism & Race Discourse in Britain. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1989.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex." Towards an

Anthropology of Women. Ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review P, 1975.

157-209.

Silver, Brenda R. "The Authority of Anger: "Three Guineas" as Case Study." Signs 16 (1991):

340-370.

Vicinus, Martha. "Virginia Woolf: the Ironic Feminist." Modernism/Modernity 11 (2004):

809-813.

Woolf, Virginia. Three Guineas. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1938.

Woolf, Virginia. "Three Guineas." History in Our Hands: a Critical Anthology of Writings on

Literature, Culture & Politics From the 1930's. Ed. Patrick Deane. Leicester: Leicester

UP, 1998. 264-271.