

“Her one regret was that she was a girl”:

Female Masculinity in Bryher’s *Development* and *Two Selves*

Amanda Holm
University of Tampere
School of Language, Translation and Literary Studies
English Philology
Pro Gradu Thesis
December 2013

TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO

Kieli-, käännös- ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö

Englantilainen filologia

HOLM, AMANDA: "Her one regret was that she was a girl": Female Masculinity in Bryher's *Development* and *Two Selves*

Pro gradu -tutkielma, 71 sivua + lähdeluettelo

Joulukuu 2013

Pro gradu -tutkielmassani tarkastelen naismaskuliinisuutta Bryherin *Development* (1920) ja *Two Selves* (1923) -teoksissa. Bryher syntyi vuonna 1894 ja koki viktoriaanisen Englannin, jossa hän varttui, erittäin rajoittavaksi. *Development* ja *Two Selves*, Bryherin ensimmäiset romaanit, ovat omaelämäkerrallisia teoksia, joissa hän pohtii yhteiskunnan vaikutusta kehittyvän ihmisen subjektiivisuuteen. Niissä hän myös ilmaisee millaista on kasvaa niin, ettei mahdu yhteiskunnan valmiiksi räätälöityihin kategorioihin. Romaaneissa esimerkiksi ilmenee päähahmo Nancyn toive, että hän olisi syntynyt poikana. Naisten aseman kritisointi on myös keskeistä näissä teoksissa.

Queer-teorian kautta tutkin miten omaelämäkerrallista genreä voi hyödyntää luomaan tilaa vähemmistöille valtakäytöksissä. Käytän Michel Foucaultin ajatusta vastadiskursseista sijoittaessani teokset niiden aikakaudelle. Tutkiessani naismaskuliinisuuden esiintymistä teoksissa viittaan Judith Butlerin ajatukseen sukupuolen performatiivisuudesta ja Judith Halberstamin naismaskuliinisuus-käsitteeseen.

Asiasanat: naismaskuliinisuus, queer-tutkimus, feminismi, Bryher, modernismi

Table of Contents

1 Introduction.....	1
2 Queer Theory and Gender Signification	6
3 Gender and Sexuality: From Victorianism to Modernism.....	16
3.1 Gender Roles.....	17
3.2 Psychoanalysis and Sexology	20
4. Reading autobiographical fiction.....	27
4.1 Queer modernist autobiographical fiction	28
4.2 Bryher’s Fiction	32
5. Development: Childhood.....	35
5.1 “She was sure if she hoped enough she would turn into a boy”: Gendered Transgression	37
5.2 “She is a sailor, not silly like the others”: Othering the ‘Same’	42
5.3 “She could never be a boy, but she could be an artist”: Art and Self-Realization.....	49
6. <i>Two Selves</i> : Entering Young Adulthood.....	56
6.1 “If only she could cut away all that was not herself. This encrustation of conformity”: Negotiating Public and Private Selves	56
6.2 “What was the use of existence to a woman, what compensation could there be for loss of freedom?”: The Position of Women.....	63
6.3 “To win freedom I must write a book”: Art as a Form of World-Making.....	68
7. Conclusion	70
Works Cited	72

1 Introduction

The purpose of this pro gradu thesis is to conduct a queer historical inquiry into how and why Bryher utilizes the autobiographical fiction genre to portray female masculinity and the position of women in Victorian England in the novels *Development* (1920) and *Two Selves* (1923). My aim is to study Bryher's autobiographical fiction as a means of negotiating and signifying female masculinity in early 20th-century England. I focus on how sexological theories and gender norms of the time may have informed Bryher's perception of gender. I will then consider how this representation of non-normative gender, in combination with the autobiographical fiction genre, can be considered to work as a counter-discourse. Finally, I will consider how the position of women is portrayed in the novels and how this interplays with the representation of female masculinity. I will be conducting this study through the lens of queer feminism, with a focus on Judith Halberstam's concept of female masculinity. My research is also influenced by Michel Foucault's notion of sexuality as a product of discourse and Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity.

Bryher was born Annie Winifred Ellerman in England in 1894. Her father was John Ellerman, a shipping magnate, who at his death was the wealthiest Englishman to have ever lived. She legally changed her name to Bryher in 1951 (Stevens, 59). Due to her father's wealth, Bryher spent most of her childhood travelling between England, France, and what she calls 'the East'. When she was older, she was enrolled in a boarding school, which she detested. Bryher was a masculine woman, whom McCabe (2006, 29) describes as follows:

Bryher's wish to be a boy led her to don masculine garb, cut her hair, and model herself upon the 'girl-page' she wrote about in Elizabethan drama. She identified the need to don male clothing as a means to obtain mobility and adventure, to survive and to travel; yet to perform masculinity, or ambiguous gender, also interacts with desire.

Today Bryher is possibly most well-known for her relationship with Hilda Doolittle (better known as H.D.), a famous American modernist poet and novelist. Their relationship began in 1918 and resulted in a life-long friendship (Friedman and DuPlessis 1990, 207). However, Bryher was a key figure of the modernist period in her own right, and together with H.D. and Kenneth Macpherson, Bryher's husband, she started the POOL Group, which published books, produced films and even published a cinema-oriented monthly magazine, *Close Up*, for six and a half years (Donald et al., 3). In addition, Bryher is known for having financially supported such modernist women writers as Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, and Dorothy Richardson.

Bryher wrote several works of both fiction and nonfiction during her lifetime. Later during her career, she ventured into historical fiction, writing a total of nine historical novels (Bryher, xvi). Bryher's first two novels, *Development* (1920) and *Two Selves* (1923), however, are autobiographical in nature. According to Stevens (59), these two novels, along with *West* (1925), are autobiographical fiction novels that combine realism and Imagist prose in order to "represent[] the complexities of early twentieth-century lesbian subjectivity." In the two relatively short novels that form the focus of this study, Bryher charts her development and education, as well as what it is like to grow up as someone outside the norm, through her protagonist, Nancy. Since the novels chart the process of growing up, they are also considered to be *Bildungsromans* (Bryher 2000, xviii).

Bryher's works have been largely overlooked and were not reprinted until the 21st century. I was able to locate two studies written on either Bryher's *Development* or *Two Selves*: the first one is a dissertation titled *The Creation of Self: The First Novel in the Life of Virginia Woolf, Bryher, and Winifred Holtby* (1988) by Elizabeth Birch Langan and the second *Bryher's Two Selves as Lesbian Romance* (1995) by Diana Collecott. Unfortunately, I was unable to access either study. While the topics of these two studies appear to treat similar

themes to those in this thesis, I would like to note that since the first one was written in 1988, it cannot have utilized the queer theoretical framework used in this essay, since Butler's *Gender Trouble* was not published until 1990 and Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* until 1998. I therefore find it likely that this study provides a more poststructuralist perspective on the role of the first novel(s) in the life of a queer writer. The second study also appears to use a different framework, as I am firstly focusing on gender rather than sexuality, and secondly I intend to use queer theory and avoid the term 'lesbian' in this thesis.

I feel that it is important to study Bryher's work, since she was quite an influential figure who associated with several acclaimed writers of the modernist period and, like Gertrude Stein and Radclyffe Hall, brought the experiences of masculine women in the early 20th century to light. Several queer theorists also feel that it is important to study queer fiction and autobiography in order to learn more about the past (and perhaps impact the present). Scott Bravman, author of *Queer Fictions of the Past* (1997, 24), argues that such texts are "powerful social/cultural texts in their own right" and can be considered to be reverse discourses on homosexuality. By studying these queer fictions of the past, we can gain a better understanding of the past and its implications on the present. This sort of reading adds a political aspect to the study of queer writing. Boynton and Malin (2005, 352-353) argue that it is so important to study such texts that they even recommend venturing outside the traditional forms of autobiography, such as novels, to include letters and journals as well.

In fact, it is impossible to avoid a political aspect when discussing Bryher's *Development* and *Two Selves*. They are both historical in nature, having been written in the 1920s, and are deeply rooted in criticism of Victorian society. It is therefore likely that Bryher had a political motive in her writing. It is also possible that the societal changes that occurred in the 1920s may have provided Bryher with the opportunity of criticizing Victorian society, as well as a possibility of comparison between the two time periods. When

discussing Havelock Ellis in her memoir, Bryher states: “All pioneers face a desperate task. They have to fight ignorance and often persecution of themselves and their followers. They stand in the ‘shield wall’ and therefore have to leave theory to the men who will succeed them” (1962/2007, 337). This statement can also be applied to Bryher’s writing: there is a hope that her writing, a testament to her existence, will be studied and have an impact on the future. *Development* and *Two Selves* contain comments against the regulating forces of society, the normative educational system, the oppression of women, and blind nationalism. I will limit my study to the first three of these themes in this thesis, as they appear to be interlinked. The concepts of nationalism and nationality as discussed in Bryher’s writing could produce an interesting study in its own right.

In order to achieve a thorough understanding of *how* (how does Bryher present female masculinity/non-normative subjectivity?) and *why* (what is the purpose of Bryher’s autobiographical fiction and how is it linked to female masculinity and the position of women?) with regard to Bryher’s *Development* and *Two Selves*, there are three main areas that I will consult: queer theory, history, and literary theory. What logically follows is that the theory section of this thesis is divided into three parts: queer theory, a historical look at gender roles, and implications of autobiographical fiction as a genre.

In Queer Theory and Gender Signification, I first give a brief history of queer theory and then, through Foucault, Butler, and Halberstam, consider how gender and sexuality can be viewed as being discursively constructed. In *Gender and Sexuality: From Victorianism to Modernism*, I give an overview of gender roles from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, as those form a major area of discourse with regard to my study. I also consider some of the key theories dealing with 'deviant' sexuality and gender representation in psychoanalytical and sexological theories of the time through Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) and Havelock Ellis’ *Sexual Inversion* (1901). In Reading Autobiographical

Fiction, I view autobiographical fiction as an act of discourse and consider the purpose that the genre may have held for women writers of the early twentieth century. In this section I consider autobiographical fiction written by other women of the time period, as well as the criticism that has been written on Bryher's autobiographical fiction. The analysis section of this thesis is divided into two parts, one dealing with *Development* (1920) and the other with *Two Selves* (1923).

2 Queer Theory and Gender Signification

It is difficult to offer a clean-cut definition of queer theory, as its elastic nature and rejection of normative ways of knowing are something that academics in the field have prided themselves on. Queer theory is ambiguous and relational: it always questions normalcy, yet without being in complete opposition to it (Jagose, 99), and it aims to show the fictional foundations of identity and thus destabilize it (Jagose, 125). Some theorists view it as a ‘politics of fractured identities’ (Penn, 233). The main focus of queer theory lies in the apparent dissonance between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire (Jagose, 3). Its goal is to deconstruct the identity categories that maintain a heteronormative worldview (Jagose, 98) – it is a non-identity or anti-identity politic (Jagose, 130). Heteronormativity, in turn, is a term that was coined in the early 1990s and refers to normative heterosexuality (Mar Castro Varela et al., 3).

Queer theory has developed from gay and lesbian studies, and offers an especially poststructuralist and deconstructionist perception of the world. As poststructuralists rendered the relationship between the signifier, the signified and the referent more and more unstable, some academics became unhappy with the concept of stable categories of identification (Jagose, 71). Early queer theorists felt that the gay and lesbian rights movements were too limited (Jagose, 76-77): they operated with subjects on very essentialist notions of what it meant to be gay or lesbian.

As a result, queer theorists adopted the concept of identity as ‘provisional’ and ‘contingent’ from poststructuralism (Jagose 77-78). This, in turn, means that “queer difference is itself internal as well as external” (Bravman, 22): as identity itself is constantly changing, at times conflicting ideals can occur within the same subject. Queer theorists postulate that sexuality, as well as gender, is discursively constructed: it is culturally and historically specific (Sullivan, 1). As identity could no longer be considered to be a stable signifier, the

ability of gay and lesbian activism to be politically representative came under scrutiny (Jagose, 77-78) and the rather monolithic notion of a fixed gay or lesbian identity was questioned and rejected by some. Nevertheless, gay and lesbian studies do still exist – there was simply a paradigmatic rupture in the field in the early 1990s, which caused some prior gay and lesbian theorists to move in the direction of queer theory. Some gay and lesbian theorists fear the constructivism that is inherent in queer theory precisely because a large portion of gay and lesbian activism is founded on an essentialist view of homosexuality, such as the claim that one is ‘born’ gay (Penn, 234).

Out of these two fields, I chose queer theory, because it allows for the instability of identity categories: it recognizes the infinite number of non-normative subject positions that can be taken, and therefore considers monolithic signification to be impossible (Jagose 99-100). This, in turn, means that queer theory is applicable to the interpretation of all non-normative gender or sexual expressions, without requiring the naming of the subject of the study as ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian,’ for instance. In this sense, the term ‘queer’ can be considered a general term for non-heteronormative subjects (Jagose, 111).

The case of Bryher would be especially difficult to categorize, because she could easily be considered as either a butch (masculine) lesbian or transgender according to today’s terminology; this is further complicated by the fact that these terms did not even exist at the beginning of the 20th century. While Bryher’s writing is often categorized as lesbian writing, the “dissonance between sex (the body) and gender identity (the mind)” that can be found throughout *Development* and *Two Selves* is a common characteristic of transgender narratives as well (Hines, 60). This matter is further complicated by the fact that the concepts of homosexuality and transsexuality were not separated until the 1940s (Halberstam, 85). According to Halberstan (161): "The history of inversion and of those people who identified themselves as inverts (Radclyffe Hall, for example) still does represent a tangle of cross-

gender identification and sexual preference that is not easily separated out or comfortably accounted for under the heading of 'lesbian.'"

In *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Eve Sedgwick, a renowned queer theorist, argues that same-sex relations may vary so much throughout the course of history that "there may be no continuous, defining essence of 'homosexuality' to be known" (44). Butler (1990, 3) reiterates this notion, but in relation to gender:

Gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities [...] It becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.

Since gender and sexuality are culturally and historically specific, it would be anachronistic to use modern terms when discussing figures of the past. It is for this reason in part that the terms transsexual (coined in 1957) or transgender (coined in 1988) can be considered to be inapplicable to these novels. The use of these terms would also be as limiting as the use of the term 'lesbian' in the sense that they are identity categories. In this thesis, I will alternate between the terms 'queer' and 'non-(hetero)normative.' While these terms can be considered rather recent as well, with 'queer' gaining its meaning in the queer theoretical sense in the 1990s, they do not work in quite the same way as the aforementioned terms. I consider 'lesbian' and 'transgender' to be more definitional. 'Queer' and 'non-(hetero)normative,' in turn, are more relational, because they do not give an exact definition of what someone is like: they focus more on what one is not. 'Queer' and 'non-(hetero)normative' can be used as general terms to describe how someone's actions or characteristics may fall outside of the realm of accepted discourse and social norms.

Sedgwick questions the right of anyone to classify or attempt to define someone else's sexuality. Sedgwick explains her stance as follows:

To alienate conclusively, *definitionally*, from anyone on any theoretical ground the authority to describe and name their own sexual desire is a terribly

consequential seizure. In this century, in which sexuality has been made expressive of the essence of both identity and knowledge, it may represent the most intimate violence possible. (Sedgwick, 26)

The terms 'lesbian' or 'invert' (explained in section 3.2) do not occur in *Development* or *Two Selves*; instead, thoughts related to 'deviant' gender or sexuality are coded into the text, through Nancy's masculine identification, spatial metaphors, and criticism of the limits of language as a means of communication. I would also like to draw a conjecture from Sedgwick's statement to include gender identity as well. This is not a large leap from the original proposition, as Sedgwick herself considers the questions of gender and sexuality to be "inextricable" (Sedgwick, 30). The link between perceived gender and sexuality was especially pronounced in the early 20th century, as sexologists of the time considered there to be a correlation between female masculinity and lesbianism. This is something that will be explained in greater detail in section 3.2.

Gender is not something that can be defined from the outside, as it is a subjective experience. It is for this reason that the purpose of this thesis is not to define Nancy's, Bryher's protagonist's, gender or sexuality, but to conduct a study of non-normative gender expression, which in this case is female masculinity. Nancy is a female who has a masculine gender expression and demeanor, which is something that is dealt with throughout *Development* and *Two Selves*. I am also interested in the interplay between Nancy and her heteronormative environment: How does Nancy view others and how do they view her? How does Nancy come to realize her own subjectivity as a non-normative person?

In "Whither Sexuality and Gender? 'What That Sign Signifies' and the Rise of Queer Historicism" (2006), McCabe also questions the need or capacity to compartmentalize Bryher's gender or sexuality. She argues against simply treating her as a male-identified woman or as a lesbian, stating "The way [Bryher's] sexuality might have crossed her gender identifications remains difficult to untangle" (29). McCabe calls for more "elasticity of

meaning and expressivity,” believing it is specifically the fragmentary life, with its nuanced identifications, that must be studied (2006, 30). While the purpose of this study is not to study Bryher’s gender or sexuality, but that of her protagonist, Nancy, since the genre treated is autobiographical fiction there are several parallels between the two figures. It is for this reason that McCabe’s statement about Bryher can also be applied to Nancy. In a rather poststructuralist statement, Butler (1993, 229-230) questions the very possibility of categorization: “One might be tempted to say that identity categories are insufficient because every subject position is a site of converging relations of power that are not univocal.”

According to Scott Bravman, it is important to study the writing and self-representation of queer writers of the past. While this category is not unproblematic, I understand it to encompass all authors who break the heteronormative and heterosexist molds of the societies in which they lived. Not only does this help undo some of the censorship that such writers will have dealt with during their time, but it also helps shape the present (4). By studying fictions of the past, we gain a better understanding of how society works and changes over the course of time. While Bravman does use the terms ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ in his writing, the title of his book suggests a move toward queer theory – and this is something that Bravman argues for. Bravman argues that past research has attempted to fit queer writers into a(n often middle-class, white, homosexual male) mold, and that this is something that must be avoided (Bravman, 9-10). Using Martha Vicinus’s argument that there is no consensus on what constitutes a ‘real’ lesbian, he calls for “destabilization” and “denial of gender specificity” (Bravman, 11): this in turn yields what he deems “problematic subjects of lesbian and gay studies” (Bravman, 15). How does one study something that one cannot define? Nevertheless, a means to do so must be contrived, as “homosexuality is not a singular, uniform subject-position” (Bravman, 18).

Queer theory provides me with a flexible and yet solid framework through which to analyze non-normative subject-formation: flexible because clean-cut definitions are problematized and solid because it allows me to conduct a study using discourse and cultural signification. Discourse, according to Foucault, can be defined as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 2002, 54). Butler’s concept of gender performativity considers gender to be an effect of discourse: it is culturally constructed (Butler 1990, 6). Foucault cautions against viewing discourse as one uniform entity: instead, there are multiple discourses at play at any given moment in time, and even those can be fragmentary (Foucault 1978, 33, 100). For instance, during the beginning of the 20th century, gender norms were different according to social class: regulations were much stricter in the upper classes than in the lower classes. Due to this, I will specifically take into account the gender norms of the upper classes of early 20th century England.

While queer theory has been accused of being ‘generically masculine’ and of ignoring the politics of gender (Jagose 116-117), the applications it allows for far outweigh these issues. Queer theory is considered masculinist because it denies gender (and sometimes even sexual) difference – in turn, it can be considered to erase all of the work that feminism has achieved. Feminism, on the other hand, has been accused of being too focused on sex/gender difference to be able to deal with the issues of same-sex relations (Jagose, 120). Nonetheless, it is not impossible to combine feminism and queer theory: Judith Butler, for one, is a good example of a synergy between the two.

As noted earlier, Butler and Halberstam are the two queer theorists who will form the majority of my queer theoretical framework. Judith Butler is most well-known for her work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), where she introduces the concept of gender performativity. Gender performativity is the theory

according to which gender is socially, culturally, and discursively constructed through a series of repetitions, or performances, as opposed to being an essential trait.

Butler claims that a gender must be symbolically legitimate and intelligible in order to be accepted by the dominant discourse (Butler 1993, 3). This admission into the dominant discourse is a prerequisite of subjectivity. Lois Tyson (95) defines subjectivity as “one’s own selfhood, the way one views oneself and others, which develops from one’s own individual experiences.” Subjectivity can also be understood as an individual’s location “at the center of truth, morality and meaning” (Mansfield 2000, 4). It is a limited way of viewing the world that is different from identity in that an identity is a “particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that gives one a consistent personality of social being, while subjectivity implies always a degree of thought and self-consciousness about identity” (Hall 2004, 3). According to Mansfield (2000, 3), the term subject “proposes that the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that operates at the intersection of general truths and shared principles.” Those whose gender does not coincide with the dominant discourse are left at its outskirts.

As Butler (1990, viii) states: “Gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real.” Gender norms and expression change over time and differ between cultures. (Gender) signification is never achieved through one act: it is a series of repetitions that take place in a socially constructed symbolic reality over a given period of time (Butler 1990, 145). It is through this repetition that gender becomes culturally intelligible (Butler 1993, xii).

Not only is signification constructed through repetition, it is also constructed through expulsion. In order for a discourse, i.e. set of normative codes, to exist, it must define itself in relation to that which it is not: this process is called Othering – gendering works in a similar way. Gender can be considered to be “a *relation* among socially constituted subjects

in specifiable contexts” (Butler 1990, 10). In the heteronormative binary way of thinking, masculinity and femininity are in opposition to one another. This binary view of gender stems from the idea that there are only two sexes: male and female (Butler 1990, 6). In the early twentieth century, males were masculine and females feminine – any deviation from this norm was pathologized.

The Other that falls outside of this gender binary, however, is not completely on the outside of the discourse in question – it is simply on its farthest borders. It is the furthest possible concept related to a discourse that can be thought from within the discourse (Butler 1993, 8). In fact, it is impossible for a concept to escape discourse, as even extra-discourse, that which is outside discourse, is produced by discourse (Butler 1993, 11). This concept echoes Foucault’s idea of power, in which resistance can never escape the power with which it is in opposition.

There is a link between power and discourse, but it is tentative: all at once discourse can be “an instrument and an effect of power” (Foucault 1978, 101). Foucault states: “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (1978, 101). There is also a link between power, language, and discourse: “power’s hold of sex is maintained through language, or rather through the act of discourse that creates, from the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law” (Foucault 1978, 83). Language is a means of effecting discourse, which is why speech and writing can each be considered to be discursive acts.

What follows is that in forming itself through exclusionary means, discourse must inevitably exclude, or attempt to exclude, a certain body of subjects: those that refuse to adhere to its norms. Yet, the same subjects are unable to evade the discourse. In the case of gender, those who present a ‘non-viable’ gender have their very humanity scrutinized and may be denied cultural intelligibility (Butler 1993, 15). This sort of expulsion has also been

viewed as a strategy of domination (Butler 1990, 144), which can be seen in the case of women's, minority, and gay rights, for example. Foucault also comments on a similar issue of expulsion: according to him, power, especially that which attempts to limit sexuality, is put into a paradoxical situation in which it must attempt to push an unwanted subject position into inexistence through silence. Since the unwanted subject position must be addressed before it is excluded, it is brought into existence in the very act which is supposed to eliminate it (Foucault 1978, 84). This is often the case with homosexuality, for instance.

The bodies that are deemed to exist on the outskirts of the dominant discourse are considered to matter less: their subject position might even be considered 'unthinkable' or 'unlivable': they may even be denied subjectivity and the opportunity of cultural articulation (Butler 1993, xi-8). As Butler states: "Because certain kinds of 'gender identities' fail to conform to those norms of cultural intelligibility, they appear only as developmental failures or logical impossibilities from within that domain" (Butler 1990, 17). For example, according to Freud, an 'invert' (i.e. a homosexual) simply failed to attain the 'genital norm' (Butler 1990, 27).

In *Female Masculinity* (1998), a seminal work in the field of female masculinity, Halberstam studies the social, literary, historical, and political positions of masculine women: women who could be considered to fall into the category of the 'unthinkable.' Female masculinity is a way of representing oneself in a manner that challenges the dominant discourse on gender and sexuality, according to which men should be masculine and women should be feminine; it also shows the constructedness of masculinity (Halberstam, 1-2). Gender expression relies heavily on symbols, such as clothing, way of speaking, and body language, through which we communicate our gender position. Halberstam's perception of the effect of language, another symbolic system, on

identity and subjectivity is in line with Foucault and Butler: she argues that language is "a structure that fixes people and things in place artificially but securely" (Halberstam, 7).

According to Halberstam, maintaining dominant forms of masculinity requires the oppression of alternative masculinities (1998, 1), female masculinity among them. She postulates that the existence of female masculinity is either contested or swept under the rug in order for male masculinity to seem like the 'real thing.' Manhood or masculinity, in turn, is a 'continual dynamic process' through which men seize public authority (Halberstam, 49). In fact, female masculinity has been accused of being an effect of patriarchy that inscribes misogyny on the female body. Nevertheless, Halberstam argues against such a monolithic view of female masculinity: after all, it can also function as a form of social rebellion or a 'sign of sexual alterity' (Halberstam, 9).

The reason I have decided to include the concept of female masculinity in this thesis is that it is the main gender/sexual deviation presented in *Development* and *Two Selves*. Nancy often mentions the wish to have been born a boy and her detest of most things that are considered feminine. In showing this kind of female masculinity, she goes against mainstream culture, according to which, especially upper-class, women are to be feminine.

3 Gender and Sexuality: From Victorianism to Modernism

Bryher grew up during the Victorian period, which ranged from the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th. *Development* and *Two Selves* also take place during this time period, which is considered to have been a rather traditional and heteronormative one. Victorian society was full of rigid rules: men were expected to be men and women were expected to be women. Sexuality was limited to young married couples, and any deviation from this ideal was considered inappropriate. I will discuss gender roles during the Victorian era in more detail in section 3.1.

Psychoanalysis and sexology saw their peak during this time, as the pathologization of non-normative gender expression and sexuality gained popularity. Psychoanalysts and sexologists such as Sigmund Freud, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Havelock Ellis greatly influenced popular understanding of gender and sexuality. I will consider their theories briefly in section 3.2.

The end of the Victorian era saw a shift between the older and younger generations: around the First World War, norms began to change. In *The Heart to Artemis* (1962/2006, 210), Bryher describes the experience of other modernist artists, as well as her own, as follows:

I cannot repeat too often that any deviation from Victorian manners was repressed so strongly that we were driven back on to the points of our own intellects instead of being able to go forward. We reacted against the sadistic denials of the age by a heightened consciousness of nature and art, places where our enemies could not reach us.

Bryher experienced the Victorian era as suffocating: she was unable to completely devote herself to developing in the direction she would have wished due to being forced to expend so much energy on fighting the strictures imposed on her by society. These strictures limited both her development as an artist and as a subject who broke gender conventions of the time,

though these two selves can be considered to be interlinked. These issues are dealt with in *Development and Two Selves*.

3.1 Gender Roles

The Victorian era refers to the reign of Queen Victoria in England and is often linked to severe social and sexual limitations. Foucault argues that the Victorian bourgeoisie saw sex as a means of reproduction – and nothing else. Victorians did not speak of sex, and sexual acts which would not result in procreation were frowned upon and considered abnormal. This created a subgroup of illegitimate sexualities, which were moved to brothels and mental hospitals (Foucault 1978, 3-4). Self-denial and abstinence were considered virtues by the Victorians (Danahay, 26). According to Rubin (143), “There were educational and political campaigns to encourage chastity, to eliminate prostitution, and to discourage masturbation, especially among the young.” While the Victorians did not speak of sex, they linked almost all illnesses to it (Foucault 1976, 88).

The Victorians had quite rigid gender categories, which depended on the concept of the ‘active, independent’ man and the ‘protected, dependent’ woman (Adams and Miller, 226). The division between the private and the public spheres was very polarized (Danahay, 17) and crossed class lines (Frost, 56). A Victorian man was expected to be hard-working, as his task was to be the breadwinner of the family (Danahay, 2, 18). In fact, work was so associated with maleness and masculinity that the domestic sphere was completely left out of the domain of work: childcare, cleaning, and such tasks which were deemed feminine were not considered to be work (Danahay, 17). Men were also expected to keep their promises, especially to those deemed inferior, such as women: for example, proposals were binding (Frost, 40). If a man did not keep to his proposal, the woman could sue him in

court for a breach of contract. Indecisiveness was considered a distinctively unmasculine characteristic (Frost, 41).

The Victorian period was a patriarchal one, in which women were considered to be inferior to men (Frost, 56). The concepts of modesty, virtue, and sanctity were of great importance in the construction of the Victorian woman (Lootens, 112). According to Tyson (90), “It was believed unnatural for women to have sexual desire.” Vicinus (1973, ix) explains the upbringing of an upper middle-class girl during the Victorian era as follows:

Before marriage a young girl was brought up to be perfectly innocent and sexually ignorant. The predominant ideology of the age insisted that she have little sexual feeling at all, although family affection and desire for motherhood were considered innate. Morally she was left untested, and kept under the watchful eye of her mother in her father’s home.

Women were largely constrained to the home and the domestic sphere, except in the case where they were unmarried or their husbands could not provide for them. Working conditions for women were quite foul: for instance, most labor unions chose to exclude them until the 1910s (Vicinus 1973, 115). Some improvements in women’s rights were achieved in the late 19th century: for example, the Married Women’s Property Act passed in 1882 allowed a married woman to own her property, instead of it being directly transferred to her husband (Married Women’s Property Act, 1882).

Rejecting one’s ‘natural’ gender identity was inconceivable during the Victorian era: men were masculine, women were feminine (Danahay, 6). According to Danahay, “One powerful strain of Victorian ‘hegemonic masculinity’ represented men as aggressive and military figures who would rather wield a sword than hold a cup of tea” (16). Victorians considered writing to be a masculine profession. The position of women writers during the late 19th century is described in *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* as follows:

To be a great writer requires a classical education; this is unavailable to women; ergo, women can’t be great writers; or if they do somehow acquire the necessary education, they must pay the price of their womanhood. In either case

that problematical category, the female writer, is disqualified and disavowed. (Fraser et al., 33)

The idea of an intellectual woman was considered an impossibility – if a woman displayed signs of intelligence, she was deemed to possess a ‘masculine intellect’ (Fraser et al, 37). Women were left the role of muse or character in literary works, not that of creative subject (Lootens, 46). In fact, women writers had to use male pseudonyms because writing was deemed an improper occupation for a Victorian woman (Tyson, 90); some women even dressed up as men in order to pass as writers (Gilbert and Gubar, 65). Nevertheless, by the 1890s women were making their way into journalism and could publish works under their own names (Fraser, 41). These women, however, often felt a need to atone for their inner masculinity by appearing overly feminine on the outside in order to avoid negative attention. Some even went so far as to adopt the role of an Angel of the House, a selfless and asexual woman, in complete contradiction to their roles as female writers (Fraser, 43-44). In order for intellectual women to be accepted, they had to be deemed ‘respectable’ and preferably were of white, Anglo-Saxon descent: otherwise they could easily be deemed inconsequential (Lootens, 45).

It was the late 19th century that was the site of the emergence of the New Woman, a woman who rejected traditional gender roles and the notion that women and men should occupy different spheres of social existence (private and public) due to biological sex. The New Woman demanded the same rights and opportunities for men and women (Gillies and Mahood 2007, 25-26). Indeed, the early 20th century saw the rise of feminist activism in England. It was then that women began to fight for their political rights (Bush, 186), as they became increasingly aware of how limited and gendered their lives were (Bush, 13). For instance, they began to fight for their right to vote (Gillies and Mahood 2007, 23). In the 1910s, industrialization offered working women more available positions in factories. Wages there were higher than in more traditional jobs and as a result women received a greater

degree of freedom (Vicinus 1973, 110). The Administration of Estates Act of 1925 expunged laws of primogeniture, which usually meant inheritance by the eldest son (The Administration of Estates Act, 1925).

Nevertheless, as discussed in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), women's propensity to do intellectual work was hindered by society even in the 1920s. The essay is most widely known for its premise that: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (2092). In the essay, Woolf offers the example of attempting to enter a college library, only to be told that she can only enter with the accompaniment of a Fellow of the College or a letter of introduction (2095).

Woolf also addresses the historical repercussions of women being unable to earn or have their own money until the early 20th century. As they were unable to pass on money to their daughters, women were essentially made the poorer sex (2103). As wealth was assigned to the men in the families, women writers were left in a situation in which it was difficult to produce works that captured female existence. In fact, until the early 20th century, female experience was largely written about by men (2105). While Bryher came from a wealthy family, she was not oblivious to her privilege. She was aware of the social situation of her sex, and thus financially supported several modernist women writers. Also her writing suggests that she was aware of the situation of women, as she wrote novels and memoirs charting her experiences, as well as those of other women, which may otherwise have been forgotten.

3.2 Psychoanalysis and Sexology

It is difficult to discuss gender and sexuality during the Victorian period without discussing psychoanalytical and sexological theories of the time, as they had a large impact on how society viewed those who did not fit into the accepted gender or sexual mold. The discourses

of psychoanalysis and sexology cannot be sidestepped, as Foucauldian theory would posit that they will have had an effect on Bryher's understanding and construction of gender, especially considering the fact that Bryher was an avid follower of psychoanalysis. In *The Heart to Artemis* (1962/2007, 298), Bryher writes: "A classical, Freudian analysis in the right hands is perhaps the sternest discipline in the world, the hardest form of intellectual activity and a great spiritual experience. It offers, as reward, liberty and understanding." Bryher felt that she owed a great deal to psychoanalysis, that without it she could not have reached such an astute understanding of herself or her surroundings (Bryher 1962/2007, 300). Bryher commends Freudian psychoanalysis even further, stating "I am a convinced Freudian both because it offers the greatest challenge to the mind and because I know through my own experience that it has given the most lasting help, not to myself only but to friends" (Bryher 1962/2007, 302).

Indeed, the turn of the century saw the rise of psychoanalysis, especially following Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Freud greatly influenced many modernist writers, with H.D., who was an analysand of his, even writing a novel inspired by him, entitled *Tribute to Freud* (1956). Bryher also had the opportunity to meet Freud (Bryher 1962/2007, 287). Sexology was at its peak in the early 20th century as well, with Havelock Ellis being its forerunner on the British front (Richardson and Willis, 2001). Bryher saw Ellis for the first time in 1919 and underwent therapy with him.

In the 19th century, homosexuality was considered to be a part of a person's physiological makeup. When homosexuality began to be treated as a medical condition at the end of the 19th century, by psychiatrists and psychologists alike, it was viewed as a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics – a kind of 'inner androgyny' or 'hermaphroditism of the soul' (Foucault 1978, 43). The term 'homosexual' was coined in 1869 (Sullivan, 2). As sexual orientations began to be medicalized, they became grouped as

either ‘normal’ or ‘pathological’ (Foucault 1976, 90). This, in turn, changed the signification and discourse of sex altogether (Foucault 1976, 102). Foucault argues that this medicalization of ‘perverse’ desires was a means of controlling those subjects who fell outside of the dominant discourse of sexuality – it justified their Othering, as they were medically abnormal. In this sense, the very concept of ‘perverse’ or ‘unnamable’ desire is a discursive construct (Foucault 1976, 138-139). Female sexuality went through a similar kind of medicalization (Foucault 1976, 159).

From the second half of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th, female homosexuality was considered a kind of ‘gender dysfunction’ and scientifically linked to masculinity. Female homosexuality was actually explained through female masculinity: as the female homosexual was masculine, it was considered logical that she would desire women as sexual partners (Bloom, 48).

When writing about homosexuality, Freud largely stayed clear of female homosexuality. “The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman,” which was published in 1920, is considered to be his only paper on the subject. According to Grosz (94), Freud believed that “only inverts assumed the mental characteristics of the opposite sex.” A woman was a lesbian not due to her desire for women, but due to her wish to be a man (Grosz, 94). Both Grosz (94) and Brooks (28) note that Freud pays quite a bit of attention to the young patient’s masculine characteristics in the paper, due to her perceived lesbianism. Her “acuteness of comprehension” and “lucid objectivity” are both perceived as intellectual attributes that are linked to masculinity (Brooks, 28).

Richard von Krafft-Ebing, author of the seminal work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), in which he studied sexual pathologies, i.e. sexual preferences that were deemed to be diseases at the time, also saw a link between female masculinity and inversion. *Psychopathia Sexualis* was a handbook meant for professionals in the fields of psychiatry, sexology,

medicine, and law. It is Krafft-Ebing who first introduced the terms *sadism* and *masochism* to the psychiatric field, for instance. Krafft-Ebing viewed homosexuality, or what he called “inversion” (Krafft-Ebing 1906, 285), “antipathic sexual instinct” (285), “mental (or psychical) hermaphroditism” (337), or “uranism” (398), as a pathology. Because he regarded inversion as a congenital pathology, Krafft-Ebing believed that inverts should not be punished by law (578).

Krafft-Ebing discusses inversion in several parts of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, treating male and female inversion separately. Before venturing into the diagnostics and case studies of inversion, Krafft-Ebing asserts that, “If the sexual development is normal and undisturbed, a definite character, corresponding with the sex, is developed” (Krafft-Ebing 1906, 283-284). It is clear that sexual inversion is abnormal in Krafft-Ebing’s view, as throughout his studies on inversion he refers to the “*normally* constituted, *untainted*, mentally healthy individual” (288; italics in the original) as opposed to the “tainted” (289) invert.

According to Krafft-Ebing, a male invert begins to display feminine characteristics and inclinations, which coincide with his wish to be “a woman during the sexual act” (Krafft-Ebing 1906, 297). Female inversion, in turn, is contemplated in a chapter entitled “Congenital Sexual Inversion in Woman.” Like male inversion, female inversion is considered to be a form of “mental hermaphroditism” (337), which translates to effemination in men and “viraginity,” i.e. male tendencies, in women (398). Krafft-Ebing suggests that women with short hair who dress in a masculine fashion and are proficient at sports can be suspected of being sexual inverts (398). A female invert is “strongly marked [by] characteristics of male sexuality” (398).

Krafft-Ebing uses both the terms viraginity (Krafft-Ebing 1906, 398) and gynandry (399) to signify female masculinity. Gynandry represents an extreme form of female masculinity: it is something that Krafft-Ebing considers “the extreme grade of

degenerative homosexuality” (399). A gynandrous woman lacks all female characteristics save female genitalia: her “thought, sentiment, action, even external appearance are those of the man” (399). Krafft-Ebing does realize, however, that such women are pained by the limitations imposed on them due to their sex. Women of this nature possess a “masculine soul” and are thus disappointed in not being able to attend college or be in the military (399).

Havelock Ellis, another of the most renowned sexologists of the time, held a similar view that female masculinity and lesbianism, or what he calls female sexual inversion, are linked. In *Sexual Inversion* (1901), one of the first comprehensive studies on homosexuality, Ellis posits that “The chief characteristic of the sexually inverted woman is a certain degree of masculinity” (140). In this, Ellis’s understanding of female inversion is quite similar to that of Krafft-Ebing. Ellis finds that female inverts have an affinity for crossdressing, not simply due to men’s clothing being practical or in order to be appealing to the same sex, but because they feel more comfortable wearing it (140-141). Ellis considers female inversion to be so apparent that even when an invert wears women’s clothing, other women may still feel that she “ought to have been a man” (143).

Ellis describes the female invert as follows:

The brusque, energetic movements, the attitude of the arms, the direct speech, the inflexions of the voice, the masculine straightforwardness and sense of honor, and especially the attitude toward men, free from any suggestion either of shyness or audacity, will often suggest the underlying psychic abnormality to a keen observer. [...] The muscles are everywhere firm, with a comparative absence of soft connective tissue so that an inverted woman may give an unfeminine impression to the sense of touch. Not only is the tone of voice often different, but there is reason to suppose that this rests on a basis of anatomical modification. [...] There is also a dislike and sometimes incapacity for needlework and other domestic occupations while there is often some capacity for athletics. (Ellis 1901, 142-143)

For Ellis, female inversion is something so deeply inscribed into the body that the female invert even develops physical male characteristics: she loses her feminine softness, her voice deepens, and she loses her affinity for feminine pastimes, such as needlework. Indeed, Ellis

deems inversion to be congenital (Ellis 1901, 181), i.e. present from birth. He does, however, argue that this ‘congenital disposition,’ is stronger in some than in others. Some might go through life without it ever being triggered, while the drive to inversion is so strong in others that the environment cannot assuage it (190). Interestingly, Ellis presents sexual inversion as having a link to artistic genius (174). He also views inversion to be more prevalent in women of high intelligence (148). Ellis does also acknowledge the existence of feminine lesbians, but for him they seem to be inconsequential – they are merely the object of the “actively inverted” woman’s desires: they are women who “differ, in the first place, from the normal, or average, woman in that they are not repelled or disgusted by lover-like advance from persons of their own sex” (Ellis 1901, 133).

Both Krafft-Ebing and Ellis view female masculinity as being interlinked with female inversion, and therefore a deviation of normal psychosexual development. Krafft-Ebing refers to inversion as an “anomaly” (Krafft-Ebing 1906, 285) and an “abnormal mode of feeling” (336) and in his view an invert is “tainted” (289). Ellis, similarly, refers to female inversion as a “psychic abnormality” (Ellis 1901, 143).

As mentioned earlier, Bryher met Ellis in 1919, at the urging of H.D. According to McCabe, Ellis “confirmed [Bryher] was a girl who was really a boy” (2006, 29) and told her that “she was ‘a girl only by accident’” (2009, 557). Bryher, in turn, feels that “Freud made the discoveries but it was Ellis who was a friend” (Bryher 1962/2007, 337), expressing her respect for and appreciation of Ellis. The two of them kept a correspondence from 1919 until 1939 (Bryher 2000, xxviii). From Bryher’s perspective, Ellis has not received a fair historical representation: “A myth has grown up that he was a fussy old man who compiled lists but had no original ideas. It is a false picture of a very great Englishman” (Bryher 1962/2007, 337). This apparent mutual respect between Ellis and Bryher proves somewhat problematic. If psychoanalysis is often viewed as having had a negative influence through the

pathologization of non-normative gender positions and sexualities, and Bryher herself appears to criticize such societal practices in her writing, how could such a relationship develop?

While during the early 20th century female masculinity, and through it lesbianism, was considered a pathology or developmental disturbance, later theorists have argued that the “mannish lesbian” can in fact be thought of as what Foucault would call a reverse discourse, or resistance to a dominant discourse. A reverse discourse might even allow one to “empower[] a category that might have been used to oppress one” (Halberstam, 159). Through their masculinity, masculine female subjects will have gone against the normative gender discourse of the time and destabilized those categories. Abelove (146), for instance, argues that female masculinity was not simply an attempt at attaining male privilege, but a way of “reclaiming [...] erotic drives directed toward women, of a desire for women that is not to be confused with woman identification.”

4. Reading autobiographical fiction

Autobiographical fiction is a genre or subgenre that blends the line between the assumed truth value of autobiography and the falsity or imaginary nature of fiction. An autobiographical novel presents parts of its author's life in a fictionalized form (Boynton and Malin, 88). The author's life is often so close to that of the narrator of the novel that differentiating between the two is scarcely possible (*ibid.*). Since an autobiographical fiction work usually chronicles the progression of the narrator's life, it often also falls under the category of a *Bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age novel (*ibid.*).

While autobiographical fiction has existed since at least the emergence of the novel, with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) presented as one of the earliest manifestations of the form, interest in the genre is relatively recent. In the late twentieth century, feminist critics were preoccupied with bringing female authors into the literary canon, and thus began studying women's autobiographical works. The transience of identity and subjectivity brought about by poststructuralist thought has also increased critics' interest in the genre (*ibid.*).

As a genre, autobiographical fiction is still very much dependent on autobiographical theory, since sources devoted solely to the genre do not exist (Boynton and Malin, 89). This might pose an obstacle for conducting research on the genre. Nevertheless, numerous studies on works of autobiographical fiction have been done, especially with regard to modernists such as H.D. and Gertrude Stein: therefore, it is likely that an established theory exists, even if it may have yet to take the form of a theoretical opus. Autobiographical fiction can be viewed as a genre that criticizes the nature of truth and autobiography (Boynton and Malin, 88). Several critics consider all autobiography to be fiction, due to limits of memory and subjective experience (*ibid.*). Yet others argue that all literature is essentially autobiographical (Rishoi, 113). The distinction between

autobiographical fiction and autobiography has also been diminished by poststructuralist and postmodernist theories. As Rishoi (109) states: “If truth is contingent and subjectivity is constructed, and both are the products of language and discourse, it follows that there is no difference between fact and fiction.”

Arguably, the main difference between autobiographical fiction and autobiography is that autobiographical fiction denies direct ties to truth and reality, while autobiography maintains them. An author of autobiographical fiction admits to using fiction and can take greater liberties than one who writes autobiography (Boynton and Malin, 88). Thus, a notion of truth encompasses the term ‘autobiography,’ but it can be abated with the addition of the term ‘fiction.’

Autobiographical fiction is generally considered as a means for a writer to make space for him/herself. It is for this reason that it is a popular form for marginalized writers (Boynton and Malin, 88), and might explain why it appears to have been such a popular genre amongst female modernists. Autobiographical fiction also offers a more malleable template to work with than the strictures of autobiography: this aspect is likely to have made it more appealing to woman writers who were working on signifying female subjectivity (Rishoi, 113). In many cases, however, it is the combining of autobiography with fiction which barred women from the autobiographical literary canon, since autobiography is supposed to be nonfiction (*ibid.*).

4.1 Queer modernist autobiographical fiction

Autobiographical forms, such as autobiographical fiction, autobiography, memoirs, and *roman à clef*, were an important feature of women’s writing in the first half of the 20th century, as several female modernists in addition to Bryher, including H.D., Djuna Barnes, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson, Radclyffe Hall, Antonia

White, and Zora Neale Hurston, also employed them. But why were autobiographical forms so popular among female modernists? One reason might be that the Victorian period, which directly preceded the modernists, was a time when creativity was considered a male quality (Gilbert and Gubar, 4). This may have caused the autobiographical form to appear to offer more possibilities than other genres might have, since it is often considered to be more rooted in reality and thus not require as much artistic creativity.

While I prefer to avoid categorizing Bryher's writing as lesbian fiction due to the multifaceted representation of gender in her work and would opt for queer fiction, it has nevertheless been categorized as such by other critics. Since Bryher's work is considered to belong to the canon of lesbian female modernist writing, I cannot ignore this area of literary criticism. Nevertheless, when the term "lesbian" is applied to Bryher's writing in this thesis, it is due to the fact that the critic to whom I am referring uses the term. Still, as a female interested in other females, whatever Bryher's gender position may have been, society will have viewed her as it viewed women who were interested in women and therefore there is likely to be overlap between the experiences of lesbian modernist writers and those of Bryher. Yet, considering the strong sentiment of having wished to have been born a boy presented in Bryher's work, I feel the gender position represented is too complicated to categorize and that such a limitation would be irrelevant to this study.

According to Faderman, a scholar known for her work on lesbian history, (1979, 205), women writers had to keep silent about their lesbian experiences until as late as the 1970s, when the lesbian-feminist movement came into existence. Biographers tampered with the biographies of lesbians such as Gertrude Stein in order to expunge any trace of non-normative gender or sexuality (Faderman 1979, 209).

As presented earlier, writing itself was considered a masculine profession right up to the 20th century (Gilbert and Gubar, 10) and women were denied the propensity of

creative thought. It is likely for this reason that writing itself plays such a large role in lesbian modernist texts. A desire to write is apparent in several texts, including Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and H.D.'s *Paint it Today*, *Asphodel*, and *Her*. This same desire can be found in Bryher's *Development* and *Two Selves*. The reason for the importance of writing to the protagonists of these works is explained in *The Cambridge Companion to Lesbian and Gay Writing*:

In these texts, the protagonists come to writing at the same time as they come to resolutions and understandings about their sexual desire and identity. Often, this sexual narrative is encoded *beneath* the coming to writing so that we also see in these texts the self-reflexive recording of the inscriptive acts of their authors. In this way, the text in hand becomes an artifact that inscribes the progress towards both self-inscription and self-knowledge. (Stevens, 57-58; emphasis in the original)

Writing not only offers a way to self-knowledge and self-expression, but also provides a means to both share and conceal existence that falls outside of dominant discourse. Writing is equated with freedom in several works of lesbian modernist autobiographical fiction (Stevens, 61).

Susan Stanford Friedman, known for her work on H.D.'s writing, considers H.D. and other women writers to have "asserted an agency and identity made in and through language, one that [they] constituted in opposition to an ideology that would deny [them] the status of subject" (Friedman 1990, x). Friedman (1990, ix-x) sees autobiographical fiction as a form of world-making, viewing H.D.'s autobiographical fiction as a means of "negotiation as a woman writer in a male world of letters."

Bryher and H.D. were by no means alone: they knew several other female artists, most notably Gertrude Stein and Amy Lowell, who were known for their non-heteronormative lifestyles. Halberstam provides a glimpse of what the Paris of the 1920s was like for queer artists:

In and around Hall herself were dozens of masculine women, many living under male names, some cross-dressing and passing, some switching back and forth

between male and female drag, some serving in the army, some in the Women's Auxiliary Police Force, some living with other masculine women, some settling down with more feminine 'wives,' some even settling into odd threesomes. Most of these women were aristocratic or middle-class or had inherited wealth; many were artists. (1998, 83)

What is important to take into account is that female masculinity is not the same thing as trying to be a 'man': some upper-class inverts used male names and dressed in a masculine fashion without ever attempting a full transition to maleness. For instance, despite her masculine demeanor, Hall always wore skirts (Halberstam 1998, 88). Another important point introduced by Halberstam is that living the life of a masculine woman in the early 20th century would have required money and social status (1998, 87) – both of which Bryher had. It is for this reason, therefore, that when considering Bryher's writing, her social class cannot be ignored, as her perspective on and experience of female masculinity will have been affected by it.

Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) is one of the most famous lesbian novels of all time. It follows the life of a woman named Stephen Gordon, a masculine lesbian whom many critics argue was an image of Hall herself, who in young adulthood finds out that she is an 'invert,' i.e. a lesbian. The novel itself has been both praised for bringing lesbian existence to light and criticized for offering such a hopeless view of it. According to Halberstam (1998, 98):

Some lesbian critics have begun the work of recuperating *The Well of Loneliness* by referencing it as a brave depiction of butch sexuality that replaces a model of lesbianism as a sin with medical and sociological models of the lesbian as invert and victim respectively.

I would like to argue that Bryher also contests the prevalent notion of female masculinity, and therefore, in this historical context, female inversion, being a sin or unnatural in *Development* and *Two Selves*, but eight and five years prior to the publication of *The Well*, respectively. Bryher's first two novels present the case of a girl who should have been born a boy and her struggles to come to terms with a non-normative gender position in a socially conservative

atmosphere. This concept of someone born in a body having the wrong sex is strongly influenced by Ellis's sexological theories, especially in lieu with Bryher's relationship with H.D., since Ellis considered there to be a parallel between female masculinity and inversion.

What is interesting, however, is that in *The Well of Loneliness*, Stephen Gordon, Hall's protagonist, refers to herself as an invert. The term does not occur in Bryher's *Development* or *Two Selves*. Another point worth mentioning is that *The Well of Loneliness* has not only been read as lesbian fiction, but some also consider it possible to read it as a transsexual narrative (Stevens & Howlett, 2009). As with Bryher's writing, there seems to be disagreement among theorists as to how to approach the text and the result seems to be politically motivated: lesbian feminists read Bryher and Hall's writing as lesbian fiction, whereas those interested in trans* studies read them through a trans* lens. While I hope to avoid such a categorization, my choice of queer theory over lesbian feminism or trans* studies does communicate a specific political position. It also causes the issue of how to define what I am studying, which I hope to circumvent through the use of the terms 'queer' and 'non-normative,' in which case I am studying a subject position that contests normative discourse.

4.2 Bryher's Fiction

Bryher's writing can be roughly divided into historical and autobiographical fiction. As Bryher's autobiographical fiction has not received much consideration from critics, I will also consider what theoretical perspectives have been used to treat her historical fiction. There are many similarities between how historical and autobiographical fiction can be used: both offer a means of rethinking one's relationship to the past or expressing criticism toward society. As I will present shortly, Bryher is considered to have used historical fiction as a means of bringing female or otherwise hidden experience into the limelight. In a similar way, Bryher's

autobiographical fiction can be viewed as a testament to her existence and thus acts as a counter-discourse: it makes what dominant discourse would make invisible visible. The life of a masculine woman in the 1920s is unlikely to have been considered of importance to writers of history and therefore it was imperative that Bryher leave her mark in the form of autobiographical fiction and memoirs.

In “Multiplying the Past: Gender and Narrative in Bryher’s *Gate to the Sea*,” (1990) Ruth Hoberman views historical fiction as a means for “women’s reconceptualization of their relation to the past” (Stevens, 354). It is a way for women to “redefine their relation to their own cultural history” (Stevens, 355-356). Hoberman argues that in *Gate to the Sea* (1958), Bryher questions the (gendered) way in which history is constructed, partly through the use of conflicting narrative viewpoints (Stevens, 361). The construction of history was (and, even in some cases today, is) gendered because women’s lives were limited and it was therefore improbable that their lives would be recorded in history books or portrayed in historical novels (Stevens, 356). *Gate to the Sea* also includes “a girl disguised as a boy” (Stevens, 355), which is something that links it to *Development* (1920) and *Two Selves* (1923): childhood rebellion against accepted gender categories. Feminist ideas and the wish to question the role of gender in society appear to be important themes across Bryher’s writing.

According to *The Cambridge Companion to Lesbian and Gay Writing*, Bryher’s autobiographical fiction, written in a combination of realism and Imagist prose, expresses the difficulties of lesbian existence at the beginning of the twentieth century: “Though lesbianism is never overtly named, the novels document the complexities of female masculinity and desire for other women” (Stevens, 59). *Development* and *Two Selves* chart the development of a subjectivity that is dissonant from the dominant culture. Stevens views the need to find ‘a

friend' that can be seen in the novels as a wish to find, "an Other who also might understand her own gender difference [...] and dissident desires" (Stevens, 60). He continues:

The text sustains an ongoing subtextual commentary on language and difference that it is hard not to read as a commentary on the unspeakability of same-sex desire. Nancy understands there is another vocabulary, indeed another way of *knowing*, which is *not* the language of the dominant culture. (Stevens, 61)

One key difference between H.D. and Bryher's autobiographical novels is that H.D. chose to keep them hidden, with roughly half of them being published posthumously, whereas Bryher had hers published herself. This in itself would suggest a difference in motive – why keep them hidden, why share them?

Bryher's *Development* and *Two Selves* may not fall into the category of a confession, or even a plea for understanding: rather, they appear assertive in nature. Even though Nancy, the protagonist of the two novels, has trouble conforming to society, she never apologizes for who she is – instead, she criticizes society for limiting her natural development. Thus, Foucault's notion of counter-discourse can be applied to these two novels. The novels could also be viewed through the lens of what Henke calls 'scriptotherapy': simply the titles of the novels, *Development* and *Two Selves*, imply a search for an understanding of subjectivity and its development, as well as a means of coming to terms with a split self. These final two options do not exclude one another: Bryher might have written the novels as a means of gaining self-knowledge, as well as criticizing societal norms.

5. Development: Childhood

If gender is constructed through relations of power and, specifically, normative constraints that not only produce but also regulate various bodily beings, how might agency be derived from this notion of gender as the effect of productive constraint? (Butler 1993, x)

Throughout her life, Bryher took several measures to create her own space in a restrictive social environment. One of them can be considered her choice to change her name to Bryher. According to Butler, the naming process itself establishes a subject's relationship to the discourse it inhabits (1993, 7-8):

In that naming (sonogram), the girl is 'girled,' brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that 'girling' of the girl does not end there [...] The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm.

Instead of accepting the name given to her by her family, a name linked to social norms and expectations, Bryher chose to recreate herself according to her own terms. In changing her name, Bryher changed her relationship to the society around her: it was a symbolic act in which she rejected the right of others to name her. It is also worth noting that the name Bryher does not carry any gender signification, whereas her original name, Annie Winifred, certainly did.

In a similar way, Bryher's historical and autobiographical fiction change her relationship to the past, as she was able to rewrite history from a non-normative, and female, perspective. It is my belief that she realized the normative tendencies in the construction of history, which prioritize(d) the experiences of men, and therefore wrote in order to contest them. Bryher's writing works as a counter-discourse that denies the claim of normative discourse to the absolute truth. This form of counter-discourse traverses temporal limits: it addresses the past by rewriting one's link to it; it addresses the present by criticizing it; and,

finally, it addresses the future by leaving a trace of dissident subjectivity for future scholars and like-minded people to study.

According to Boynton and Malin (2005, 352), autobiographical writing is traditionally associated with “male-coded hubris, individualism, and claims to a life’s singularity,” i.e. that the life of one individual man is worth recording. While, following the tradition of autobiographical writing, the plot of *Development* is mainly concerned with Nancy’s life, I do not feel it makes a pretense of singularity. On the contrary, Bryher seems to be painfully aware of the social nature of subjectivity, stating: “Perhaps we cannot escape from our generation, no matter how much we may be isolated from it, it is a universal movement and we have to drift with it or perish” (Bryher 1962/2007, 183). Throughout *Development* Nancy ponders her own subjectivity in relation to outside limits and impositions.

As for the “male-coded hubris” associated with the genre, while the plot of *Development* is centered on the life of one subject, such a choice is difficult to avoid if the purpose of the work is to create space for non-normative subjectivity. In fact, it could be considered one reason for this choice of genre: it allows for the placement of a non-normative subject at the core of the text. The autobiographical element of autobiographical fiction in turn allows the writer to encode aspects of his or her life into the text. From a constructivist perspective, this sort of autobiographical writing allows for the possibility of in-depth analysis of the discursive forces that affect the development of subjectivity from the subject’s point of view, instead of simply listing the subject’s achievements. The difference, then, is that in traditional male autobiography the life of its author is considered to be of social significance according to dominant discourse. In queer autobiographical writing that goes against normative discourse, such an assumption does not exist, since this sort of writing has been, at least historically, marginalized. Attention is drawn to one non-normative subject in

order to create space for non-normative subjects as a group. According to Bryher, someone who occupies a marginalized subject position in society must be “self-centred to survive” (Bryher 1962/2007, 155). In essence, then, queer autobiographical writing can be viewed as a form of survival.

Development (1920), Bryher's first novel, is considered to be her most controversial oeuvre (Brown, Clements, and Grundy). It was reviewed in both newspapers and literary periodicals of the time (Bryher 2000, xvii). Perhaps one of its most controversial topics is its criticism of the girls' education system. After its publication, a debate ensued in the *Daily Mail* about whether or not girls' schools were indeed strongholds of "dull cramping formalism" (Bryher 2000, xxi).

The analysis section of *Development* is divided into three parts: Gendered Transgression, Othering the 'Same,' and Art and Self-Realization. Gendered Transgression treats Nancy's non-normative gender identity: how she perceives herself, what sorts of limits she comes across, and how Victorian gender norms may have informed Nancy's understanding of gender. Othering the 'Same' considers how Nancy feels about other girls, as she is socially grouped with them, but internally feels that she is different from them. Art and Self-Realization deals with the concept of art providing a space in which Nancy can freely be herself: it provides her with a temporary escape from the reality that she experiences as suffocating due to the limits imposed on her.

5.1 “She was sure if she hoped enough she would turn into a boy”: Gendered Transgression
Nancy's wish to have been born a boy becomes apparent within the first few pages of *Development*. We are introduced to a small child, playing in a box, while listening to the *Swiss Family Robinson* being read to her aloud and dreaming of running away and becoming a sailor (Bryher 1920/2000, 21-22). Sailing and the sea develop a strong significance in both

Development and *Two Selves*: they represent freedom, and, more specifically, the freedom of being a boy – something Nancy cannot have.

As a child, this limit is partly manifest in objects – things she cannot have, partly due to her sex, and partly due to them being wishes of childhood fancy:

Her one unrealized desire was possession – like a boy – of a pocket-knife, her one disappointment was the refusal of a live pet monkey; yet there was ever a poignant sadness about these little days, when years later she remembered them, of something for ever lost, of a promise never to be fulfilled. (Bryher 1920/2000, 26)

While the part having to do with a pet monkey offers some comedic value, it is followed by mournfulness for that which never was. Nancy realizes that the limits imposed on her during her childhood limited her development and guided her in a socially acceptable direction. A similar sentiment is expressed in *The Heart to Artemis* (Bryher 1962/2007, 298): “I had always known that my emotions had been stronger when I was six and that the unrelenting social machine had tried to crush them out of me ever since I had left the cradle.” This suggests an understanding of the societal strictures that fashion gender, which appear similar to Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix.

The wish for freedom is expressed throughout the novel. This wish, however, is too complex for Nancy to comprehend as a child. At about the age of ten, she says she is “Impelled by a touch of immortal madness, desire of liberty too large for childish passion [...] Freedom: she wanted freedom” (Bryher 1920/2000, 52-53). She stays adamant in her wish that, “One day should hold adventure captive within her hands” (Bryher 1920/2000, 54). These ideas are in line with Halberstam's assertion that: “Tomboyism tends to be associated with a 'natural' desire for the greater freedoms and mobilities enjoyed by boys” (6).

Halberstam considers female adolescence to be a kind of developmental crisis in which a girl must come to terms with the fact that she lives in a male-dominated society: while male adolescence may be considered a 'rite of passage,' girls encounter limitations (6).

When she is older, around twelve years old, Nancy gets urges to escape. For instance, when she travels to the South, in this case to Egypt, with her family, she dreams of escape. Alas, she concludes, she cannot, as she is “an unwilling prisoner to civilization” (Bryher 1920/2000, 130). This wish to escape Victorian society is also recounted in Bryher’s memoir, *The Heart to Artemis* (1962), as noted by Vicinus (2007, 25).

Nancy has a hard time coping with social restrictions imposed on her due to her being a girl:

Oh to be a boy and have the world. What was the use of existence as a woman, what compensation could there be for loss of freedom? It maddened her to think that as a boy she could have gone to sea, shaped her own experience. A man has liberty, the disposal of his life so largely in his hands, but a girl – she had no wish to write books woven of pretty pictures seen from a narrow window; roughness and adventure, these formed her desire. To possess the intellect, the hopes, the ambitions of a man, unsoftened by any feminine attribute, to have these sheathed in convention, impossible to break without hurt to those she had no wish to hurt, to feel so thoroughly unlike a girl – this was the tragedy. (Bryher 1920/2000, 137)

From this quotation we can gather that at least part of Nancy’s wish to be a boy has to do with gaining more freedom and possibilities. Nancy realizes that the hopes that she has, of writing and experiencing adventure, are not appropriate for a young woman to have. This idea is further expanded upon using spatial metaphors. The sea in itself comes to represent freedom and maleness, whereas femaleness is limited to closed spaces and being an observer, rather than one who experiences.

The Victorian idea of an astute intellect as a sign of masculinity appears in this excerpt. The language used is also very similar to that used by psychoanalysts and sexologists of the time period when discussing female inversion. The intelligence and lack of “any feminine attribute” directly coincide with Ellis’s perception of the female invert. Therefore, this representation could be read as an encoding of non-heteronormative desire. At the very least, it signals the existence of a subject that has trouble fitting the stereotypical

requirements of society. What is interesting as well is that Nancy does not fear societal expulsion, but hurting those who are closest to her.

Nancy feels that a girl's clothing is very limiting: "A wet dragging skirt made impediment at each step. Would she were out in a boy's suit, free and joyous and careless as a boy is" (Bryher 1920/2000, 138). Clothes affect what one can do and can pose physical restraints on the body - they affect how one comes to occupy space. A boy's clothing offers more freedom of movement. The preference for male clothing cited here is also something that psychoanalysts and sexologists noted as a sign of female inversion.

It is not only the clothing that Nancy is expected to wear that she finds limiting. Due to her sex, she is not free to come and go as a boy her age might, and thus Nancy feels that her lack of experience impedes her writing: "Yet had she been a boy it would have been so easy to obtain experience; it was this accident of being a girl that doubled her difficulties, dragged her back at every step" (Bryher 1920/2000, 143). Being a willful young woman in the early 1900s and 1910s, she feels it is a cruel joke that she was born in the wrong body: she considers it to have been an "accident."

When in Scilly, Nancy goes 'scratching' for sand lances, a species of small fish. While on their way to Pellistree beach, where they plan to fish them, "Nancy follow[s] the others up the road, knowing she [is] a boy" (Bryher 1920/2000, 152). Nancy feels a keen identification with the night and is reluctant to leave it:

All the wildness of her spirit night liberated with a touch. She stood; all eagerness, all longing, just to smell tar, to feel rope, not to watch but to battle with the waves. Yet the door was locked; she could only wait at the window, desolate with lost adventure, desolate with a boyishness that might never put to sea, denied the secrets of the wind and dawn a sailor has by heart [...] The wildness of the hour took Nancy's heart in its strong grasp. She stared at the mainland, rigid with rebellion. [...] Why was she born with a boy's heart when she might not go to sea? (Bryher 1920/2000, 154-156)

This identification with the night can be considered to symbolize Nancy's falling outside the limits of heteronormative society. Similarly to how the sun is often associated with man and

the moon with woman (Tyson, 100), we can consider a binary opposition to exist in which heteronormativity is represented by daytime and non-normative gender or sexual identification to be pushed to the side of the night. Nighttime, especially the moon, has been associated with female sexuality and lesbianism, i.e. deviant sexuality, since the time of Sappho (McIntosh Snyder, 50). The application of this concept to the quotation above is supported by the fact that during the day, Nancy lives with the societal constraints imposed on her, but at night she feels ‘liberated.’ The idea of nighttime being linked to lesbian sexuality is also used in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936) (Bryher 2000, xxiv).

In addition to identifying with the night, Nancy identifies with the East. Travel offers Nancy a socially acceptable sense of what it would be like to be a sailor. She herself says that “Traveling has much in common with adventure” (Bryher 1920/2000, 66). Nancy's family travels throughout Europe and the East and she grows to view England, which she dubs ‘the North’ as a cold, bleak place (Bryher 1920/2000, 31). She sees the East as a mysterious place, full of adventure. When traveling to Cairo, Nancy states:

Out of the midst of the plain of green corn and cotton plant a mud village, full of an unmistakable Eastern silence, sprawled by a clump of date palms [...] Africa, she was in Africa. How difficult to realize she had left Europe at last. (Bryher 1920/2000, 41-42)

From the quotation above, it seems that travel has offered Nancy the sense of escape that she longed for as a child. Europe comes to symbolize something limiting and regulatory, whereas the East represents a release from the strictures of English society. The East has figured as a location filled with mystique, especially with regard to sexuality, in the works of other modernist writers as well. For instance, it is in the East that Virginia Woolf's Orlando's sex changes.

Highly interested in history and having read boy's storybooks about antiquity, Nancy explains: “Antiquity held no terror for her, only interest; [...] To her it was a period of

unrestrained freedom, a life of riding forth, a lion-skin on the saddle, the picturesqueness of single combat” (Bryher 1920/2000, 44). The East is a place where Nancy can escape the rigid confines of Victorian England. When she has to leave Egypt, Nancy thinks, “For only as an unconscious child was peace for her in the East” (Bryher 1920/2000, 51). Nancy’s identification with the East is so complete that she considers European influence in the region an “intrusion” (Bryher 1920/2000, 60).

Travel also introduces Nancy to important historical figures. For instance, she admires Hernando Cortés, saying that, “The wildness of his youth answered her impatience of authority” (Bryher 1920/2000, 55). She identifies with these key historical figures, later saying that “she needed to be herself a leader” (Bryher 1920/2000, 57). This identification can be viewed to be related to Nancy’s wish to have been a boy: she feels a need to lead, which is not the role of a woman in Victorian society. Her impatience of authority can also be linked to her inability and refusal to adhere to social norms. Nancy considers it unlikely that she should ever become an ordinary English person, with “repressed voices, such restricted lives” (Bryher 1920/2000, 57).

5.2 “She is a sailor, not silly like the others”: Othering the ‘Same’

From an early age, Nancy appears to see other girls as other to herself. She finds it easier to identify with the concept of ‘boy’ than that of ‘girl,’ even though her knowledge of the two concepts is quite limited, as demonstrated below:

Her one regret was that she was a girl. Never having played with any boys, she imagined them wonderful creatures, welded of her favorite heroes and her own fancy, ever seeking adventures, making them, if they were not ready to their hand, and, of course, wiser than grown-up people. She tried to forget, to escape any reference to being a girl, her knowledge of them being confined to one book read by accident, an impression they liked clothes and were afraid of getting dirty. She was sure if she hoped enough she would turn into a boy. (Bryher 1920/2000, 24)

It would appear that Nancy sees girlhood as something with rigid limits, as suggested by the range of activities she would have to forgo as a girl in order to avoid getting ‘dirty,’ whereas boyhood appears to be a nearly mythological state. Interestingly, one of Nancy’s first female playmates is not a clean, dainty being: she is described as “a strong, assertive child, half a head taller than Nancy and bigger in proportion” (Bryher 1920/2000, 27). The girl, Sylvia, also has “queer rough speech” (Bryher 1920/2000, 27), which suggests a certain degree of masculinity. The girls play together with Nancy’s tricycle, but when it is Nancy’s turn, Sylvia continues riding it. The girls end up in a physical fight, with the grocer’s boy urging them on (Bryher 1920/2000, 28).

The main clash between Nancy and girls her age occurs after the age of twelve when she is sent to Downwood, a girl’s school. By her own admission, she “had never been so near girls her own age before” (Bryher 1920/2000, 88). Another aspect of the school for Nancy to adjust to is the fact that “privacy and free time was unknown” (Bryher 1920/2000, 99) there. She is torn from her family life of travel, art class, and a rather solitary existence among books and placed in a situation where “Girls seemed everywhere, all in white blouses and blue skirts, their hair tied back with an enormous bow” (Bryher 1920/2000, 83). Girls seem like strange, foreign creatures to Nancy: she does not feel that she has anything in common with them. The school system represents a normalizing force, which promotes similarity and socialization: this can be seen, for instance, in the fact that all of the girls wear the same uniform. Life at the school is the complete opposite of the dreams of adventures Nancy has: instead of being free to travel and explore, she is confined to a school. Nancy is not happy with her change of circumstance:

Nancy walked over to [the dog] and waited, instinctively feeling that a dog was better than being alone with a lot of noisy girls. Never, never would she speak to any one of them, for she knew that was the reason she was snatched from her dreams and freedom and sent to school. (Bryher 1920/2000, 84)

Nancy's regret at having been sent to the school is apparent. Families have a large effect on development and are one of the main vehicles for maintaining sexual conformity and gender socialization (Rubin, 160). According to Bryher, "It was not an accident that Freud chose to explore the influence of family life upon development" (Bryher 1962/2007, 287). Nancy appears to be aware of the normative demands at play: her parents chose to send her to the school due to her not having many friends of her own age. There seems to be a wish that if Nancy were to simply spend time with other girls, she would develop in a socially acceptable manner and cease to have wild fancies.

The girls at the school appear aggressive and dangerous to Nancy. She also seems to view them as a homogenous group, rather than as individuals, since the school system has made them appear so similar. For instance, when the teacher walks out of the room during her first lesson, "all of the girls turned on her" (Bryher 1920/2000, 84). They ask her questions about where she is from and whether she has travelled. When Nancy answers that she "know[s] Europe pretty well," she "unsuspectingly fall[s] into the trap, unaware that this truthful answer would label her as conceited and extraordinary until she left the school" (Bryher 1920/2000, 85). Not being used to spending time around girls her age, they seem complicated, perhaps even manipulative, to Nancy. She abhors lunchtime, when she has "to submit to the usual questioning from a different girl each day" (Bryher 1920/2000, 91). Nancy even sees herself as being on a completely different plane from the games mistress at the school, who "was pretty and knew it" (Bryher 1920/2000, 91).

Nancy comes to pity the other students:

From the mire of crushed individuality and ream, surrendered as the price of a comfortable mediocrity, she could discern the eyes lifted in a piteous helplessness, an unconscious hunger of loveliness, with the brooding heaviness of dinosaur or mastodon. (Bryher 1920/2000, 89)

She sees the girls as victims of a normalizing school system. They seem "lifeless and uninspired" (Bryher 1920/2000, 108). Nancy feels that girls seem ignorant, not having heard

of the Thirty Years' War or knowing details about the French Revolution (Bryher 1920/2000, 99). She also gathers that, "for them there was no oblivion in books" (Bryher 1920/2000, 102), and they are therefore unable to escape the strictures of reality and expand their range of thought. The girls' lives seem very limited to Nancy, who describes them as follows:

Helpless as a herd of deer they huddled together at injustice, staring with frightened eyes, with muttered words. True, they had mocked her, had denied she would ever write; in spite of this, resentful as ever that she had come to Downwood, Nancy at her loneliest moments pitied them the poverty of their monotonous restricted thought. (Bryher 1920/2000, 102)

The girls do not question the authority of the school or the regulations placed on them. They also make fun of Nancy for being different, for having a "thirst for knowledge" that goes beyond "the conventional limits of acquiring marks" (Bryher 1920/2000, 95). Due to her refusal to conform, Nancy is left isolated from the 'herd.' She goes even further, stating: "The girls went home, but if they left they merely changed from the tyranny of one school to that of another, they neither grew up nor lived" (Bryher 1920/2000, 114). Women were not left idle during the early 20th century: they were constantly guarded, whether by the school, their parents, or their husbands. In the novel, this can be most clearly seen as what spaces are considered appropriate for women, which mainly consist of the home and school.

The (hetero)normative atmosphere of the school is tangible even in its choice of diction: "No incident could claim to be a 'row,' between girls it was just a 'quarrel,' or, when the 'ladies of the staff' were involved, a 'fuss'" (Bryher 1920/2000, 105). This can either be understood of a way of imposing a sense of propriety on the girls or of demeaning them: they are unable to have 'rows' as their matters are inconsequential.

On Prize Day, a school assembly, Nancy describes Miss Evesham's preparation as follows:

Seeking a disordered flower, a badly tied bow, her eyes moved up and down the lines, with that mixture of hard anxiety and kindness an enthusiast displays to his machine, should the parts get out of order they must be petted or scolded till they work again, each form moulded to its stereotyped pattern. In Miss Evesham's vision there was no room for any excrescences of individuality. (Bryher 1920/2000, 115-116)

This situation can be viewed as a microcosm of broader heteronormative society. It seems that in Nancy's view, school is one supporting foundation of heteronormativity: while arguably the girls are getting an education, they are also being molded to fit societal requirements. As Miss Sampson, one of the mistresses at the school, presents it: "Life is only a continuation of school" (Bryher 1920/2000, 110). In the situation above, Miss Evesham decides which girls display an acceptable form of femininity and if she finds a fault, she quickly pushes them back into the mold.

Nancy chooses to stay apart from the girls at Downwood: "Better solitude than to share a lifeless acquiescence" (Bryher 1920/2000, 109). This physical isolation mirrors the mental isolation that Nancy feels: she is outside of the norm. Instead of socializing with her peers, she walks around alone, "with her hands in her pockets, pretending she was a boy" (Bryher 1920/2000, 90). In fact, Nancy can be seen as doubly marginalized: first, the spaces which she can inhabit are limited to those meant for women; yet, she cannot comfortably fit them, and is thus left on the outskirts. According to Hoberman (1997), Bryher also treats the theme of how to "preserve a lost past and still survive, how to live both within (so as not to go mad) and outside (so as not to lose one's identity) the dominant discourse" in her historical fiction novel *Gate to the Sea*.

Nancy comes to hate the school, the girls, and "their absurd conventions" (Bryher 1920/2000, 91-92). She starts to rebel against the school, saying, "The more people discouraged her, the more enthusiastic she would become. She went home singing to herself a little song, 'They can't take my thoughts from me, and my dreams are my own'" (Bryher

1920/2000, 93). Thus, the school, an institutional regulator of (hetero)normative ideals, provides Nancy with something tangible to oppose. While her own family also offered her such an entity, with them there was the constant fear of harming them: at Downwood Nancy has more freedom to rebel as she is not concerned with the thoughts or feelings of the mistresses or other students. Here, we see how counter discourse and that which is outside of dominant discourse are in fact its effects. According to Butler (1993, 11), “Insofar as the extra-discursive is delimited, it is formed by the very discourse from which it seeks to free itself.” By serving the purpose of a specific, normative discourse, the school provides Nancy the insight to realize that she is different, as well as something against which to rebel.

It is at Downwood, however, that Nancy meets Doreen, a girl from Cornwall with a “boyish face” (Bryher 1920/2000, 95) that Nancy is drawn to. She thinks, “She is a sailor, not silly like the others” (Bryher 1920/2000, 96). At the end of the first term of school, Nancy dreams of escaping Downwood and taking Doreen with her, “because she had never laughed at her” (Bryher 1920/2000, 97). Doreen’s boyish appearance causes Nancy to feel that she has found someone who understands what it is like to exist on the outskirts of heteronormative society.

At the end of her first year at Downwood, Nancy contemplates the reaction of her classmates upon leaving:

A little group of the elder girls hung together, besought mistresses to write to them, whom, a week before, they had hoped never to see again. They were afraid. School had taught them, had bound their thoughts by rules, had manufactured dreams for them, had given them a language. They had surrendered their individuality [...] The girls, helpless and afraid of homecoming, with no beginning of term to steady them, huddled in the passage. Nancy looked at them for the first time with an immense pity. There was no beauty in their lives. (Bryher 1920/2000, 118-119)

The girls she witnesses are the older ones who are leaving the school. The girls still huddle together into a herd, as they have become used to doing. With their schooling complete, their

minds have been shaped to fit the ideology of (hetero)normative society. School has “given them a language,” which can be considered to be that of normative discourse.

As time passes, Nancy becomes even more unwilling to associate with girls her age:

To speak to other girls seemed as unreal to her as ever; she felt it was better to be alone as regards intimate friendship than to wear gloves every day and be polite. It was not only that none of them cared for literature or history or that she was, as people called her, ‘shy’; it was rather the dread, so deep a root of her nature, of the insincerity of such meetings, of her inability to see life from the accepted point of view. (Bryher 1920/2000, 143)

Nancy's meetings with girls her age are bound in normativity: they require her to act according to standards that she feels she does not fit. She also realizes that there are other ways of existing in and viewing the world, but that those are deemed socially unacceptable. Unfortunately for her, meetings with girls her age are unavoidable, and so she soon finds herself in a situation where: “To her horror she was shown into a room full of people, girls predominating, all with an air of mingled indifference and restraint” (Bryher 1920/2000, 145). She ends up “sitting on a sofa nearly buried in cushions between two girls, one fair, one dark, and both equally uninteresting” (Bryher 1920/2000, 145). The situation is mentally, and nearly physically, suffocating; yet, Nancy attempts to have a conversation with the girls. When they get to the topic of Nancy’s trip to Wales, Miss Chester, the fair girl, acts “as interested as her languid movements would allow” (Bryher 1920/2000, 147). The dark girl, however, seems genuinely interested in what Nancy has to say. She mentions how she would have liked to go to a friend’s summer cottage, but was not allowed to. She insists that she is still “having a good time, you know” (Bryher 1920/2000, 147). Nancy feels that the girl is being “as confidential as formality would allow” and continues “The good time, as far as Nancy could make out, consisted of a series of interminably dull lunches and teas and in never being allowed outside the house alone” (Bryher 1920/2000, 147). This serves as a

reminder, once again, of how the life of the middle-class woman was limited to domestic spaces, namely the home and school. When the girls find out that when Nancy and her friend were at her friend's summer cottage they did not have servants with them, both girls "withdrew as though Nancy were insane or unfit for their company" (Bryher 1920/2000, 148). Social regulations having to do with class are apparent in this reaction. Miss Chester quickly gathers herself, however, and replies "How splendid!", a phrase that has presented itself throughout the conversation, but apparently with no real significance.

5.3 "She could never be a boy, but she could be an artist": Art and Self-Realization

Thinking about sailing and writing are ways for Nancy to cope with the strictures imposed on her by societal norms. For instance, when Nancy is reminded of how her development has been stunted due to gendered limits on what she can and cannot do, she quickly counters: "But always truant among her dreams even of ships and sailors was the thought, 'When I am older I will write a book'" (Bryher 1920/2000, 26).

On her seventh birthday, Nancy is given a children's picture-book of some of Shakespeare's plays. Interestingly, the characters whom she mentions are Viola from *Twelfth Night* and Imogen from *Cymbeline*, both of whom are women who dress as men at some point during the plays (Bryher 1920/2000, 29). She states: "The mere fact of the frequent assuming by the Elizabethan maiden of 'the lovely garnish of a boy' captured an imagination eager enough to copy; she was ever impatient of the end where they changed to a girl's attire." (Bryher 1920/2000, 29) It would appear that, from an early age, Nancy finds an outlet for her non-heteronormative gender identity in literature, by finding female heroines that she can identify with. Nonetheless, she is unable to identify with them fully, as they revert back to femininity at the end of the play.

The idea of articulation, or the ability to use language to signify oneself and one's experiences, is also touched upon within the novel. Nancy says, "Even to herself she lacked power to put into words her desire, impetuous to escape into speech" and later continues "Childhood is not articulate" (Bryher 1920/2000, 33). Just a few lines later, however, Nancy, at the age of eight, is given a children's version of the *Iliad* and she states: "It was her first revelation of the power of literature, of her own power and desire of a richness that could never be satisfied" (Bryher 1920/2000, 34). Already, art and literature are seen to offer Nancy possibilities and a sense of freedom from the confines of reality. In reading the book, Nancy is free to identify with the male protagonists. She says, "Parts there were that appealed to her less strongly than others, the loveliness of Helen, for instance, boys and warriors alone reigning in her fancy" (Bryher 1920/2000, 35). A year later, she receives Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, and it consumes her thoughts (Bryher 1920/2000, 36).

After the *Iliad*, Nancy's fancy is caught by a "boy's book of adventure" (Bryher 1920/2000, 37) about the second Punic war and Hannibal. Soon after reading the book, Nancy is inspired to write a story of her own. According to Nancy, "A boy must occupy the center of the story" and continues by saying "To her, Carthaginian girls existed merely in a fabulous way" (Bryher 1920/2000, 38). Again, we are presented with a boyish identification, as Nancy makes the protagonist of her story a boy. Supporting evidence of this notion is that her protagonist is nine years old, just like she is. Nancy fails to acknowledge the absence of girls in her knowledge of Carthage and seems estranged from them. It is also possible that Nancy's views have been shaped by societal norms: if she has constantly read stories in which the main character is a boy, then it would be the natural option to make her own main character a boy as well.

At around the age of eleven, Nancy is given another book of Shakespeare's plays. She reads *Troilus and Cressida*, stating that "Cressida was a girl, no fighter, and

therefore unimportant” (Bryher 1920/2000, 62): Nancy’s boyish identification continues. This also further supports the notion that Nancy has been influenced by some societal norms, as she not only fails to wonder at the absence of a female presence in the stories that she reads, but views the female characters that are present as ‘unimportant.’ Later, however, she does admit that “Cleopatra’s spirit was worthy of a boy” (Bryher 1920/2000, 62), which implies that female characters are only worthy of recognition if they show traditionally male attributes, which in Cleopatra's case would be strength of spirit.

From an early age, Nancy has an artistic view of the world. She explains it as follows:

From earliest remembrance certain phrases, names especially of places or of persons, were never free from an association of colour, fashioned of a tone, written in it; and as she grew, this feeling developed, unconsciously expanding until her whole vocabulary became a palette of colours, luminous gold, a flushed rose, tones neither sapphire nor violet, but the shade of southern water. (Bryher 1920/2000, 65-66)

Nancy ventures into writing again at twelve years old. This time, she writes a nine-page story about a boy living during the Paleolithic era (Bryher 1920/2000, 71). The drawings that she makes to accompany it, however, feel inadequate: they do not express her true wishes and sentiments. Like the language that escapes her, drawing has yet to offer itself as a viable mode of self-expression. Nevertheless, she does not give up on the hope of one day being a “great artist” (Bryher 1920/2000, 73). Nancy enrolls in an art class, describing it as follows: “The smell of the place, the daubs of paint scattered everywhere, the brushes on the floor, the broken bits of charcoal were joys to her, for she felt among them as though she were beginning at last” (Bryher 1920/2000, 74). To her dismay, however, the other students are not as motivated as she is, and when the teacher walks out of the classroom, they begin talking to one another, ignoring the work set out for them. Therefore, instead of finding comrades in the class, she focuses on dreaming of the future, saying:

All the time that Nancy sat drawing outlines of a greyhound her head was filled with dreams of the time when she would be a great artist, the time when she would know other artists, have utter freedom and be able to talk about art all day long if she wished. (Bryher 1920/2000, 74-75)

A longing for others who understand her is apparent. Nancy is “Lonely, not for playfellows, but for someone to share her dreams” (Bryher 1920/2000, 76). Yet, art does allow Nancy a means of escape, even if her skills of self-expression (i.e. writing, drawing) have not fully developed. Nancy’s keen interest in history is slowly converted into a “desire for expression” (Bryher 1920/2000, 76). It is art, previously in the form of literature, now in that of self-created art, that has shown her “her own power” (Bryher 1920/2000, 77). She soon ascertains that “books were stronger than paint” (Bryher 1920/2000, 78). In fact, a sheer moment of epiphany occurs when Nancy proclaims: “She could never be a sailor, she could never be a boy, but she could be an artist, she could be a writer” (Bryher 1920/2000, 78). Here becoming a writer is viewed as a more socially acceptable means of experiencing adventure. She continues:

She was full of an overwhelming gratitude that such a gift was allowed her. All life seemed hers to do what she would with it; obstacles were as nothing if she could express something of what she saw, something of what she felt. (Bryher 1920/2000, 79)

Nancy realizes that art can provide her with the sense of escape she has longed for since childhood. The citation, nevertheless, appears to be more of a wish for the future, as soon thereafter she describes herself as still being “inarticulate” (Bryher 1920/2000, 79).

Before being sent to Downwood, Nancy dreamt of going to an art school: it is for this reason in part that she considers Downwood to have been a hindrance to her artistic development. During the beginning of her time at the school, what gives Nancy strength to endure is the idea that “her thoughts were her own” (Bryher 1920/2000, 87). Downwood, however, has caused Nancy to feel “more inarticulate than ever” (Bryher 1920/2000, 102). Yet, even at Downwood, literature lends itself to Nancy’s need for escape. She reads

Flaubert's *Salammbô*, and it helps her break "the fetters of her present bondage" (Bryher 1920/2000, 112). The reading experience is described as follows: "Each word was joy because it restored her to a forceful world that was not sordid as the school was sordid, weak as the girls were weak" (Bryher 1920/2000, 112). Through reading, Nancy is able to temporarily escape the space, i.e. school, to which she is confined.

After her first year at Downwood, Nancy feels that her self-knowledge and skills as an artist have deteriorated. She describes the feeling as follows:

Childhood had shivered into a thousand pieces that May morning she had entered school, and instead of starting afresh Nancy had wasted time trying to find and fit together the broken pieces. She seemed to have slipped back a whole age. The wonder and imagination she had treasured were gone and knowledge had not come to fill their place. She had lost her early facility of writing verse; become critical, nothing she attempted satisfied her. That she would have had to lose her childhood some time never occurred to Nancy. (Bryher 1920/2000, 123)

The cold reality of the normative ideals of society appear in full force to Nancy, replacing her relatively free upbringing, during which she had been allowed to travel and read practically anything that she wished. Again, Nancy turns to books for comfort, "With the growing realization that to escape from one prison might not mean to have the world at her own disposal" (Bryher 1920/2000, 124). She considers herself to be a prisoner due to her sex: it seems that her life will forever be limited to certain spaces that are allowed and others that are not. With this fear of limitation comes the fear that she will never find like-minded people, and therefore the notion of becoming an artist is brought up once more: "Her hope, her dreams, shaped to a definite longing for something to fill her loneliness, give her knowledge; to a thought that only a book of her own making would admit her to the friendships she desired" (Bryher 1920/2000, 127).

Instead of trying to befriend the other girls at the school, she loses herself in thought to the point where her "indifference of others assured Nancy in her belief she was a poet" (Bryher 1920/2000, 127). Nancy distances herself further and further from her peers.

Since she is not able to physically go where she would like, she retreats into an inner world, as well as those offered by books. The idea of the 'poet' becomes almost mythical in her mind: it comes to represent her otherness, and thus offers a term for it. The other girls are not poets, but she is: therefore, it is only natural that they do not understand her.

Nancy also continues reading, often insisting on reading works that are deemed inappropriate for girls her age. For example, when she wishes to read Verhaeren, her French teacher's reply is "Young girls cannot read Verhaeren," along with a shudder (Bryher 1920/2000, 133). When she is finally able to gain access to read some of his work, she describes it as "strong, new, impetuous" (Bryher 1920/2000, 134). Nancy is drawn to modern writing: "It was the modernity of many of these writers, their fondness of experiment, that made them not alone a technical revelation but brought a new and vital element of wideness into her vision" (Bryher 1920/2000, 136). Modern poetry inspires her to "pull the universe to pieces and build it up again in her own way" (Bryher 1920/2000, 136). Nancy views knowledge, and therefore reading, as a way of attaining freedom and therefore insists on reading, especially those works that would otherwise be denied her (Bryher 1920/2000, 138).

Soon after having been inspired to action by modern poets, Nancy decides to have some of her writing published "at her own expense" (Bryher 1920/2000, 140). The reception varies: a newspaper article praises the verses, while older people "smiled at her as though she were a spoilt child given a new toy" (Bryher 1920/2000, 141). Nevertheless, Nancy feels that her writing is stunted by the lack of experience she has, partly due to the limits imposed on her due to her sex: writing requires knowledge of "actual life," which she lacks (Bryher 1920/2000, 142). This is presented as follows: "Yet had she been a boy it would have been so easy to obtain experience; it was this accident of being a girl that doubled her difficulties, dragged her back at every step" (Bryher 1920/2000, 143). Nancy considers it to be "false to write of emotions her mind had not experienced" (Bryher 1920/2000, 151).

Nancy envies the Elizabethans, wishing she had the “right” to create new words. She feels that, “English grew impoverished and demanded freshness” (Bryher 1920/2000, 159). It also happens to be the Elizabethans that Nancy consults when her “impulse[s] for freedom” strike her (Bryher 1920/2000, 163). This is because, in Nancy’s eyes, the Elizabethan writers, poets, and playwrights represent the kind of freedom that she cannot experience in her own time: “The mere assuming of a boy’s apparel, so favourite a device of the period, enchanted her never-dormant desire of unrestricted freedom. Be a girl and there were always barriers” (Bryher 1920/2000, 164). In addition, Nancy turns to Flaubert for consolation: “Nancy came to [Flaubert] for shelter from an unjust, a brutal, and a bitter world” (Bryher 1920/2000, 166).

Thus, it is from reading and writing that Nancy gathers the strength with which to deal with a society in which she feels like an outcast. As she describes:

The intervals of her reading Nancy filled with her own manuscript, wrought neither of imagination nor remembered stories but of the one experience she knew from end to end – herself. Utterly careless of what is misnamed of the multitude ‘success,’ she was eager for expression, to frame in words her belief in freedom, her own need of truth. (Bryher 1920/2000, 169-170)

In the quotation above, it is clear that writing offers Nancy a kind of escape, as well as a possibility of self-expression. She states that she wants to express “her own need of truth”: this could be understood to mean her exploration of the parts of herself that she is forced to keep hidden, because they do not adhere to social norms. Even though Nancy writes, she still has trouble coping with her belief that “No art is possible without freedom [...] To be free is to choose a world and dwell in it uninfluenced by sentiment and circumstance” (Bryher 1920/2000, 171).

6. *Two Selves*: Entering Young Adulthood

The novel *Two Selves* (1923) was published three years after *Development* (1920) and continues where *Development* left off. It was not as widely reviewed as *Development* was, only receiving one review in the *Manchester Guardian*. Nevertheless, its preface, which was written by Amy Lowell, garnered attention among those who had an interest in Imagism (Bryher 2000, xvii).

Like the analysis section of *Development*, the analysis section of *Two Selves* is divided into three sections. Nancy's gender dysphoria and the discord between her private (masculine) and social (feminine) selves continues in this novel and is treated in more depth in *Negotiating Public and Private Selves*. The Victorian girls' education system continues to be criticized in *Two Selves* (1923), as it is in *Development* (1920). However, as Nancy grows up, she comes to see even more of the unjust machinations of society: these are discussed in *The Position of Women*. In *Art as a Form of World-Making*, I consider the theory of art presented in the novel, as well as the idea of writing not only being a form of self-expression, but also of self-creation.

6.1 “If only she could cut away all that was not herself. This encrustation of conformity”:

Negotiating Public and Private Selves

Two selves. Jammed against each other, disjointed and ill-fitting. An obedient Nancy with heavy plaits tied over two ears that answered “yes, no, yes, no,” according as the wind blew. A boy, a brain, that planned adventures and sought wisdom. Two personalities uneasy by their juxtaposition. As happy together as if a sharp sword were thrust into a golf bag for a sheath. (Bryher 1923/2000, 183)

Thus begins Bryher's second autobiographical fiction novel, *Two Selves*. Already, a clear rupture between Nancy's public and private selves can be observed, both in the title of the novel and its first paragraph. There is the Nancy that has been conditioned through social pressure and heteronormative ideals of the early 20th century: she is outwardly feminine, as is

evidenced by the plaits on her head, obedient, and meek, only answering “yes” or “no,” without further contemplation or force behind her answers. Nevertheless, another Nancy exists: that who is more masculine and adventurous. The effect of early twentieth century gender discourse appears in this quotation, as there seems to be a clear link between masculinity and intelligence: both the “brain” and the pursuit of wisdom are linked to Nancy’s masculine side.

Nancy’s two selves are described as follows:

Two selves. The one complete enough, chaffed by every restriction, planning to reform the world, planning to reform schools, planning to know and experience everything there was to know and experience. But the other self ... blown apart with every wind ... it was painfully inadequate a covering. (Bryher 1923/2000, 184)

It is evident that Nancy displays mental strength and volition that will not have been deemed appropriate for a young lady in early 20th-century England. Thoughts of reformation are unlikely to have been popular amongst the rather conservative middle and upper classes in the early 1910s, which I would estimate to be the time period in which the beginning of this novel is situated. What is interesting in this quotation is that Nancy perceives the socially acceptable self as “other” and simply a “covering” of her true identity. Her saying that it is “inadequate” can be understood to mean that she feels like a fraud in social circumstances and that she is afraid that one day her true, complete self will show through and thus reveal her otherness. It could, however, also be understood as a way of viewing the “covering” as something imposed from the outside that cannot limit her true self for much longer, and is therefore inadequate.

Nancy is, nonetheless, allowed to practice fencing, which she considers liberating. When she is wearing her fencing clothes, she feels that “Her legs were free at once. It gave her an incomparable sense of boldness” (Bryher 1923/2000, 198). She mentions that ever since her first lesson, she has been “captive” to the “*clash* of steel, *crash* of thunder,

smash of surf” and goes on to state that “these were sounds for a boy to love” (Bryher 1923/2000, 201; emphasis in the original). Fencing allows Nancy to partly experience the adventure stories she read when she was younger. While fencing can be considered to be a rather masculine sport, Nancy reveals that “She had learnt fencing simply because ‘girls couldn’t have boxing lessons.’ What she really wanted was to smash out with both fists and knock somebody over” (Bryher 1923/2000, 203). Here there is a clear negotiation between Nancy’s inner self and the social constraints around her.

Nevertheless, even her propensity to practice fencing (also referred to as *épée* in the novel) is put under scrutiny when her fencing master suggests that she have a short match against a man, a major, who has also only just begun to fence. The major’s automatic remark before they have even begun is: “This is hardly a sport for ladies. [...] I might hurt her” (Bryher 1923/2000, 204). After they have started, the man taps Nancy on the shoulder with a foil and says “Pardon. I trust I did not hurt you. This is no sport for ladies” (Bryher 1923/2000, 205), in an attempt to reaffirm his masculinity and cause Nancy to feel embarrassed. In the end, Nancy is more skillful, but the major is stronger, as he is over six feet tall and Nancy a mere five foot one (Bryher 1923/2000, 206). When the major is ready to leave, he states: “Really I should have thought hockey was more suitable. *Épée* [...] is not a ladies’ sport” (Bryher 1923/2000, 206), repeating his attempt at Othering Nancy from the sport once more.

Nancy decides not to contest the statement verbally, but instead thinks “If only I could box [...] I’d break his beastly nose” (Bryher 1923/2000, 206). She goes on to say, “Men were the limit anyway. What good did hockey do or where did it take one? Fencing was a world leading to freedom. Men always wanted to keep the best things to themselves” (Bryher 1923/2000, 206). Here we can see the rivalry between dominant (white heterosexual male) masculinity and a minority (female) masculinity. According to Halberstam (1998, 4),

dominant masculinity is dependent on minority masculinities: it defines itself in relation to other masculinities, which it deems inferior.

Nancy perceives herself as “clumsy and rough” (Bryher 1923/2000, 202). She also has a desire to cut her hair short, which is considered to be a “wicked” thought (Bryher 1923/2000, 208). Nancy feels pressure to adhere to social norms of how she is supposed to look, even though “her personal appearance bored her thoroughly” and “She had always wanted short hair, like a boy’s” (Bryher 1923/2000, 209). It is her opinion that short hair “gave more force to any head” (Bryher 1923/2000, 209). As in *Development*, when it comes to girl's clothes, she considers them to be pure “agony” and feels “ashamed” when people see her in them. Nancy feels like “a hopeless idiot” when she is forced to wear feminine dresses made out of muslin and colored ribbons. She only feels comfortable when she can wear her fencing breeches and read (Bryher 1923/2000, 210). Nancy comes to equate breeches and short hair, symbols of masculinity, with freedom (Bryher 1923/2000, 221).

Sometimes Nancy wishes that “there were no family life.” To Nancy, the fear of hurting those she cares about is “a tyranny worse than that of a school or form of government” (Bryher 1923/2000, 213). Nancy realizes that the constraints laid on her by her family are not malicious and that makes it more difficult to rebel: “Against harshness one could rebel; it was kindness that hindered one. And without rebellion there could be no development” (Bryher 1923/2000, 213).

Nancy feels a keen connection to her father:

She herself was rather like her father. People told her so. Said they looked the same way when their wills were crossed or their orders disobeyed. Yet they were, at the end, different (Bryher 1923/2000, 212-213)

Even though Nancy feels close to her father and others comment on their similarity, she senses that they are different: they have different possibilities in life. Even if Nancy were as

intelligent and ambitious as her father, she could not expect to achieve all that he has, because she is a girl. Nancy's admiration for her father is expressed later on in the novel as follows:

Her father had the thing she admired most, a mind. Also a sense of adventure. As a boy he had run away and climbed mountains. He had fenced. He had been to America. But he was perfectly unreasonable as far as Nancy was concerned. Which was very distressing. (Bryher 1923/2000, 254)

Nancy states that when she was a child, her father taught her things no other children knew and encouraged her to read as much as possible. As she entered her teenage years, she had wanted her father to allow her to pursue studies in art or business, but her father refused, telling her that he had already arranged an income for her. Instead of allowing Nancy to pursue her interests in art or business, her parents put her in a girl's school, "'To get companionship with girls her own age.' To learn to drop her curiously personal ideas" (Bryher 1923/2000, 255). In *The Heart to Artemis*, Bryher explains the educational situation of young women as follows: "We forget that in 1910 the battle for equal education of men and women was far from being won. Many parents objected to intensive training of the mind and if we spoke wistfully about jobs we were sharply reprov'd and told that we must not take the bread out of a poor girl's mouth" (Bryher 1962/2007, 143). Here we see that Nancy's limitations are two-fold: she is limited by the expectations of both her gender and her class. Her father does not feel it is appropriate for a girl of her class to pursue a career and, according to social convention, has seen to it that she will be provided for. Girls belonging to the upper classes were even made to feel guilty and selfish for wishing to pursue their own motivations by claiming that they would be putting girls in lower classes at a disadvantage (Bryher 1962/2007, 154).

Nancy's desire to be a boy and experience adventure that first became apparent in *Development* (1920) continues in *Two Selves* (1923): "Wish I were a boy and could go to sea" (Bryher 1923/2000, 239). Yet, others' expectations of her limit her – Nancy constantly

feels like she is being pulled in two directions, that of her true, non-normative self and that of her socially acceptable self:

Two selves. Oh, if she could cut away all that was not herself. This encrustation of conformity. But people did not want the truth. Nobody wanted the truth. Not Doreen even or Eleanor. All would try to prevent her from being what she saw. As they tried now to prevent her seeing. (Bryher 1923/2000, 242)

In this quotation we see what Butler refers to as the 'heterosexual matrix,' a set of normative discursive ideals that govern gender, sex, and sexuality, at play. This 'heterosexual imperative' accepts certain subject positions and denies others cultural intelligibility (Butler 1993, 3). Nancy knows that internally she does not adhere to societal norms and she is forced to keep that hidden. This heterosexual imperative permeates society so deeply that she cannot even share the truth, that she wants to be a boy, with her closest confidants. Instead of allowing Nancy to express her true self, society tries to put Nancy into an acceptable mold and stop her from seeing the possibility of inhabiting a non-normative subject position.

Nancy contemplates the structure of truth and reality in her society:

Everything was wrong. The whole scheme of the world seemed disjointed. Why did early impressions cling so? In babyhood one was taught it was wrong to lie. Afterwards this law was reversed. One was punished for thinking the truth. One was forced to be hypocritical. Yet one had an uneasy sensation all the time that a gate would open and something that was beyond the consciousness of the world would catch one lying and reproach one. [...] She had wanted to be a boy and write a book. To have liberty and adventures. She still wanted the same things in more intense a way. Probably it was the same with all children. All that one needed was to get hold of minds before they were warped by school. (Bryher 1923/2000, 251)

Criticism of the structure of society is apparent in this excerpt. Nancy finds society to be hypocritical: it wants people to speak the truth, but only the socially regulated, acceptable truth: criticism of the status quo is not allowed. Nevertheless, Nancy sees this normative discourse as a fragile facade that can be overtaken by something "beyond the consciousness of the world." The world that Nancy inhabits is created through a series of exclusions: this

idea is similar to the idea of discourse and its outside that Butler refers to in *Bodies That Matter*:

There is an 'outside' to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute 'outside,' an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive 'outside,' it is that which can only be thought - when it can - in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders. (1993, 8)

Normative discourse is created through exclusionary means, and due to her non-normative gender position, Nancy is aware that there are concepts that cannot be expressed through normative discourse. These concepts are part of the truth of reality that exist, but are not discussed and thereby pushed outside of discourse. Nancy continues:

She, herself, could escape into her other self. Swing her legs over the chair and shout 'to hell with marriage, patriotism, duty, they are lies, lies, lies.' (When no one was listening, of course.) And plot out just how she would run a school or a newspaper of her own. But other people couldn't. They had not the richness of her untrammelled childhood in the south to build up a separate self. (Bryher 1923/2000, 251)

Nancy views her private, masculine self as a kind of rebel: through that self, she considers herself to be able to view English society more objectively than an average English citizen, since she has experience of other cultures. This self also makes it easier for her to think of transgressive thoughts that go against the normative state of things. Nancy is angered at the societal expectations and norms forced on her and others:

Nancy walked with anger in her heart. It was not altogether a personal matter. It was personal to the extent that this web crushed her, retarded a development guessed at, dreamed of, but snatched at only in books. Yet beyond this she desired freedom not to be at the mercy of chance but everybody's privilege. [...] Dreams were a poor makeshift for a soul eager to act. (Bryher 1923/2000, 252)

In this quotation, Nancy contemplates the relationship between reality and the world of her thoughts. While Nancy's ability to create a space for herself in her mind and imagination, with the help of books and writing, has provided her with a place to which she can escape the strictures of reality, she realizes that even so she is limited. Books offer Nancy a chance to

experience life in a way that she could not in reality, but she yearns for the ability to take action. The idea of a crushing normative web is similar to Butler's idea of the heterosexual matrix: both create an all-encompassing normative discourse, which limits what can exist and what cannot.

6.2 “What was the use of existence to a woman, what compensation could there be for loss of freedom?”: The Position of Women

As has already been noted, criticism against the position of women in Victorian and Edwardian society can be found throughout Bryher's writing. According to Bryher (1962/2007, 171):

The modern world does not understand how narrow existence was for the Edwardian woman. It was not a question of class, or even money, this should be emphasized, but of public opinion. From slum to palace almost everything outside the home was forbidden ground. It was only after analysis, many years later, that I realized how much of this was due to sexual taboos that were all the harsher for never being explained or mentioned in conversation. I was not allowed to go to public lectures or to accept invitations to lunch in restaurants.

Again, Bryher notes how women are limited to domestic spaces. In *Two Selves*, Nancy begins to draw more attention to the position of women in early 20th-century England, both when considering her own future and that of the women with whom she comes into contact.

Miss Cape, a dance teacher, is one such woman. When Nancy wonders why she considers Miss Cape to be interesting, she thinks it may be “because she had a job” and has “quiet decision” in her eyes (Bryher 1923/2000, 198). She is an intellectual who would like to “settle in a place. With [her] books” (Bryher 1923/2000, 199). Miss Cape decides to move to Buenos Aires with an English lady because, as she puts it:

Well, there's not much to look forward to in England, is there? [...] I shall be thirty soon. And I can't get a higher salary here. I haven't any capital or chance of getting enough capital to start out on my own. What I can earn hardly leaves enough for bus fares when my food is paid for. And when I'm older, what am I going to do? (Bryher 1923/2000, 200)

The plight of the unmarried middle-class English woman in the early 20th century becomes evident in this quotation. Even though she might have the intellectual propensity to manage on her own, she does not have the financial means to do so. I consider Miss Cape to belong to the middle class as, although her salary is meager, she does appear to have received a formal education and works as a teacher.

As in *Development* (1920), in *Two Selves* (1923) Nancy continues to criticize how middle- and upper-class girls are brought up in Victorian society. According to Nancy, Millicent, a girl who “lives for dress,” “did not give one a very happy impression” (Bryher 1923/2000, 215). Nancy does not see that there is anything wrong with a girl being truly interested in beauty, but that Millicent “looked merely bored, curiously insincere with the heavy powder dabbed too thickly on her cheeks” (*ibid.*). In juxtaposition with Eleanor, Nancy’s more masculine friend, who wears rough jersey and corduroy climbing breeches, Millicent’s appearance seems fraudulent. Nancy goes on to explain:

Nancy could not join the other girls when they laughed at Millicent for giving up her life to dress. To express beauty in coloured stuffs was not wrong. But the lavender dress was stupid and Millicent and her powder somehow did not match. (Bryher 1923/2000, 215)

From Nancy's point of view, Millicent is lacking a will toward self-expression, which is all-important when it comes to expressing beauty: one must have an artist’s mind. In Millicent’s case, however, it appears that she is simply following social codes and feels no real passion for her appearance. This need to adhere to social conduct becomes even more apparent in Millicent’s behavior. She mentions that Nancy is very energetic and that she herself does not like to go on walks, yet according to Nancy “she looked too young and healthy to be fragile” (Bryher 1923/2000, 216). Nancy blames Millicent’s mother for this, thinking that she is “training her up to be a Restoration countess when she was a fresh stolid little milkmaid” (Bryher 1923/2000, 216). Later on in the novel Nancy blames the lack of independence in

children on parenthood: "People were too lazy to develop independence in their children. Nations were too lazy to prevent the roots of war" (Bryher 1923/2000, 224).

When Nancy and Millicent discuss having finished school, Millicent mentions that it is nice to be grown up. Nancy feels that it is pointless to mention that "they were less free than school children" (Bryher 1923/2000, 216). Nancy has trouble relating to Millicent, as she did with the girls at Downwood, and ponders whether she ever felt a desire to be free. Nancy views Millicent as "rather like a pedigree kitten that had never been allowed to lap alone lest it should take a spoonful of milk too little or too much" (Bryher 1923/2000, 216-217). Nancy deems Millicent's development to have been stunted by social norms, and wonders: "Did one brain in a thousand have the courage to achieve full development?" (Bryher 1923/2000, 216).

Across the room from Millicent and her, Nancy can hear adults speaking in dismayed voices about young people "breaking away from the traditions of a century." One example that is given is that young women no longer reply to invitations by letter, but telephone instead (Bryher 1923/2000, 217). They regard such behavior to be reckless and Nancy sadly wonders whether she will ever even have a chance to be reckless. She imagines that the adults are speaking of another world, which she feels must be "Terribly beautiful; or it would not be so criticized" (Bryher 1923/2000, 217). Here we see a clear shift in norms between generations.

The effects of World War I also have an impact on the position of women. Eleanor, Nancy's friend from Downwood who works as a secretary, tells Nancy that she cannot manage on the three pounds she is paid per week, but that she was told not to ask for a raise "in such serious times" (Bryher 1923/2000, 246). Eleanor wonders whether the position of young women, especially, will ameliorate after the war, but her conclusion is rather morose:

There will be no money for years to finance any new schemes of education. As for the liberty of women! After my experience with Lady Cockle I'm beginning to fear that they will only impose fresh shackles. They squash the young more vigorously than men. (Bryher 1923/2000, 247)

Eleanor is referring to the difference in power between generations: the older generations, which are in power, are able to dictate requirements for the younger generations, even though there may be clear ideological differences between them. Nancy contemplates this point and replies:

It's the old, the old in thought, rather than men or women, I imagine. Most of the girls at Downwood, for instance, were born old. Whatever their freedom they would not have developed any further. But it is not much of an outlook. (Bryher 1923/2000, 247)

Here the ideological gap is presented as being not only between generations, but between those who have a conservative way of thinking and those who are open to change. According to Nancy, the girls at Downwood were "born old": by saying so, she may refer to the fact that they refuse to question authority and seem perfectly happy adhering to contemporary social norms.

Eleanor continues to describe her predicament: as a young, educated woman who has yet to meet a man she would like to marry, she does not have many options. She mentions that she will never have a chance to earn more than five hundred pounds a year and that she currently makes one hundred fifty pounds (Bryher 1923/2000, 247). She explains her stance on marriage as follows:

I have never met a man yet I wanted to marry. Think of the men one knows... self-centered, uneducated... the Public School type, who would want their children brought up with the same code as their grandfathers in a totally different age. One might meet a man with whom one could fall in love but it is very doubtful. The other sort of marriage just means being a housekeeper to someone it would be hard even to respect. And everyone sniffs at me for being a secretary. Lots of mother's friends have dropped asking me to tea. It's funny but it's true. (Bryher 1923/2000, 248)

Eleanor has begun to be shunned due to not fulfilling societal expectations. Nancy suggests that Eleanor move to the United States, but she does not wish to, as then she would have to start all over in a new land, where she has no memories or friends (Bryher 1923/2000, 248).

Eleanor expresses the dreams she had:

I hoped the first year I left school, Nancy, that things were going to happen. New schemes, new liberty. I thought I could have got a job where I could have pushed ahead. How I would have worked at it. I'm supposed to have a good job now, as women's positions go. Lots of girls envy me. But you can't put much enthusiasm into correcting Lady Cockle's mistakes and packing up boy scout pamphlets. (Bryher 1923/2000, 248)

Eleanor's frustration at her inability to progress socially in spite of her intelligence and education due to societal strictures of what is a proper occupation for a young lady is apparent in the quotation above.

Nancy describes Eleanor:

Eleanor's dark hair curled softly against her grey coat collar. There was something powerful about her. A clarity of decision and action. Wasted because modern England had little or nothing to offer her. (Bryher 1923/2000, 248)

Eleanor appears to display a kind of masculinity with which Nancy can relate. Her "clarity of decision and action" and "powerful" air are qualities that would have been attributed to men in the Victorian period.

Nancy's anger at her years spent in Downwood comes forth. It is Nancy's belief that the purpose of education should be to lead one to independence, but Downwood did just the opposite. It taught the girls to: "Obey your parents, obey the school, obey everything and everyone but your own self. Instead of teaching us to live all school did was to knock out of us any little impulse toward freedom that we had" (Bryher 1923/2000, 249). The education that Nancy received has left her feeling helpless and as though she is of no use to anyone.

6.3 “To win freedom I must write a book”: Art as a Form of World-Making

As in *Development* (1920), art plays a large role in *Two Selves* (1923). Chapter IV in *Two Selves* begins with Nancy’s speculation: “To win freedom I must write a book” (Bryher 1923/2000, 218). Nonetheless, the thought quickly unravels into apprehension and self-doubt. Nancy does not feel confident in her ability to string words together and ponders as follows:

There was something too authentic and too storm-wracked about her emotions for the right word ever to come. And if the right word did not come it would not be good enough to be printed and if it were not printed she would never get a friend. If she did not get a friend she could never find answers to her questions, never be recognized as an individual, never be free. (Bryher 1923/2000, 218)

What becomes apparent from the quotation above is Nancy’s loneliness and need for companionship: she needs a “friend.” This need is further described as follows: “What [Nancy] wanted was a friend. That spoke as the Elizabethans wrote. That brought adventure to her like a flame” (Bryher 1923/2000, 219). Nancy wishes to find someone who views the world differently, as she does. Writing becomes a driving force for her. As she muses: “Write a book and make them understand. Write a book. And find she had a friend” (Bryher 1923/2000, 221). Not only does Nancy want a friend, but a desire to be understood in general can be deduced from Nancy’s thoughts. Nancy’s difficulty in expressing herself is exemplified in the following quotation:

Nancy tried to get a word for the colour of the water that slid over her oar. It was not silver and it was not green. New words. Half the Elizabethan ones had been forgotten and the Elizabethans had created their own language. Words were hard to make. Absolutely they must express the shade, the feeling. But she must have new phrases. New ways of expression... new discoveries... new lands. (Bryher 1923/2000, 232)

Nancy goes on to deliberate the complexity of attempting to describe the sea: “It was not the boyish gesture of many writers, ‘grey waves, open haven,’ sort of business” (Bryher 1923/2000, 233). She wishes to discover a language that is more complex than the normative, masculine language of literature. This linguistic limitation is explained by Butler (1993, 225) as follows: “Where there is an ‘I’ who utters or speaks and thereby produces an effect in

discourse, there is first a discourse which precedes and enables that 'I' and forms in language the constraining trajectory of its will." This echoes Foucault's idea that there is a link between power, language, and discourse and that "power's hold of sex is maintained through language" (1978, 83). Since concepts and ideas gain their meaning through discourse, there is a specific range of thoughts that can be expressed, or even imagined, using normative language.

This is an idea that is also touched upon in *Gender Trouble* (Butler 1990, 9), but merely in relation to gender: "These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender." More specifically, since normative discourse, and therefore the language that supports it, are formed through the exclusion of those subjects and concepts that are deemed unfit, it naturally follows that language does not lend itself to Nancy's self-expression, as her gender position falls outside the norm.

Nancy suspects that her limited scope of experience hinders her ability to become a writer:

If I were a boy and could go to sea. If I could keep watch at night under the sails. I can't put that gull into words. I can't put anything into words till I've learnt adventure. What is the point of going back into the same autumn as last year, thinking the same thoughts, writing nothing? (Bryher 1923/2000, 237)

Nancy's real life does not offer the same kind of inspiration as the novels and poetry that she reads: she blames this, in large part, on the limitedness of her life as a girl in Victorian England. The monotonous nature of her existence does not provide her with the substance she would like in order to be able to write truly great works. In this way, writing can be viewed as the embodiment of her wishes and ambitions as a whole: society prevents Nancy from achieving them by imposing limits on what is proper and what is not.

7. Conclusion

Development (1920) and *Two Selves* (1923) are both multifaceted works that deal with a range of issues, from nationalism to gender and sexuality, and from theory of art to feminism. They could be studied from the lens of race or class, as well as the choice for this thesis, gender. While Bryher's works have not received as much acclaim as her partner H.D.'s, they do provide valuable insight into the experience of non-normative subjectivity in the early 20th century.

Female masculinity, the key form of non-normativity expressed in the novel, was the key focus of this study. The purpose was to study how non-normative subjectivity could be expressed through autobiographical fiction. As the research endeavor went on, it grew more and more clear that it was nearly impossible to separate the study of female masculinity in the early 20th century from the discourse psychoanalysis that were prevalent at the time that the novels were written. Indeed, it would appear that Bryher's perception of gender was greatly influenced by psychoanalytical theories of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and this is visible in her portrayal of Nancy's gender. What is also clear, however, is that a large part of Nancy's discomfort is due to the limits imposed on her as a female. Nancy is in fact doubly marginalized: firstly, by society due to her being a woman; and secondly, from women who perceive her as other due to her masculinity. She can be considered to be even further Othered by men due to displaying masculinity on a female body, as exemplified by her fencing incident treated in section 6.1.

It is due to this marginalization that Nancy turns to books and writing as sources of consolation and self-expression. The Elizabethans' creation of new words and switching gender roles (such as in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*) show Nancy that the world is not limited to the already existing concepts and entities: new ones can be created. She feels that language is too limited for her to be able to express herself completely: this can be viewed as

an effect of her attempt to signify herself as someone inhabiting a non-normative subject position using the language of dominant discourse. The novels in their entirety can be considered to be such an endeavor: Bryher uses Imagist techniques, which were popular amongst other queer modernist writers, such as H.D. and Amy Lowell, to help express Nancy's subject position (Bryher 2000, xviii).

In conclusion, it is the complex interplay between the genre of autobiographical fiction, non-normative gender identity, and discourse of art and self-expression that make these novels worth studying. They provide an in-depth account of normative discourse at play from an antagonistic position, as well as tests the borders of normative language as a tool for the expression of non-normative subjectivity.

Works Cited

- Abelove, Henry. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Adams, James Eli and Andrew H. Miller. *Sexualities in Victorian Britain*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Administration of Estates Act, 1925. 31 May 2012. Web. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1925/23/pdfs/ukpga_19250023_en.pdf>.
- Barron, James W. *Humor and Psyche*. New Jersey: Routledge, 1999.
- Bloom, Clive. *Lesbian and Gay Writing*. London: MacMillan, 1990.
- Boynton, Victoria and Jo Malin. *Encyclopedia of Women's Autobiography: K-Z*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.
- Bravman, Scott. *Queer Fictions of the Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Brooks, Carellin. *Every Inch a Woman: Phallic Possession, Femininity, and the Text*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006.
- Brown, Susan, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy. Orlando Project. "Bryher." Web. 10 August 2013. <<http://orlando.cambridge.org/>>
- Bryher. *The Heart to Artemis*. 1962. Reprint. Ashfield, Massachusetts: Paris Press, 2006.
- Bryher. *Two Novels: Development and Two Selves*. 1920, 1923. Reprint. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000.
- Bush, Julia. *Edwardian Ladies and Imperial Power*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Danahay, Martin. *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2005.
- Donald, James et al. *Close Up: Cinema and Modernism*. London: Cassell, 1998.
- Ellis, Havelock. *Sexual Inversion*. London: F.A. Davis, 1901.
- Faderman, Lillian. "Who Hid Lesbian History?" (1979). *The Feminist History Reader*. 205-211. New York: Routledge, 2006.

- Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. 1972. Reprint. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la sexualité: La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Édition Gallimard, 1976.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. 1976. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Fraser, Hilary et al. *Gender and the Victorian Periodical: Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. *Signets: Reading H.D.* Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Frost, Ginger Suzanne. *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class, and Gender in Victorian England*. Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1995.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Gillies, Mary Ann and Aurelea Denise Mahood. *Modernist Literature: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
- Gilmore, Leigh. *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Hall, Donald Eugene. *Subjectivity*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Hines, Sally. *TransForming Gender: Transgender Practices of Identity, Intimacy and Care*. The Policy Press, 2007.
- Henke, Suzette. *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.
- Hoberman, Ruth. *Gendering Classicism: The Ancient World in Women's Historical Fiction*. SUNY Press, 1997.
- Hoberman, Ruth. "Multiplying the past: Gender and Narrative in Bryher's *Gate to the Sea*." *Contemporary Literature* 31.3 (1990): 354-372.

Jagose, Anne-Marie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

Krafft-Ebing, Richard von. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. New York : Rehman Company, 1906.

Lootens, Tricia A. *Lost Saints: Silence, Gender, and Victorian Literary Canonization*. Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1996.

Mansfield, Nick. *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*. New York: NYU Press, 2000.

Mar Castro Varela, María do, Nikita Dhawan, and Antke Engel. *Hegemony and Heteronormativity: Revisiting 'The Political' in Queer Politics*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2011.

Married Women's Property Act, 1882. Web. 31 May 2012. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1882/75/pdfs/ukpga_18820075_en.pdf>.

McCabe, Susan. "Whither Sexuality and Gender? 'What That Sign Signifies' and the Rise of Queer Historicism." *Pacific Coast Philology* 41 (2006): 26-31.

McCabe, Susan. "Survival of the Queerly Fit: Darwin, Marianne Moore, and Elizabeth Bishop." *Twentieth Century Literature* 55.4 (2009): 547-571.

McIntosh Snyder, Jane. *Lesbian Desire in the Lyrics of Sappho*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Penn, Donna. "Queer: Theorizing Politics and History." *The Feminist History Reader*. 232-241. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Richardson, Angelique and Chris Willis. *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Rishoi, Christy. *From Girl to Woman: American Women's Coming-Of-Age Narratives*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.

Rubin, Gayle S. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*. 143-178. Routledge, 1999.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Stevens, Hugh. *The Cambridge Companion to Lesbian and Gay Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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

Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Vicinus, Martha. *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Vicinus, Martha. *Women's Review of Books*. May/June 2007, Vol. 24 Issue 3, p. 25-26.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* (1929). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. 2. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. London: Norton, 2006. 2092-2152.