

**THE SUBVERSIVE CINDERELLA: GENDER, CLASS AND COLONIALISM  
IN THE WORK OF DOROTHY EDWARDS (1903-1934)**

by

Claire Andrea Flay

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of  
Philosophy of the University of Glamorgan

This research programme was carried out with support from the Arts and Humanities  
Research Council

December 2008

## ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore the impact of gender, class and colonialist issues on the life and fictions of Welsh novelist and short-story writer Dorothy Edwards. Although largely a literary analysis, this thesis also includes new biographical material which suggests that the class and gender ideologies that influenced her early years became key to her writing. After an introduction presenting the arguments of the thesis, the first two chapters are both primarily aimed at establishing the context of Edwards' work, the first in terms of her community and life history, and the second in terms of literary context. Chapter one locates Edwards firmly in her social and historical context, in part by means of new and exciting information discovered in a recent deposit of manuscripts pertaining to Edwards held at the University of Reading. In chapter two I argue that Edwards can be placed within the female modernist tradition as a result of her experimentation with narrative perspective in her 1927 short-story collection *Rhapsody* and her particular utilisation of the short story form.

The central body of this thesis consists of a literary re-analysis of Edwards' work in the light of feminist and postcolonial theory, alongside a class-based reading of her fictions. Edwards' work cries out for analysis in terms of feminist theory, and her depiction of female roles and female sexuality in *Rhapsody* forms the focus of chapter three. Most if not all of Edwards' women are assigned to a marginalized position, and I explore the implications this has regarding her concept of gender relations. Edwards' depiction of social class in her fictions is particularly interesting; accordingly, chapter four offers a discussion of the representation of class in her 1928 novel *Winter Sonata*. I argue that here, more clearly than in her short stories, she deconstructs the constrictive nature of class boundaries and expectations and the effects these have on male and female, working- and middle-class characters alike.

I return in chapter five to the details of Edwards' life, this time during the much overlooked and misunderstood period following the publication of *Winter Sonata*, much of which she spent in the company of the Bloomsbury group when visiting or living in London. The final chapter of this thesis analyses the literary produce of Edwards' time in London in the light of postcolonial theory; I suggest that the idea of a pervasive and mentally colonising cultural imperialism is key to understanding Edwards' work.

The thesis ultimately aims to demonstrate that an analysis of Edwards' literary output in the context of current theoretical paradigms, together with new biographical information discovered in archival sources, reveals that issues of class, gender and colonialism are central to the work of Dorothy Edwards, as indeed they were to the Wales in which she was born and raised.

## INTRODUCTION

In *A Room of One's Own* (1929) Virginia Woolf wrote that in order to be a successful female writer one must master 'the first great lesson' – to write 'as a woman who has forgotten that she is a woman'.<sup>1</sup> A superficial reading of Welsh writer Dorothy Edwards' 1927 short-story collection *Rhapsody* and 1928 novel *Winter Sonata* initially suggests that their author not only appears to have forgotten her gender, but also her class and nationality.<sup>2</sup> Given the setting and tone of Edwards' fiction her readers could be forgiven for initially believing hers to be the work of a middle-class male author. Her stories are usually narrated from a male perspective and are set in large country houses or holiday retreats where her middle- and upper-class characters spend idle lives or long summer vacations. They do not worry about everyday needs and are usually financially independent; if they are employed that fact is only mentioned in passing. This is in complete contrast to the work of her Welsh contemporaries, as novelist and critic Glyn Jones has pointed out: '[u]sually in Anglo-Welsh writing the only people who do not work are the ones on the dole.'<sup>3</sup> The world in which Edwards locates her fiction could not be more different from the south Wales coal-mining community in which she was born and raised, or the respectable but impoverished life that she later led in the Cardiff suburb of Rhiwbina.

The fact that no obviously identifiable Welsh voice can be found in Edwards' fiction goes some way to explain why her work has until recently been sidelined from the Welsh literary canon. Edwards' nationality, coupled with her lack of direct focus on Wales in her work, has resulted in her relative neglect by both Welsh and English

---

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929, 1938; London: Penguin, 1993), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007), and *Winter Sonata* (1928; London: Virago, 1986). All subsequent references to these texts will be to these editions and will be in parentheses in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Glyn Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues: Essays on Anglo-Welsh Writers and Writing* (London: Dent, 1968), 56.

camps; as Christopher Meredith suggests, ‘She seems to have dropped almost inaudibly between two stools’.<sup>4</sup> Several of her Welsh contemporaries held the view that, as she did not write directly about Welsh issues or set her fiction in Wales, she did not qualify as a ‘Welsh’ writer. Glyn Jones, for example, felt that Edwards was ‘too remote – not a Welsh writer in English’ and as a result did not ‘take much interest in her’.<sup>5</sup> He found her work to be ‘thin and boring’, lacking the gritty realist narrative that characterises the work of the Welsh male valleys writers of the period.<sup>6</sup> Instead, he commented in his seminal critique of Anglophone Welsh writing, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (1968), perhaps rather derisively, that Edwards ‘comes nearest to those writers who deal with artistic people at their week-ends in the country’.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, in *Fountains of Praise: University College, Cardiff 1883-1983*, co-edited by the novelist and critic Gwyn Jones and published to mark the centenary of Cardiff University, a note on Edwards which states that she ‘published a volume of short stories [...] and a mildly experimental novel [...] which were sufficiently notable to gain her an *entrée* into off-Bloomsbury literary society’, suggest the view that she was a hanger-on of the London literati rather than a Welsh writer in her own right.<sup>8</sup> In Wales at least, her brief and sporadic association with the English author David Garnett seems to have done her reputation more harm than good. Dorothy Edwards was born into the same type of community as Gwyn Jones and Glyn Jones and during the same period, yet her writing is curiously devoid of any reference to Wales; Edwards mentions her home country only twice in her published fiction.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Meredith, ‘The window facing the sea: the short stories of Dorothy Edwards’, *Planet*, 107 (1994), 64-5.

<sup>5</sup> Glyn Jones, letter to Luned Meredith, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1985. Courtesy of Luned Meredith.

<sup>6</sup> Glyn Jones, letter to Gwen Davies, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1985. Courtesy of Luned Meredith.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, 56.

<sup>8</sup> Gwyn Jones and Michael Quinn, eds., *Fountains of Praise: University College, Cardiff 1883-1983* (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1983), 146.

<sup>9</sup> ‘The Conquered’ is set on the border between England and Wales, and in ‘Mutiny’ the Reverend Montgomery intends to carry out missionary-style work in the impoverished south

But Edwards' neglect is not solely as a result of her somewhat unexpected choice of subject matter. Arguments concerning the validity of representations of Wales have been inherently gender-based, underpinned by the suggestion that writing by Welsh men is somehow truer of the Welsh experience than writing by Welsh women. In his 1957 lecture 'The First Forty Years: Some Notes on Anglo-Welsh Literature' Gwyn Jones, in his capacity as Professor of English at the then University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, said:

[The] present world [of Anglo-Welsh writing] began [...] with the publication of *My People* in 1915 [...] with Caradoc Evans the war-horn was blown, the gauntlet thrown down, the gates of the temple shattered [...] it was as though some new-style yahoo had flung a bucket of dung through the Welsh parlour window, and in case anyone was genteel or well-meaning enough not to notice anything amiss, had flung the bucket in after, with a long-reverberating clangor [...] The Anglo-Welsh had arrived.<sup>10</sup>

In this lecture, Jones discounts any writing by Anglophone Welsh authors before the publication of Evans' *My People* (1915). 'True, there had been Allen Raine', he concedes, but continues, 'no one now reads [her work]',<sup>11</sup> ignoring Raine's popularity in her day. Raine published her first novel, *A Welsh Singer*, in 1897; by 1911, her novels, two of which were made into silent films, had sold over two million copies.<sup>12</sup> Her books were read in America, the British colonies, and Australia (the above sales figures exclude the American market); at various times during the eighty years following her death they were translated into Irish, French and Welsh.<sup>13</sup> This led John Harris, in his 1993 article on Raine, to claim that '[w]hatever the judgement of literary historians, for the book trade Anglo-Welsh literature unquestionably began in 1897

---

Wales valleys. These stories are discussed in chapter six.

<sup>10</sup> Gwyn Jones, 'The First Forty Years: Some Notes on Anglo-Welsh Literature' (1957), in Sam Adams and Gwilym Rees Hughes, eds., *Triskel One: Essays on Welsh and Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1971), 77.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. Allen Raine was the pseudonym of Welsh novelist Anne Adaliza Beynon Puddicombe (1836-1908), who published eleven novels and a collection of short stories. See Meic Stephens, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 611-2.

<sup>12</sup> John Harris, 'Queen of the Rushes', *Planet*, 97 (1993), 64, 67.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

with the publication of *A Welsh Singer*.<sup>14</sup>

Ostensibly of the romance genre, Raine's novels are at times melodramatic, involving several central characters intertwined in intricate and often unrealistic plots. Although she did not emerge onto the Anglo-Welsh scene with as much scandal or contention as Caradoc Evans, she proved that she was very aware of the social and economic factors affecting her Welsh communities, and portrays these with accuracy and skill. Her 1906 novel, *Queen of the Rushes*, for example, depicts and criticizes the emotional instability created and exacerbated by the 1904 religious revival in Wales. In her introduction to *Queen of the Rushes*, Katie Gramich highlights the dismissal of not just populist fiction, by the likes of Raine, but also what may be considered highbrow literature, as a result of gender bias, stating:

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that female writers' exclusion [from the Welsh literary canon] is a direct result of a patriarchal bias against the supposedly inferior literary productions of women.<sup>15</sup>

Despite Raine's success, and the fact that her work was written and set in Wales, featured Welsh characters and depicted specifically Welsh issues, Jones saw fit to discount her.

But, as Raine's case proves, Welsh women were writing and publishing in English before the twentieth century, and doing so with some success: the lack of female-authored texts in the orthodox Welsh canon is evidently not caused by a lack of writing by Welsh women. On the contrary, Jane Aaron has revealed in her research into nineteenth-century Welsh women's writing a relative profusion of such authors. In her article, 'A national seduction: Wales in nineteenth-century women's writing', Aaron remarks that when she embarked upon her research she expected to find a dozen writers, but 'a few weeks' work' in the National Library unearthed the names

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>15</sup> Katie Gramich, 'Introduction' in Allen Raine, *Queen of the Rushes* (1906; Dinas Powys: Honno, 1998), 1.

of over 60 women writing in English, and a roughly equivalent number of Welsh-language writers.<sup>16</sup>

In her extensive and ground-breaking research on Welsh women's history Deirdre Beddoe suggests that the very specific formations of Welsh society have rendered 'Welsh women [...] culturally invisible'.<sup>17</sup> As Beddoe points out, the dominant stereotypical signifiers of Welsh popular culture during the last 150 or so years have been overtly masculine. The embodiment of Welsh masculinity, the miner, spent his hard-earned wages in his local public house and cinema, watched boxing matches and races, sang in the male voice choir, and flaunted his masculine physique on the rugby or football field at the weekend. The shadow cast by this fine figure of masculinity has, perhaps inevitably, served to obscure his female compatriot. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Angela John in her introduction to the edited collection, *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939* (1991), where she says: 'The emphasis has been placed on celebrating the land of our fathers rather than viewing Welsh history from the equally valid perspectives of women.'<sup>18</sup> Historically, there has been little room to negotiate a place for women in Welsh cultural consciousness.

As both Beddoe and John have shown, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Wales was dominated by the heavy industries of coal, steel and slate; paid work was almost exclusively a male preserve and patriarchal social conventions were commonplace. As a result, much writing from Wales has been centred upon issues relating to the coalfield and its workers. Economics, labour politics and employment

---

<sup>16</sup> Jane Aaron, 'A national seduction: Wales in nineteenth-century women's writing', *New Welsh Review*, 27 (1994-5), 31.

<sup>17</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, 'Images of Welsh Women', in Tony Curtis, ed., *Wales: The Imagined Nation* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), 227.

<sup>18</sup> Angela V. John, ed., 'Introduction' in *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 1.

are all key features in work by the likes of Merthyr author Jack Jones and Rhondda-based writers Lewis Jones and Gwyn Thomas. In fact, these two writers are considered so integral to Welsh writing in English that they were both featured twice on the original list of twenty authors to be included in the ‘Library of Wales’ series, a Welsh Assembly Government project which purports to make the best of Welsh writing in English readily available to the general reading public.<sup>19</sup> The combined share of these two authors, at 20 per cent, stands larger than the *entire* portion allocated to female writers (15 per cent).<sup>20</sup> This deficit of women-authored texts to be included in a state-funded, state-focused project shows that even in the twenty-first century Welsh women remain culturally overshadowed by their male counterparts, a factor which Aaron attributes to the patriarchal nature of society:

Welsh historians and social commentators appear to have considered it something of an exception for any woman to have made any contribution to Welsh cultural life.<sup>21</sup>

Twentieth-century Welsh writing in English, then, is dominated by its engagement with industry, labour, and class conflict, and the way in which these created and contributed to a specifically Welsh national identity. The proliferation of south Wales industrial writing during the 1930s by novelists such as Lewis Jones, Jack Jones and Gwyn Thomas, indicates the extent to which the economic and class-based struggles taking place in Welsh mining communities permeated the country’s literary output. Prior to the 1930s, however, the industrial landscape was yet to be interpreted in any significant detail in English-language Welsh prose. Evans’ *My People*, for example, was published in 1915 but it is set in rural Wales. In fact, the

---

<sup>19</sup> The texts included by Lewis Jones on the original list, *Cwmardy* (1937) and *We Live* (1939), were actually published in one combined volume in 2006. See Lewis Jones, *Cwmardy; & We Live* (Cardigan: Parthian, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Announced in 2005, the original list of twenty books to be published in the Library of Wales series featured seventeen male-authored texts compared to three female-authored texts: Edwards was one of these three. See <http://www.libraryofwales.org> for further information.

<sup>21</sup> Jane Aaron, ‘A review of the contribution of women to Welsh life and prospects for the future’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 8 (2002), 188.



only Welsh writer making a successful attempt at industrial-based fiction before 1930 was Rhys Davies: writing in London in the 1920s, Davies set his fiction in the Rhondda of his upbringing. His first novel, *The Withered Root* (1927), appeared in the same year as Edwards' *Rhapsody*. But on the whole the industrial fiction privileged as truly representative of Wales did not begin to emerge until after Edwards' death in 1934. By and large, Edwards was writing and publishing her work in an atmosphere in which Welsh writing was still largely required to be romantic, or at best parochial, in order to be considered commercially viable. Stephen Knight points out that:

London publishers, active enough in Welsh romances and contributionist material, were not publishing worker-based industrial fiction in the early twentieth century [...] it was only when in the 1930s a sympathetic left-leaning English audience, served by publishers like Martin Lawrence and Victor Gollancz, was willing to buy novels to discover the situation in Wales that writers could work to find a form and a voice to describe the strange new world in which the south Welsh found themselves.<sup>22</sup>

But even a markedly left-wing publisher like Gollancz had to moderate the tone of the work that his company published. Gwyn Thomas' *Sorrow For Thy Sons* (1986), for example, written in 1935 and submitted to Gollancz in a competition for a working-class novel, was rejected on the basis of its being too ruthless in its representation of 1930s south Wales. Thomas recalls Gollancz telling him that 'its facts were so raw, its wrath so pitiless, its commercial prospects were nil unless he could issue a free pair of asbestos underdrawers to every reader. So he had to say no to publication.'<sup>23</sup> In her Welsh-language essay on Edwards and her contemporary, the Welsh-language writer Kate Roberts, Katie Gramich highlights the fact that Edwards began publishing her work before Welsh writing in English had established itself as a genre:

Wrth edrych am reswm am y bylchau anesmwyth sydd yn ei gwaith, mae'n

---

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 63.

<sup>23</sup> Gwyn Thomas, quoted in Dai Smith, 'Introduction' in *Sorrow For Thy Sons* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986), 7.

well troi at sefyllfa gyhoeddi'r Eingl-Gymry yn y cyfnod. Gallwn weld yn eithaf eglur nad oedd llawer o ddewis i'r awduron hyn ar wahân i anelu eu gwaith at y farchnad lyfrau yn Lloegr [...] Mil naw tri saith oedd y trobwynt, mae'n debyg, gyda sefydlu'r cylchgrawn *Wales*, a alluogodd awduron di-Gymraeg Cymru i anelu eu gwaith yn uniongyrchol at ddarllenwyr Cymreig.<sup>24</sup>

[When looking for a reason for the uneasy gaps in her work, it is best to turn to the situation of Anglo-Welsh publishing at the time. We can see quite clearly that there was not a lot of choice for these authors apart from aiming their work at the literary market in England [...] 1937 was the turning point, it seems, with the establishing of the magazine *Wales*, enabling non-Welsh-speaking Welsh authors to aim their work exclusively at the Welsh reader.]

Given that Welsh women have largely been historically excluded from the concept of Welsh society perpetuated as the 'true Wales' by its most dominant and visible fraction – the working-class (and, indeed, at times middle-class) male – it is hardly surprising that Edwards selected a different fictional context in which to explore her very different experiences. In the literary climate in which she was writing, it is fair to argue that a novel written by a Welsh woman about the industrial life of her country would not have found a publisher, let alone an audience. Instead, Edwards developed a far more subtle, complex and subversive method of criticising the power dynamics of capitalist society based on her own childhood experiences – or so, at least, I argue in this thesis.

Edwards' neglect, then, is largely representative of the situation occupied by Welsh women writers in general in the twentieth century. However, in recent years much has been done in Wales to rediscover and reprint the work of women writers that had previously been hidden. The 'Classics' series of Honno Welsh Women's Press has been at the forefront of this with publications such as *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460 - 2001: An Anthology* (2003) providing literary proof of a tradition of

---

<sup>24</sup>

Katie Gramich 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd: storïau byrion Dorothy Edwards a Kate Roberts yn y dauddegau', in M. Wynn Thomas, ed., *Diffinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 83-4, my translation.

Welsh female poetry.<sup>25</sup> Other organisations have also made important contributions. Bridgend-based publishers Seren, for example, republished a collection of border writer Margiad Evans' short stories, *The Old and the Young* (1948), in 1998; her novel *The Wooden Doctor* (1933) was republished by Honno Classics in 2005, and in 2006 her first publication, *Country Dance* (1932), was one of the first five books to be published in the new 'Library of Wales' series, with the result that several of Evans' fascinating fictions are available and accessible to readers.<sup>26</sup> Despite this, much remains to be done and many Welsh women writers remain hidden, their work out of print and their biographies unwritten. Even as we move into the twenty-first century the attitudes that dictate the canon of Welsh writing in English circles have, on the whole, changed little, as the gender bias of the 'Library of Wales' series shows. My motivation in writing this thesis is to contribute to the rediscovery of notable Welsh women writers by means of an analysis of the life and works of an important but severely neglected Welsh writer who, though her work has received increased attention in recent years, is still lacking a biography or an extensive critical analysis of her writing. In the remainder of this introduction I discuss Edwards' oeuvre and the critical heritage on her work, before outlining the structure of this thesis.

## I

On its publication in the late 1920s Dorothy Edwards' writing was greeted with a critical acclaim generally not afforded to other Welsh authors of her generation. When *Rhapsody* appeared Edwards, then just twenty-four years old, was hailed as a genius

---

<sup>25</sup> Catherine Brennan and Katie Gramich, eds., *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460 - 2001: An Anthology* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Margiad Evans' other novels *Turf or Stone* (1934) and *Creed* (1936) remain out of print and largely inaccessible, as do her autobiographical texts *Autobiography* (1943) and *A Ray of Darkness* (1952), and two volumes of poetry *Poems from Obscurity* (1947) and *A Candle Ahead* (1956).

by literary critic Gerald Gould, and *Winter Sonata* was described as ‘one of the few great novels in English literature’ by writer David Garnett.<sup>27</sup> Both texts were reissued by Virago in 1986 but were soon out of print, and Edwards has in the past been more generally known for the tragic circumstances surrounding her suicide in 1934 than for any literary value that her work may have had. (An initial Google search that I performed at the very beginning of my research in 2004 revealed her listed on a web page entitled ‘Infamous Welsh suicides’, but until very recently no reference to her writings appeared.) Yet her published fiction *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* provide rich material for analysis, and form the central focus of this thesis.

Further research has also revealed several other valuable sources of primary material written by Edwards. During her time at the then University College of Monmouthshire and South Glamorgan (now Cardiff University) in the early 1920s Edwards utilised the college magazine, *Cap and Gown*, as a vehicle for practising and honing her writing skills. As a result, this source contains some collaborative poems and a short story, and well as several short but valuable essays in which she reveals her early literary ambitions.<sup>28</sup> In 1925-6 three of her stories, ‘A Country House’, ‘Summer-time’, and ‘The Conquered’, appeared in Edgell Rickword’s edited periodical *The Calendar of Modern Letters* before being collected, with seven other previously unpublished stories, in *Rhapsody*.<sup>29</sup> *Winter Sonata* appeared in 1928, and

---

<sup>27</sup> Entry for Dorothy Edwards, in R. T. Jenkins, ed., *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (London: The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, 1959), 185. S. Beryl Jones, ‘Dorothy Edwards as a writer of short stories’, *Welsh Review*, 7 (1948), 184. David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 22<sup>nd</sup> November n.d. [c. 1928]. Dorothy Edwards Collection, Reading University Library, MS 5085, packet 3, item 6. The Dorothy Edwards Collection will hereafter be referred to as ‘Reading Collection’.

<sup>28</sup> Of particular interest are Dorothy Edwards ‘On Temperatures’, *Cap and Gown*, 22/1 (1924), 27-29, and ‘On Writing’, *Cap and Gown*, 23/1 (1925), 11-12.

<sup>29</sup> ‘A Country House’, ‘The Conquered’ and ‘Summer-time’ appeared in *The Calendar of Modern Letters* between 1925-1927. See Edgell Rickword and Douglas Garman, eds., *The Calendar of Modern Letters March 1925 - July 1927, Volume I March 1925 - August 1925* (London: Frank Cass, 1966) 436-448; and *The Calendar of Modern Letters, Volumes 3 and 4 April 1926 - July 1927* (London: Frank Cass, 1966) 1-11 and 216-225.

in the same year Edwards also contributed a short study of G. K. Chesterton to Rickword's edited essay collection *Scrutinies*.<sup>30</sup> During 1928-1932 she regularly undertook review work on behalf of the *Western Mail and South Wales News*; according to Tony Brown, she published thirty reviews during this period.<sup>31</sup> In 1933, after a period of relative silence in terms of fiction, Edwards began once again to write short stories, and after her death in 1934 *Life and Letters To-day* published 'The Problem of Life' and 'Mutiny'.<sup>32</sup> These stories reveal definite developments in Edwards' political and ideological views, and offer an exciting glimpse of the volume of short stories that she was writing shortly before her death.

This, then, comprises Edwards' entire published output. My research has also revealed a recent deposit of manuscripts at the University of Reading which provides new and largely uninvestigated primary resources. The existence of this collection has finally put paid to the previous confusion about Edwards' literary remains. David Garnett, in his autobiography *The Familiar Faces* (1962), claims that 'Dorothy's papers, her letters and diaries, were put in [...] [his] hands', while the 'Preface' to the Virago editions of *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* states that on the morning of her death Edwards 'burnt her letters and papers'.<sup>33</sup> But in a 1986 essay S. Beryl Jones, Edwards' closest friend from her University years, claims otherwise. Jones writes:

In fact the only letters that Dorothy made known she wished to be destroyed were those from John Thorburn to whom she had been briefly engaged. It was

---

<sup>30</sup> Dorothy Edwards, 'G.K. Chesterton', in Edgell Rickword, ed., *Scrutinies* (London: Wishart, 1928), 29-40.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Brown, "'A personal isolated odd universe": Dorothy Edwards and her short fiction' in Christopher Meredith, ed., *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), 145 (fn).

<sup>32</sup> Dorothy Edwards, 'The Problem of Life', *Life and Letters To-day*, 9 (1934), 662-76, and 'Mutiny', *Life and Letters To-day*, 10 (1934), 325-346. Both of these stories were included in the republication of *Rhapsody* in the Library of Wales series. See Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007). All further references to these stories will be to the Parthian edition and will be in parentheses in the text.

<sup>33</sup> David Garnett, *The Familiar Faces* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), 98. All subsequent references to these texts will be to this edition and will be in parentheses in the text. 'Preface' to *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* (London: Virago, 1986), i.

to me and a friend that Mrs Edwards entrusted the task of sorting the rest, and among other papers I still have in my possession an octavo diary covering a part of the year before her death together with letters that she had chosen to keep from various people, including those from David Garnett. I also have indeed a few score very useful letters that she wrote to me now and again over about fifteen years.<sup>34</sup>

Further research substantiates Jones' statement: Edwards requested in various letters to Jones and her partner Winifred Kelly, another close friend of Edwards and a contemporary of hers at Cardiff, that:

If anything should by any chance happen to me here, will you promise to claim a parcel in my desk at home. You can claim it as my literary remains. It contains John's letters & my bad novel. They must both be burnt & nobody is to read them, especially the letters which do no particular credit to either of us.<sup>35</sup>

In the end, Edwards did not risk leaving this task to someone else. On 5<sup>th</sup> January 1934, the day of her suicide, she apparently burnt Thorburn's letters along with an unpublished novel. But many of her journals and letters still remained in Jones' possession. In the 1990s, on Jones' death, these documents were donated to Reading University by her sister Peggy Jones and her nephew David Emrys Evans.<sup>36</sup>

The Reading collection, as it will now be called, consists of approximately 150 letters or postcards, two-thirds of which were written by Edwards, as well as her 1933 diary; ten poems; notes by Edwards on various topics including the Independent Labour Party, the 'Digger' movement, Jewish literature, and Welsh literature; five short stories; three photographs, and various other miscellaneous items including

---

<sup>34</sup> S. Beryl Jones, 'Dorothy Edwards: A Personal Estimate', unpublished essay, Reading Collection, packet 11, 2. Jones wrote this piece as a reaction to the inconsistencies that she perceived in Elaine Morgan's introduction to the Virago edition. Attempts to find a publisher failed, but the study is incisive and informed by a personal and intimate knowledge of Edwards and her work. *Winter Sonata* is dedicated to Jones and Kelly. See Appendix i, pp. 240-250 for a copy of this essay.

<sup>35</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925-7]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 16 (a).

<sup>36</sup> In 1996 after S. Beryl Jones' death, her sister Peggy Jones presented the papers to the archives department at the University of Reading, on indefinite loan. According to David Emrys Evans, the reason for donating the papers to Reading, and not to a Welsh University, was simply that it was the nearest institution of its type to their home at that time.

contracts and a payslip. Of the letters, approximately 96 were written by Edwards to Jones and Kelly; they cover a period from about 1920 until Edwards' death in 1934. These include information on Edwards' literary influences, her views on contemporary literature, art and theatre, her experiences as an author, her frequent bouts of depression, and her time spent travelling in Europe and living in London. The remainder were mostly written to Edwards and include letters from the socialist M.P. Keir Hardie, David Garnett and Bloomsbury artist Dora Carrington. Edwards' 1933 diary offers an invaluable insight into her psychological and emotional condition shortly before her suicide, and also contains some passages on her childhood in Ogmere Vale, as well as two short stories which were unpublished during her lifetime.<sup>37</sup> Correspondence between Edwards and her publisher Wishart and Co., also held in Reading, proves that shortly before her death Edwards had signed a contract for a new collection of short stories. During my initial research of this material, I identified a further story, 'La Penseuse', which was originally intended for inclusion in *Rhapsody* but was surplus to requirements. I traced a copy of this story to Jones' nephew, David Emrys Evans, and as a result it was added to the Reading collection in 2006.<sup>38</sup>

In 2007 I identified a further private collection of material relating to Edwards.

---

<sup>37</sup> These stories, found in Edwards' 1933 diary, are untitled (see Reading Collection, Packet 6). 'Mitter' was recently published in *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 10 (2005), 160-189, along with a later draft of the same story. As a result of its availability, I shall refer to this published version when discussing 'Mitter'.

<sup>38</sup> 'La Penseuse' was mentioned repeatedly in letters from Edwards to Jones and Kelly. I contacted Jones' nephew David Emrys Evans and enquired whether there were any relevant papers still in his care, with the result that a copy of the story was discovered in Jones' remaining possessions and added as an appendix to the Reading Collection. In one undated letter in which Edwards refers to 'La Penseuse' she also mentions her beloved cat Yasmin, who was destroyed before she and her mother departed for their European holiday, indicating that 'La Penseuse' was written in Cardiff in or before 1926 (see Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 17). 'La Penseuse' was included in the republication of *Rhapsody* in the 'Library of Wales' series in 2007, along with 'Mutiny' and 'The Problem of Life' (See Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007)). All further references to this story will be to the Parthian edition, and will be in parentheses in the text.

After contacting David Garnett's son Richard, in his capacity as executor of Garnett's estate, it emerged that a cache of material relating to Edwards survives at the Garnett's family home in Cambridgeshire.<sup>39</sup> This material consists of 36 letters from Edwards to Garnett or his wife Ray, seven letters from Edwards' family and friends after her death and two photographs of her, as well as five of her notebooks containing drafts of or plans for various items of fiction. Several typescripts of short stories written by Edwards and found among her possessions were sent to Garnett in 1934 in the hope that he would compile and publish the short-story collection that Edwards was writing at the time of her death, and these have been preserved with the documents listed above.<sup>40</sup> Apart from the letters from Edwards to Garnett, and the aforementioned typescripts, the remainder of this material appears to have been left by Edwards at Garnett's London home, where she was staying until shortly before her death.

---

<sup>39</sup> I am very grateful to Richard Garnett for allowing me access to this material, and for permission to quote from it in this thesis. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers.

<sup>40</sup> It appears that Edwards' family and friends were anxious to publish her second volume of short stories posthumously. An undated letter from Vida Edwards to Ray Garnett asks 'Will Mr Garnett be able to give some definite news about her [Edwards'] book?' (Vida Edwards, letter to Ray Garnett, undated [1934]. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers, courtesy of Richard Garnett.) On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934, following a brief visit to Cardiff to see Vida Edwards, Beryl Jones wrote to David Garnett saying: '[W]e have brought back with us all Dorothy's manuscripts and possessions. We think that perhaps you will have the stories and put any you think fit into the hands of Wishart, and see if there is enough to make the promised book?' (Beryl Jones, letter to David Garnett, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers, courtesy of Richard Garnett. With this letter is an A4 envelope, addressed to Mr D. Garnett in Jones' hand, containing typescripts of 'Indian Story' (published in 2005 as 'Mitter'), 'Roman Holiday' (apparently an early draft of 'The Problem of Life'), 'Satire', 'Orrin' (again, an altered draft of 'The Problem of Life'), and 'Caerphilly', a personal sketch of the eponymous area. This collection also contains a notebook which features sections of 'Mitter' and 'Ursula'. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers, courtesy of Richard Garnett.



## II

Edwards' early death, relatively small literary output and her neglect in Wales has meant that, until recently, very little critical material has been written on her work. In this section I provide an overview of the material which has previously appeared in order to highlight the particular problems or neglected areas that I will go on to address in this thesis.

The first three pieces published on Edwards and her works were all written by close friends of hers. 'Dorothy Edwards' by Harold M. Watkins is a personal portrait focusing on Edwards' life and activities in Cardiff, and appeared in Keidrych Rhys's *Wales* in 1946, twelve years after her death.<sup>41</sup> As useful as this piece is, it includes some small factual errors which suggest that, for all its worth as a gauge of the personal impression that Edwards made on others, the veracity of some facts may have become clouded during the time between Edwards' death and its writing.<sup>42</sup> This was followed shortly by S. Beryl Jones' 'Dorothy Edwards as a writer of short stories', published in the *Welsh Review* in 1948. As well as containing valuable biographical material on Edwards, this article also offers an incisive critical reading of her work, despite Jones' close proximity to her subject as a contemporary and close friend of Edwards.<sup>43</sup> David Garnett's account of Edwards featured in his autobiography *The Familiar Faces*, despite its evident bias against her, is of particular use when detailing the final years of Edwards' life, as well as her reception by and reaction to literary London (*FF*, 86-99).

---

<sup>41</sup> Harold M. Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', *Wales*, 6 (1946), 43-50.

<sup>42</sup> These are mostly small factual errors; for example, Watkins claims that *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, where Edwards published her first short stories, was an American periodical when it was British; he cites the day of Edwards' disappearance as 6<sup>th</sup> January 1934 when it was in fact the previous day, and he names Mrs Edwards' brother as Dr Edwards, when his name was Dr William Bertram Jones. Watkins' claim that Edwards spent six months in Vienna living with a socialist bookseller and his wife, and later spent nine months in Florence (*ibid*, 44), is particularly problematic. Material held in the Reading Collection suggests a very different picture of her time in Europe, and I discuss this in further detail in chapter one.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, 'Dorothy Edwards as a writer of short stories', 184-93.

Edwards received no further critical attention until 1986, when the feminist press Virago reissued *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* as part of their classics series. Both volumes featured a critical eight-page introduction to Edwards' biography and writing by Welsh dramatist Elaine Morgan.<sup>44</sup> These introductions have for some time offered the most comprehensive biography available to date on Edwards. Morgan's essay, however, makes extensive and uncritical use of Garnett's account of Edwards. This fact caught the attention of Beryl Jones, who, describing Morgan's preface as 'decidedly inaccurate and misleading',<sup>45</sup> wrote of Edwards in a letter to Virago in 1986:

As I was her friend all her life you will understand, I am sure, my regrets that you have been saddled with a Preface and Introduction that are inaccurate and misleading throughout [...] More important than inaccuracies, the constant tone and emphasis is sadly false, parodying Dorothy's idiosyncrasies and showing a complete misunderstanding of her words and actions. Clearly too much reliance has been placed on the rather snobbish comments made by David Garnett in the later phase of their friendship.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, Jones produced a second article on Edwards, entitled 'Winter Sonata: A Personal Estimate' (unpub., 1986). This piece offers a perceptive analysis of Edwards' literary style and technique, and is the first to focus solely on *Winter Sonata*, but unfortunately it was never published: I include a facsimile as an appendix to this thesis.<sup>47</sup> The same year saw the publication of Luned Meredith's short article 'Dorothy Edwards' in *Planet*. Meredith pays attention to the previously overlooked stories 'Mutiny' and 'The Problem of Life', and is the first of the later critics to draw attention to these stories as part of Edwards' oeuvre.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Meredith also includes comments from two contemporaries of Edwards, Glyn Jones and Gwyn

---

<sup>44</sup> Elaine Morgan, 'Introduction' in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; London: Virago, 1986), ix-xxii; and Elaine Morgan, 'Introduction' in Dorothy Edwards, *Winter Sonata* (1928; London: Virago, 1986), ix-xviii.

<sup>45</sup> S. Beryl Jones, letter to Virago Press, September 1986. Reading Collection, packet 11, item 1.  
<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, 'Winter Sonata', Appendix i, pp. 240-250.

<sup>48</sup> Luned Meredith, 'Dorothy Edwards', *Planet*, 55 (1986), 50-6.

Jones, and is the first to name Edwards' mother (formerly, precedence had inevitably been given by Edwards' critics to her father and his activities).

A gap of almost ten years follows before the publication of the next piece on Edwards. Christopher Meredith's 'The window facing the sea: the short stories of Dorothy Edwards' was published in *Planet* in 1994; in this, Meredith offers an insightful reading of Edwards' fiction, and his observations on the story 'A Garland of Earth' are particularly suggestive.<sup>49</sup> This was followed by the first, and only, comparative and Welsh-language analysis of Edwards, Katie Gramich's chapter 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd: storiâu byrion Dorothy Edwards a Kate Roberts yn y dauddegau', which appeared in M. Wynn Thomas' *DiFfinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (1995). In this piece, Gramich focuses on setting Edwards in the context of 1920s Rhiwbina, at this time a hub of literary and intellectual activity, as well as usefully outlining the publishing atmosphere facing Welsh authors at this time. Gramich also makes use of a letter by Edwards to Saunders Lewis, held in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, which is particularly revealing of Edwards' developing national consciousness during the 1930s.<sup>50</sup> Teleri Williams' "'Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things": The feminine stories of Dorothy Edwards', followed in *New Welsh Review* in 1998-9: in this innovative piece, Williams approaches Edwards' work from a feminist point of view, a fact which serves to highlight Edwards' ongoing neglect in terms of gender theory, to which I will return later in this thesis.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> C. Meredith, 'The window facing the sea', 64-7.

<sup>50</sup> Gramich, 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd', 80-95. In her recent monograph *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (2007) Gramich also discusses Edwards' story 'The Conquered'. Katie Gramich, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 57.

<sup>51</sup> Teleri Williams, "'Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things": The feminine stories of Dorothy Edwards', *New Welsh Review*, 43 (1998-9), 63-6. In 1999 'The Conquered' was included in Jane Aaron's edited collection *A View across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c. 1850-1950*, placing Edwards very specifically in the context of a Welsh women's literary tradition; see Dorothy Edwards, 'The Conquered', in Jane Aaron, ed., *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c. 1850 - 1950* (Dinas Powys:

When I began my research on Edwards in 2003, this was the extent of the material that had appeared on her and her fiction. However, the discovery of the Reading collection has generated a renewed interest in Edwards and her work. In September 2004 two Masters dissertations made the first, albeit introductory, use of the Reading collection: Lucy Stevenson's *Loneliness and Isolation in the Life and Fiction of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)* from the University of Wales, Bangor,<sup>52</sup> and my own *Strange Music: A Study of the Life and Writings of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)* from the University of Glamorgan.<sup>53</sup> In 2005 Stevenson then included the previously unpublished story 'Mitter', found in Edwards' 1933 diary, along with an apparently later draft of the same story and a very useful introduction based on the Reading material, in *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*.<sup>54</sup> This was followed by my own article 'Conquering Convention' in *New Welsh Review* in 2007, where I made use of the Reading material in an analysis of Edwards' attitude towards class and ethnicity.<sup>55</sup> My discovery of 'La Penseuse', combined with Christopher Meredith's continued interest in Edwards, led to the inclusion of this formerly lost story in the 2007 reissue of *Rhapsody*, edited and introduced by Meredith for the 'Library of Wales' series.<sup>56</sup> Meredith also chose to include 'Mutiny' and 'The Problem of Life' in this volume, making new Edwards material available to the general reading public. Later in the same year Meredith published the first critical assessment of 'La Penseuse' in his chapter '*Rhapsody's* Lost Story' which featured in

---

Honno, 1999), 107-119. Katie Gramich has also considered Edwards' work in a specifically female context in *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Lucy Stevenson, 'Loneliness and Isolation in the Life and Fiction of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)', University of Wales, Bangor M.A. Thesis (unpub., 2004).

<sup>53</sup> Claire Flay, 'A Strange Music: A Study of the Life and Writings of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)', University of Glamorgan M.A. Thesis (unpub., 2004).

<sup>54</sup> Stevenson, 'Two Drafts of an Unpublished Story by Dorothy Edwards', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 10 (2005), 160-189.

<sup>55</sup> Claire Flay, 'Conquering Convention', *New Welsh Review*, 77 (2007), 60-6.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher Meredith, 'Foreword' in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody*, 'Library of Wales Series' (Cardigan: Parthian, 2007), ix-xiv.

the festschrift *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker* (2007).<sup>57</sup> In this chapter Meredith comments on the way in which Edwards' fiction reflects her own life and experiences despite its lack of obvious autobiographical reference, a theme which I will explore in detail in this thesis. This volume also included "A personal isolated odd universe": Dorothy Edwards and her short fiction' by Tony Brown, whose continued interest in Edwards, along with his work on the short-story genre in general in Welsh writing, has contributed much to contemporary appreciation of her work. Brown makes use of archive material from *Cap and Gown* as well as the Reading collection to analyse the 'oddly unreal' world that Edwards chose as the setting of her fiction.<sup>58</sup> The most recent published piece on Edwards is my own chapter 'The Subversive Cinderella: Power Dynamics and Cultural Imperialism in the Short Stories of Dorothy Edwards', a brief study of Edwards' use of the short-story genre and narrative voice, which appeared in the edited collection *The Short Story* in 2008.<sup>59</sup>

It is clear, then, that in recent years Edwards' work has enjoyed a renewed critical interest. Prior to 2004 a total of nine articles, introductions or chapters had appeared on her work; by comparison, during the period 2005-2008 no less than six new critical pieces on Edwards have been published, initiating the republication not only of *Rhapsody* but also of three previously unpublished Edwards stories. Furthermore, Honno Classics plan to reprint *Winter Sonata* in 2010.<sup>60</sup> But there is still no critical biography of Edwards, and her work remains unexplored within the

---

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Meredith, 'Rhapsody's Lost Story', in Christopher Meredith, ed., *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), 159-170.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, "A personal isolated odd universe", 150.

<sup>59</sup> Claire Flay, 'The Subversive Cinderella: Power Dynamics and Cultural Imperialism in the Short Stories of Dorothy Edwards', in Ailsa Cox, ed., *The Short Story* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), 116-129.

<sup>60</sup> Dorothy Edwards, *Winter Sonata* (Dinas Powys: Honno, forthcoming), edited and with an introduction by Claire Flay.

contexts of several key theoretical arenas. In the following section, I outline my central aims and concerns in this thesis which will, I hope, go some way towards redressing the gaps in terms of critical material and biographical information available on Dorothy Edwards.

### III

My first aim is to set Edwards in her social and historical context and to provide a more accurate overview of her childhood than that previously available. Accordingly, chapter one largely consists of a new biography of Edwards. Extensive research of various historical sources, including the logbooks of the schools in which Edwards' parents taught, coupled with an analysis of the Reading collection, serve to establish concrete facts and dates regarding her early life, which has previously gone uninvestigated. In particular, I explore her unconventional upbringing in the industrial valley Ogmore Vale, and the effects that her father's early teachings had on her development of a political and cultural identity. Edwards was raised by her socialist father to believe that a revolution was imminent and that social and sexual divisions would crumble during her lifetime. These class and gender ideologies that so influenced her early years became, I suggest in this thesis, key to her writing.

Chapter two focuses on setting Edwards in her literary context. It explores the cultural climate of the 1920s in terms of contemporary British and international writing, in particular the literary experimentations of Modernist women writers. The form that Edwards chose as a framing device to express her concerns will be analysed in the context of critical theories of the short story. Clare Hanson, in her introduction to the edited collection *Re-reading the Short Story* (1989), highlights the fact that the short story has historically held an appeal to marginalized or ex-centric groups, those

who feel ‘a sense of alienation from dominant culture’.<sup>61</sup> Following on from the first biographical chapter I suggest that this idea applies particularly well to Edwards’ situation: doubly marginalized as a woman and as a Welsh writer, debarred both from the patriarchal leisured society that she chose to depict, and the male-dominated working-class society from which she came. Further, in terms of genre development, I suggest that Edwards’ work can be placed within the Modernist tradition as a result of her experimentation with a male narrative perspective in *Rhapsody*, in particular her story ‘A Country House’, and her use of epiphany in ‘Summer-time’.

The central body of this thesis consists of a literary re-analysis of Edwards’ work in the light of feminist, class, and postcolonial theory. In her 2004 survey of Welsh writing *Postcolonialism Revisited*, Kirsti Bohata highlights the shortcomings of the often-held view that feminism, nationalism, and anti-colonialism are mutually exclusive identities; I concur with Bohata’s suggestion and argue that, in the case of Edwards, all three ideologies are as integral to her sense of self, as indeed they are to her writing.<sup>62</sup>

Edwards’ work cries out for analysis in terms of feminist theory, and her depiction of female roles and female sexuality in *Rhapsody* forms the focus of chapter three. I suggest that Edwards’ depiction of traditional gender roles in society offers a subtle yet effective indictment of the accepted patriarchal standards that serve to silence or oppress women, as I discuss in relation to ‘Summer-time’, ‘A Garland of Earth’, ‘A Throne in Heaven’, ‘Sweet Grapes’, and the until recently unpublished story ‘La Penseuse’. Music is the only form of expression that is specifically and consistently linked to women in her writing, and I explore its use as a heavily gendered motif in the stories ‘Cultivated People’, ‘A Country House’, ‘Rhapsody’,

---

<sup>61</sup> Claire Hanson, ed., *Re-reading the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 2.

<sup>62</sup> See Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 79.

and ‘Treachery in a Forest’. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the construction of female passivity in ‘Days’.

Inevitably, perhaps, as a result of her upbringing, Edwards’ depiction of social class in her fictions is particularly interesting. The fact that she does not present an explicit class critique from the point of view of working-class Wales in her fiction has been considered by some to be particularly puzzling given her personal and political perspective. I argue that in her novel *Winter Sonata* she deconstructs the constrictive nature of class boundaries and expectations and the effects these have on male and female, working- and middle-class characters alike. Accordingly, chapter four offers a discussion of the representation of class in *Winter Sonata*.

In chapter five I return to Edwards’ biography to discuss the details of her life during the often misunderstood period that she spent living in London with David Garnett and his family. During her time in exile in London, Edwards became more overtly self-reflective in her writings: her 1933 journal contains recollections of Ogmere Vale, and of her father, the only explicit examples of autobiographical writing found so far in her work. The final chapter of this thesis offers a postcolonial reading of Edwards’ work in the light of contemporary critical theory. Here, after an introductory account of the argument for and against reading Welsh writing in English as a postcolonial body of writing, I argue that the idea of a pervasive and mentally colonising cultural imperialism is key to understanding Edwards’ work. The short stories that she produced in the early 1930s, particularly ‘Mitter’ and ‘Mutiny’, form the primary material for analysis in this chapter, as well as ‘The Conquered’, an earlier story which, nonetheless, captures the essence of Edwards’ views on ethnicity and culture. The subversive and multi-faceted nature of her writing means that an analysis of Edwards’ work in the context of today’s theoretical paradigms proves



highly productive. In this chapter I make use of colonial and postcolonial critiques including Homi K. Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *The Location of Culture* (1994), as well as the increasing body of work analysing Welsh society from a postcolonial perspective, such as Bohata's *Postcolonialism Revisited* along with Jane Aaron and Chris Williams' edited collection *Postcolonial Wales* (2005).

The thesis ultimately aims to demonstrate that an analysis of Edwards' literary output in terms of contemporary theory, coupled with new biographical information, reveals that issues of class, gender and colonialism are central to her work, as indeed they were to the Wales in which she was born and raised.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FROM BRYNTEG TO PEN-Y-DRE: DOROTHY EDWARDS IN OGMORE

#### VALE AND RHIWBINA

Dorothy Edwards was born on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1903 to Edward and Vida Edwards, of Brynteg, Glyn Street, in the small mining community of Ogmore Vale, south Wales.<sup>63</sup> The family lived in a large, semi-detached, white-painted house, on which, Edwards recalled, ‘the coal dust from the colliery near[by] descended without cease.’<sup>64</sup> Neither Vida nor Edward were natives of the Ogmore Valley. According to census records, Edward Edwards was born in Llantwit Fadre, near Pontypridd, in 1865, and Vida Jones in Aberdare in 1866.<sup>65</sup> They met in 1896 when Vida was appointed to the position of headmistress of the infants’ section of Tynewydd Infants and Juniors Mixed School in Ogmore Vale, where Edward Edwards had acted as headmaster since 1894.<sup>66</sup> They married in 1899 and Dorothy, their first and only child, arrived rather late in their lives by the standards of the day: Vida was 37 years old and Edward 38 when their daughter was born. In her 1933 diary, one of the documents now preserved

---

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix ii, Fig. 1 (p. 251), for a postcard written by Vida Edwards, showing the location of the Edwards’ home in Ogmore Vale.

<sup>64</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>65</sup> In the 1901 Census of England and Wales. Edward Edwards is registered as living in Llandyfodwg, Glamorgan, in 1901, aged 36, occupation schoolmaster; Vida Edwards is also registered as living in Llandyfodwg, Glamorgan, in 1901, aged 34. (Under the old parish divides, Llandyfodwg was the area of Ogmore Vale that lay to the east of the river Ogmore; the area on the west side of the river was referred to as the parish of Llangeinor. Both, however, cover a relatively small geographical area). 1901 Census of England and Wales. 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2005 <<http://www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>>

<sup>66</sup> Huw Daniel, ed., ‘History of the Tynewydd group of schools (1975)’, *Ogmore Valley Local History and Heritage Society Journal*, 8, (2007), 16-17. Tynewydd School was situated directly opposite the Edwards’ home in Glyn Street. It remained an operating primary school serving Ogmore until 2000, when it was closed along with all the other schools in the lower half of the valley and replaced by a purpose-built school designed to house the nursery, infants and primary schools under one roof. The building remained standing until recently when burnt to the ground in an arson attack. It is now the site of a new housing development, ‘Tynewydd Court’.

in the Reading collection, Edwards describes her parents around the time of her birth.

She wrote:

Here is an old photograph of my parents. They are seated in a garden with an old oak tree as a background. My mother is doing a piece of embroidery and has on a blouse with a paisley pattern, of which long afterwards I made dresses for my dolls. My father has his legs crossed and a pair of resplendent golf stockings with ornament tops adorn [sic] them. He has his head a little to one side as he looks straight at the camera with a contented and profoundly happy smile. My mother's head with its dark curly hair is bent over a piece of embroidery as though she does not really know that she is being taken. They are both so good looking, and so much in love, and the scene with its old tree and the garden benches & the wall behind is so charming that I am distressed to find at the side of the picture spoiling its symmetry and grace a baby in a silk dress and a little bonnet with a most discontented & perplexed expression on its face, who must be myself.<sup>67</sup>

Edwards paints an attractive picture of her parents: they are confident, happy, relaxed.

But, strangely, she appears to see herself as a blot on the scene, at once a part of her parents and cut off from them. Of course, rather than being an indication of her parents' feelings towards her, this passage reflects Edwards' state of mind at the time of writing: in this thesis I suggest that such a sense of separation and isolation is embodied in her writing.

By the time of Dorothy's birth in 1903, Edward Edwards had been a headmaster in the valley for some thirteen years.<sup>68</sup> He is remembered as an eccentric figure in the community: a vegetarian, a Sunday golfer, an ardent socialist and Independent Labour Party leader, his political views influenced his actions in school. The logbook of Tynewydd School shows that Edward Edwards was very strict with regards to his pupils' attendance: in 1903 several parents were prosecuted for the non-attendance of their children and, as a result, under his headship record highs in

---

<sup>67</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Edwards is listed as headmaster of Wyndham Mixed School in 1890; see *Kelly's Directory of Monmouthshire and the principal towns and places of South Wales 1891* (London: Kelly & Co., 1891), 381.

attendance figures were achieved.<sup>69</sup> It was probably because of his involvement in the highly successful co-operative movement of the valley (he kept the books) that in January 1904 the local branch sent 320 oranges to the school for distribution among the pupils.<sup>70</sup> At the height of the 1911 strike, a canteen committee was formed in the school to feed ‘the children of strikers and other children in need’; superintended by Edward Edwards, the scheme provided meals for 130 children a day,<sup>71</sup> and was continued in the Easter holiday when the meals were paid for by voluntary funds.<sup>72</sup>

The political theories that Edward Edwards so passionately believed in were equally put into practice in his personal life. In 1975, a former secretary of Tynewydd School wrote:

Mr Edwards is remembered even today as being quite a character. He was reputed to be a nudist and he used to camp out on the mountainside near an old well.<sup>73</sup>

In her 1933 diary Edwards later recorded that a free communion with nature was not her father’s aim here; his ‘nudism’ was merely a part of his method of examining his socialist beliefs. She wrote:

Now since the socialist text books of those days were much given to describing utopias, & my father had a practical mind he decided to test in his own life what minimum of luxury and sophistication was necessary to a man of the industrial age, one summer he divested himself of everything but his clothes and went to live in a cave on the mountain top in a beautiful little ravine. And when he got there, he took off his clothes too, so that my mother taking her friends on occasion to picnic in his company [*deleted* – would as she approached have to call loudly and urgently to announce their arrival, so] would have to announce their approach by calling loudly and urgently to him [*deleted* – in a voice] to indicate that he must put on at least a towel to receive them. Very soon he discovered that he needed a hatchet and a frying pan and as Autumn approached he built a fine fire place & acquired a tent, so that the Socialist street corner orators who stayed so often in our house were able to observe primitive man to whom they loved to refer in their speeches, in the

---

<sup>69</sup> Tynewydd Schools Logbook (E/M/ 55/6), [c.1903-4]. Glamorgan Records Office, 3-4, 11.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1904, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1911, 62.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1911, 63.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel, ed., ‘History of the Tynewydd group of schools (1975)’, 19. See Appendix ii, Fig. 2 (p. 252) for a photograph of Edward Edwards.

various stages of his evolution.<sup>74</sup>

In his mountain-top camp Edward proceeded to hold meetings with his socialist friends, to which his young daughter was privy. '[B]eside our camp fire we proudly entertained Keir Hardie,<sup>75</sup> Bruce Glasier,<sup>76</sup> Stitt Wilson,<sup>77</sup> [Robert] Smillie<sup>78</sup> & [George] Lansbury,<sup>79</sup> she later recalled.<sup>80</sup> Greatly influenced by her father's progressive and unconventional practices and beliefs, Dorothy too proclaimed herself to be a socialist and became a lifelong member of the Independent Labour Party at a very young age. According to David Garnett, in later life one of Edwards' fondest childhood recollections was that of welcoming Hardie onto the stage in Tonypandy during the 1912 miners' strike when she was nine years old, dressed from head to toe in red. (FF., 93)<sup>81</sup> Evidently, then, the beliefs held by her father had a huge impact on her life and her perception of society. In one of the most self-reflective passages of her 1933 diary, which is dedicated to the Canadian socialist and contemporary of Edward Edwards, J. Stitt Wilson, she wrote:

I have been much luckier than most people [...] I benefited by my father's progressive ideas on education. Over and above this I learnt to ask for what I

---

<sup>74</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>75</sup> James Keir Hardie (1856–1915), Scottish socialist and first leader of the Labour Party. Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Hardie, (James) Keir (1856–1915)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33696>>.

<sup>76</sup> John Bruce Glasier, (1859–1920), Scottish socialist and labour poet. Chris Wrigley, 'Glasier, John Bruce (1859–1920)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38468>>.

<sup>77</sup> Jackson Stitt Wilson (1868-1942) was a Canadian socialist and Methodist; of Edward Edwards' friends, only Wilson and Edwards himself are missing from historical textbooks.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Smillie (1857–1940), Irish-born trade unionist, founder member of the Scottish Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party. Chris Wrigley, 'Smillie, Robert (1857–1940)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36126>>.

<sup>79</sup> George Lansbury, (1859–1940), leader of the Labour Party. John Shepherd, 'Lansbury, George (1859–1940)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2008. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34407>>.

<sup>80</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>81</sup> See Appendix ii, Fig. 3 (p. 253), for a photograph of Dorothy Edwards aged 10. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

had a right to; from the great Socialists whom I knew when I was little, you among them. All this was a sheer gift that life made to me and to how few others! [...] How about the young artists, thinkers, great souls, who are not armed against the world beforehand by knowing Keir Hardie or you?<sup>82</sup>

Perhaps inevitably Vida has been obscured by the strength of her husband's character, and she has previously had little or no mention in the few biographical accounts of Edwards' life, indicating the patriarchal bias outlined by Beddoe in *Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth-Century Wales* (2000). 'Women's class and status were defined by that of their menfolk', Beddoe notes, 'women were subsumed by their husband's persona [...] rendering the women invisible'.<sup>83</sup> Until her marriage in 1899 Vida had had a successful career as head teacher of the infants' section of Tynewydd School, a fact which previous biographical accounts of Edwards have completely overlooked. The prevailing social expectations of the time dictated that on her marriage she had to resign from her post and become dependent on her husband not only financially but in terms of identity.<sup>84</sup>

But Vida did not settle into the role of wife and mother in the conventional socially prescribed manner. There is much to suggest that she was active in politics, which is likely given her husband's activities and her own capabilities. Research by Neil Evans and Dot Jones published in their article "'A blessing for the miner's wife": the campaign for pithead baths in the south Wales coalfield, 1908-1950', reveals that 'the women's campaign [for pit-head baths] seems to have started when a south Wales delegate conference of the WLL [Women's Labour League] was prompted by Mrs

---

<sup>82</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>83</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>84</sup> It is unclear whether the Glamorgan local authority enforced a marriage bar for teachers in 1903. According to Beddoe, '[s]ome local authorities in England and Wales had operated marriage bars before 1914...but in the early 1920s marriage bars were widely introduced' (*Out of the Shadows*, 83). The fact that Vida resigned her post on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1899 but was asked by the school board to remain in her post until a replacement could be found (her replacement took up the post on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1899) suggests that a bar was not in place at this time, but that it was generally socially unacceptable to remain in a teaching post after marriage. Tynewydd Schools Logbook, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1899, and Aug 28<sup>th</sup> 1899, 163.

Edward Edwards of Ogmore Vale to promote the issue.<sup>85</sup> The logbook of Tynewydd School records that in the 1900s Vida often took charge of the school in her husband's absence long after she had resigned from any official capacity, and there is no suggestion that any of the other teachers, or indeed parents, felt that this was inappropriate in any way.<sup>86</sup>

In her 1933 diary, Edwards suggests that her mother struggled to maintain the family's social image, while working hard to support her husband's more extreme views which she, apparently, did not share. '[S]he had to accept the discordant note of my father's red tie, of which indeed I think she came to understand the vital necessity', recalled Edwards.<sup>87</sup> Dazzled by the light of her father's radicalism, Edwards perhaps saw her mother by comparison as conventional and staid, but the evidence above suggests that this was certainly not the case. But in these journal entries, written while Edwards was in London and some fourteen years after her final removal from Ogmore Vale, she recalls that her mother expended 'much anxiety and pain upon the difficult task of reconciling her husband's revolutionary views with the obvious respectability and merit of the wondering friends and relations, who disagreed with him so emphatically'.<sup>88</sup> She writes:

[M]y mother with heroic [sic] defended him in her polite tea-drinkings with [*deleted* – the wives of doctors & colliery managers] the most distinguished society of the place; learned to cook the most [*deleted* – incredible] unheard of dishes which he delighted to pass off on his carnivorous friends as the accustomed fish or flesh; and sat in chapel through Welsh sermons which were not without pointed references to sinners who played games on the Lord's Day upon the mountain tops.<sup>89</sup>

As headmaster of the valley's school Edwards held a position of responsibility which

---

<sup>85</sup> Neil Evans and Dot Jones, "'A blessing for the miner's wife': the campaign for pithead baths in the south Wales coalfield, 1908-1950", *Llafur*, 6/3 (1994), 14.

<sup>86</sup> Tynewydd Schools Logbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> November [1904] and 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> January [1905], 14,16.

<sup>87</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

required a certain mode of behaviour, as Huw Daniel suggests in his edited history of the Tynewydd group of schools: ‘Teachers were generally respected throughout the valley and were expected to conduct themselves in such a way as to be above reproach.’<sup>90</sup> Edward Edwards had clearly made a name for himself as a controversial, albeit progressive, headmaster; the burden of his eccentricities, however, seems to have fallen wholly on his wife’s shoulders.<sup>91</sup> For, during her husband’s experiments,

Vida

remained in the valley below, and made tea for the committees and bore in agony the jeers of the passers by when her husband, come back to civilisation for the occasion, stood on our kitchen chair on the wasteground next to the police station, and tried to collect a crowd for the coming meeting.<sup>92</sup>

Whether or not Vida shared her husband’s views, it was apparently her responsibility to maintain some façade of decorum, not only for the sake of social respectability but, ultimately, to ensure the family’s income.

Edwards’ upbringing, then, was certainly unusual. While Edwards was learning about politics from her father and his friends, her female contemporaries in the valley were being raised to be the wives and mothers of future working-class generations. Beddoe notes that: ‘[a]t home, girls helped with the washing, cleaning and cooking and acted as “little mothers” to younger siblings.’<sup>93</sup> Although the notion of separate spheres originated amongst the English middle class, the concept was rigorously exercised in a particularly Welsh form in the south Wales valleys. Beddoe suggests:

It is in the mining valleys of south Wales that we see the most complete adoption of separate spheres and women’s absorption of the domestic ideology

---

<sup>90</sup> Daniel, ed., ‘History of the Tynewydd group of schools (1975)’, 19.

<sup>91</sup> Edward Edwards’ activities made him a notorious figure in Tynewydd School’s history: to mark the school’s centenary in 1992, for example, pupils and teachers performed a play which depicted his eccentric practices.

<sup>92</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>93</sup> Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows*, 24.



in the emergence of that archetypal stereotype – the Welsh Mam.<sup>94</sup>

The lot of the valleys woman was generally a hard one. Most often the wife and mother of miners, contending with a brood of coal-dust covered men returning home from different shifts requiring feeding and washing at all hours of the day and night, valleys women were often trapped in daily cycles of continuous back-breaking domestic work as a result of their communities' industry. For these women, life was characterised by poor diet, particularly during times of industrial strife or strike when many women went without for the sake of their children or husbands; severe overcrowding (in 1922 there were on average 5.8 inhabitants per small terraced house in the Rhondda); insufficient healthcare; lack of birth control (an average of 15 years spent in childbearing and nursing at the turn of the century); high rates of infant and maternal mortality (maternal mortality rates actually rose in Wales 1918-1922); few educational or employment opportunities; and the prospect of a life exactly like that of their mothers.<sup>95</sup>

Although it is apparent that Vida Edwards supported her husband in all his activities she far from embodied the traditional 'Welsh Mam' figure. The coal-dust certainly dirtied the exterior of the Edwards' home, as it did every other house in the valley; its interior, however, would have remained relatively unscathed. Vida's husband was in a clean, safe, and comparatively well-paid job, and she herself had been in paid employment for some years before her daughter's birth. The fact that the couple had only one child meant little strain on the household in terms of finance or space. As Tony Brown has suggested, Edwards, like her contemporaries Rhys Davies, Glyn Jones and Alun Lewis, was set apart from the rest of the community as a result

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>95</sup> Figures from *ibid*, 22.

of her father's occupation.<sup>96</sup>

Despite claims that Edwards received no formal education until the age of eleven, there is some evidence to suggest that she did in fact attend school in Ogmores Vale from a young age.<sup>97</sup> In her autobiography *From Caerau to the Southern Cross* (1987) Rachael Ann Webb, raised in Ogmores Vale during the same period as Edwards, suggests that she may have been a pupil at Aber School. Webb recalls:

My schooldays in Ogmores Vale were very happy. I made a lot of nice friends, in particular a small group of girls, and our favourite playtime game was to have a wedding [...] the same two girls had to be the bride and groom every playtime, while we were the bridesmaids [...] Dorothy, the other 'bridesmaid', took her own life when she was in her thirties.<sup>98</sup>

The significance of the name, coupled with the manner of death and the dates that Webb attended Aber School combine to suggest that the Dorothy remembered here is in fact Edwards.<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, the school logbook that would serve to clarify the situation has been lost, so the details of Edwards' elementary education remain unclear.

Some commentators have claimed that Edwards was educated in the boy's school in which her father taught.<sup>100</sup> Fascinating as this would be, not only in terms of Edwards' sense of displacement but also her later use of a male voice in her fiction, evidence discovered during my own research suggests that it was not in fact the case. If Edwards did attend school in the valley she would in all likelihood have attended Tynewydd, where her father was indeed headmaster.<sup>101</sup> Until 1915, however, Tynewydd was not a boys' school but a mixed school, where male and female students may have been separated for classes, but shared the same building and

---

<sup>96</sup> Brown, "A personal isolated odd universe", 141.

<sup>97</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934.

<sup>98</sup> Rachael Ann Webb, *From Caerau to the Southern Cross* (Port Talbot: Alun Books, 1987), 61.

<sup>99</sup> I would like to thank Sally Roberts Jones for bringing my attention to this comment.

<sup>100</sup> This claim appears to have originated in Garnett, *The Familiar Faces*, 87.

<sup>101</sup> Pupils in Ogmores Vale attended Aber School before moving on to Tynewydd School.

facilities.<sup>102</sup> Not until 1915 did Edward Edwards become head of Tynewydd Boys' School, situated in its long-awaited purpose-built edifice in Park Avenue, Ogmere Vale, at which point Tynewydd Girls' School took over the former site. By this time Edwards was in all likelihood a pupil at Ogmere Grammar School: an entry in the school's logbook in January 1916 states, 'Dorothy Edwards secured a Boarders Scholarship at Llandaff (Howell's School)', suggesting that Edwards was indeed a pupil here.<sup>103</sup>

Despite the confusion surrounding Edwards' early education, it is certain that on 19th September 1916, at the age of thirteen, she enrolled as a scholarship boarder at the prestigious Howell's School for Girls, Llandaff. Some critics have expressed surprise that a socialist schoolmaster like Edward Edwards sent his beloved only child to a private, fee-paying school located some distance away from her home: the fact that she won a scholarship sheds new light on this situation. It appears that Edwards was far from unique in Ogmere Vale in having gained this privilege: the same grammar school logbook that documents her success in winning a scholarship to Howell's records several other female pupils winning such a place at fairly regular intervals.<sup>104</sup>

Edwards had been at Howell's for fifteen months when her father died on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1917.<sup>105</sup> Edward Edwards had been ill for some time, suffering from a

---

<sup>102</sup> This school was split into girls' and boys' schools on separate sites on the completion of the new Tynewydd Boys' School building.

<sup>103</sup> Entry in Ogmere Grammar School Log, 1916, 177, quoted in W. A. M. Jones, ed., 'Extracts from the School Logbook: Ogmere Grammar School' (unpub., 2005).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. According to various historians, the nature of employment in south Wales may have had a positive effect on the number of girls entering into education. Beddoe, for example, suggests that in south Wales during this period girls were more likely to receive a secondary education than boys. Boys could work in the collieries from a young age, and their wage was often valued above their education; girls on the other hand could continue free of charge in education, attend training college, and eventually contribute a teacher's wage to the family income.

<sup>105</sup> Unsurprisingly, Edwards found Christmas a very difficult period for the rest of her life. In a letter to Beryl Jones she said 'Oh Lord how I hate Xmas [sic] in all but theory'. Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925]. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 24.

debilitating disease that led to frequent absences from his teaching post. Records suggest that Vida played a key role in helping her husband maintain his headship during this illness: on June 21<sup>st</sup> 1917, six months before his death, for example, her handwriting replaces his in the school logbook.<sup>106</sup> His funeral took place on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1917. The report in the local newspaper, the *Glamorgan Gazette*, describes him as ‘the well-known Welsh I.L.P. leader’ and indicates that his burial was a well-attended affair.<sup>107</sup> As well as family, friends, and various local colliery officials, representatives attended from the south Wales branches of the ILP, the Miner’s Federation, the National Union of Teachers and the Co-operative Society, the local schools and workingmen’s clubs.<sup>108</sup> Despite his eccentric behaviour, it is clear that Edward Edwards was well-respected in his locality; according to the report, he had recently received an address and a cheque ‘in recognition of his public services’, stating that

[Edward Edwards] was justly respected for his fearless independence in expressing his opinions and his courage in fighting on behalf of weak causes from which he could never hope to obtain any material reward beyond the satisfaction of having acted on conviction and from a sense of duty.<sup>109</sup>

A large stone monument, in the form of a book, sits on his grave; donated in memoriam, it indicates the esteem with which he was held by his local community. Its inscription reads:

This book was laid by the Tynewydd Ward Labour Party, the Trade Unions & the Co-operative Society. In memory of Edward Edwards, Schoolmaster & Socialist Pioneer.<sup>110</sup>

Edward Edwards’ death inevitably had a huge impact on his wife and daughter, not only emotionally, but practically. Previous biographical accounts of

---

<sup>106</sup> Tynewydd Schools Logbook, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1917, 116.

<sup>107</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 1918.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Inscription on Edward Edwards’ gravestone, Ogmores Vale cemetery. See Appendix ii, Fig. 4 (p. 254) for a photograph of the monument and inscription.

Edwards claim that she and her mother moved to the Cardiff suburb of Rhiwbina immediately after the event, suggesting that Edward Edwards was their only link to the community of Ogmore Vale. In fact, Vida Edwards remained in the valley for at least fifteen months after the loss of her husband. Barely a month after his death, she took up a full-time teaching post in her late husband's school, where she remained until March 1919 when she was transferred to Ely School in Cardiff.<sup>111</sup> It is fair to assume that Vida's appointment to a teaching post in a boys' school in 1918, twenty-one years after her exit from the educational sphere, was due to the effect of the First World War as much as either her own abilities or the influence of her late husband's position. Indeed, Beddoe indicates that similar situations could be seen throughout Wales: 'Those who stayed within the traditional sphere of teaching now found jobs in boys' schools open to them', she says of the war years.<sup>112</sup> Equally, Vida's transfer to Ely School may have been in part a result of the return of ex-servicemen to work after the war; the logbook of Tynewydd Boys' School at this time records the return to work of several serving male teachers.

It was not until March 1919, then, that Vida and Edwards made the final move from Glyn Street, Ogmore Vale, to Pen-y-dre, in the garden village of Rhiwbina. Designed by a group of Liberal intellectuals concerned about the social problems of the time, the Garden Village suburbs were planned in order to provide their inhabitants with light, open space and fresh air, and were originally intended for workers. But Rhiwbina quickly became a middle-class district, with teachers, academics, writers, and politicians settling in the area. Residents included the Welsh- and English-language authors R. T. Jenkins, Kate Roberts, Gwyn Jones, Jack Jones

---

<sup>111</sup> An entry in the Tynewydd Schools Logbook on states: 'Mrs Vida Edwards commenced duties', and on: 'Mrs Vida Edwards has been transferred to Ely (nr Cardiff) School.' Tynewydd Schools Logbook, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1918, 119, and 31<sup>st</sup> March 1919, 131.

<sup>112</sup> Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows*, 60.

and W. J. Gruffydd, many of whom lived there at the same time as Edwards. The move from the industrialised, labour-orientated valley community, which in effect began with her removal to Howell's school in 1916, was now all but complete, signifying not only a split from the world of her father but also from the working class with which the family, ideologically at least, associated themselves. In Cardiff Edwards and her mother found themselves, to all intents and purposes, among the bourgeoisie.

Family friend Harold Watkins recalled his first meeting with Edwards at a socialist rally around this time, when she was seventeen years old and an 'enthusiastic socialist' reciting for the occasion a poem by William Morris.<sup>113</sup> Watkins describes Edwards as 'pretty in spite of projecting teeth, well developed, free of self-consciousness, unusually vivacious.'<sup>114</sup> Her gender did not at this stage appear to hamper her prospects: Edwards found a new world of opportunity open to her from which, as a woman, she would traditionally have been excluded, when she became an undergraduate student of Greek and Philosophy at the then University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, now Cardiff University.<sup>115</sup> Wales at this time was ahead of the rest of Britain in terms of female admissions to higher education.<sup>116</sup> In 1884 women were admitted to all colleges of the University of Wales, while the traditional English institutions lagged behind. In *Sisters and Rivals in British Women's Fiction 1914-1939* (2000), Diana Wallace notes:

---

<sup>113</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 43.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> The University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire will hereafter be referred to by its current title, Cardiff University.

<sup>116</sup> The University of Wales Charter (1893) ambitiously declared equality for all its students, regardless of gender: 'women shall be eligible equally with men for admittance to any degree' it decreed, at once explicitly acknowledging and attempting to remove any gender imbalance. Women students certainly availed themselves of the opportunity for higher education although, perhaps unsurprisingly, not initially on the same scale as men; in 1910-11 408 male students were enrolled as full-time students at Cardiff, compared to 189 women. Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows*, 29.

By 1914 women could take their degrees at the universities of London, Wales, Scotland, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool, while Oxford awarded degrees to women in 1920 and Cambridge in 1948.<sup>117</sup>

Working-class towns, then, were far in front of the ruling classes in terms of higher education for women, not only in Wales but in England – industrial centres such as Liverpool and Manchester were awarding degrees to women a full 34 years ahead of their Cambridge counterparts.

At Cardiff University, Edwards was part of a circle of ambitious, unconventional women; her close friend S. Beryl Jones, for example, had an active interest in politics and in the 1940s stood as Communist candidate for Keighley, Yorkshire, where she worked as a schoolteacher.<sup>118</sup> Winifred Kelly, another friend, later became a lecturer at Aberystwyth University and contributed regularly to the *Welsh Review*.<sup>119</sup> Sona Rosa Burstein, who had struck up a friendship with Edwards in Cardiff which was later rekindled in the 1930s in London, went on to become a distinguished anthropologist and an expert on witchcraft.<sup>120</sup> Many of Edwards' University friends came from backgrounds similar to her own. Jones, for example, was born and raised in an English-speaking Welsh family in Resolven; her father was a mining engineer who held a management position at various coal mines during his career.<sup>121</sup> Jones had also attended Howell's School for Girls. Like Edwards, then, Jones was raised in, but was not necessarily of, a working-class mining community:

---

<sup>117</sup> Diana Wallace, *Sisters and Rivals in British Women's Fiction 1914-1939* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 31.

<sup>118</sup> David Emrys Evans, 'Introduction' to S. Beryl Jones, *In the Armpit of a Mountain* (Hereford: Laprige Publications, 1996), 5.

<sup>119</sup> L. Meredith, 'Dorothy Edwards', 55.

<sup>120</sup> Chris Wingfield, 'Diploma students in Anthropology, University of Oxford 1907-1945', Pitt Rivers Museum, South Parks Road Oxford, University of Oxford, May 2006. 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008 <<http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/students.php?all>>. The significance of Burstein's friendship with Edwards is evident in one of the last stories she wrote, while living in London in 1933, when she began to rely increasingly on Burstein for company outside of Garnett's circle. 'The Problem of Life' features a character called Mr Rose, and a young woman of Jewish parentage named Bernstein (*R.*, 241, 244).

<sup>121</sup> I am grateful to Emrys Evans for this information.

her father's position meant that the family were, essentially, middle-class.<sup>122</sup> But by the end of the First World War Mr Jones had lost his job, and the political climate leading up to the General Strike 'led Beryl to a markedly left-wing political position.'<sup>123</sup> Given their shared experiences, perhaps it is hardly surprising that Jones and Edwards remained lifelong correspondents.

Watkins' statement that Edwards 'lived a full social life at college and, although she worked hard at her studies she was always the gay, carefree student,' is certainly substantiated by her own writings from this time, as well as by material found in the college magazine *Cap & Gown*.<sup>124</sup> Later, she was to make strong impressions on two contemporaries and fellow-writers, Glyn Jones and Gwyn Jones. Glyn Jones recalls seeing Edwards at 'some function at the University' where, despite their minimal age gap, Edwards appeared to Jones to be 'infinitely more experienced and assured, the last word in chic and sophistication.'<sup>125</sup> She had a similar impact on Gwyn Jones, who recalled her in the late 1920s

swanning along a College corridor at Cardiff in a broad-brimmed black hat, grass-green costume, the longest ear-rings this side of Tiger Bay, and a cigarette-holder whose fifteen inches of elephant ivory ensured that you got more of the smoke than the smoker. She was my first visible author, and I beheld her with awe.<sup>126</sup>

In the same passage, Jones comments that her suicide revealed her 'not at all the enamelled symbol of sophistication [...] [that his] Valley eyes took her to be', perhaps exaggerating the gulf between Edwards' background and his own.<sup>127</sup>

Edwards' student letters to Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly are light-hearted,

---

<sup>122</sup> Tony Brown has made such a comment about Rhys Davies. See Tony Brown, 'The ex-centric voice: the English-language short story in Wales', *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 1/1, (2001), 32.

<sup>123</sup> Emrys Evans, letter to Claire Flay, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

<sup>124</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 43.

<sup>125</sup> Glyn Jones, letter to Gwen Davies, 1985. Courtesy of L. Meredith.

<sup>126</sup> Gwyn Jones, 'Introduction' in Gwyn Jones and Islwyn Ffowc Elis, eds., *Classic Welsh Short Stories* (1971; Oxford: University Press, 1992), ix.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



energetic, at times teasing and facetious. Her passion for music and drama found an outlet in the University's Dramatic Society (she acted in several of its productions).<sup>128</sup>

For much of her life she desired above all else to become an opera singer: she received singing lessons while a student, and for a time she intended after graduating to further cultivate her talent in Milan. Watkins claims that Edwards was 'taught by one of the most successful teachers in Wales' and that her singing, 'distinguished by artistry and intelligence', led her friends to think that 'she could have made a career out of it'.<sup>129</sup> Edwards apparently shared this sentiment: she wrote to Beryl Jones commenting:

If I can save £250 Mother will lend me £500 & I can go to Milan – so my future is assured [...] I am feeling quite sure of my voice [...] Do you think I can save £250 by the time I am 26 or 27?<sup>130</sup>

Although nominally a student of Greek and Philosophy, during this time Edwards' love of literature became increasingly evident. She contributed various pieces to the college magazine *Cap and Gown* and, shortly after graduating, presented a paper on Anton Chekhov to the English Society.<sup>131</sup> But this was by no means the beginning of her authorial aspirations. Edwards, by her own admission, began writing at a very young age; in a letter to Jones, she claimed to have written a novel, 'The Runaways', when she was just five years old; another story, included in the Reading archives, seems to have been written when she was a teenager.<sup>132</sup>

But Edwards' circle was not confined to members of her own sex. One

---

<sup>128</sup> A photograph of Edwards acting in a production of the Dramatic Society can be found in Appendix ii, Fig. 5 (p. 255).

<sup>129</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 45.

<sup>130</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 18.

<sup>131</sup> Kathleen Freeman, reference for Dorothy Edwards, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1925. Reading Collection, packet 9, item 14. An edition of the college magazine notes 'Miss Dorothy Edwards, B.A., gave a paper on 'Anton Tchekhov' [sic] to the English Society'. *Cap and Gown*, 23/2 (1926), 40.

<sup>132</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1925]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 9. Dorothy Edwards, 'The Spirit of Music', unpublished short story, n.d., Reading Collection, packet 12.

relationship that began, and ended, during Edwards' undergraduate career, was with a young Philosophy lecturer, John Thorburn, to whom she became briefly engaged. The pair came into contact not only during class but also in the extra-mural events, such as the Philosophical Society, and her letters to Jones and Kelly from this time are full of references to him. But she appears to have seen Thorburn as a mentor rather than a lover, as suggested by a characteristically light-hearted letter where Edwards listed for Jones the 'pros and cons' of embarking on a relationship with him. 'He is the most likely person to take my operatic ambitions seriously,' and, '[h]e can teach me all the things I want to know at the moment', are two of the positives that she cites.<sup>133</sup> But when their short-lived engagement was broken off her flippant comments do little to hide the real pain that she experienced. In a letter to Jones, for example, she says:

John is behaving abominably & in spite of my heartbreak I am rather enjoying myself [...] Pardon this hilarity but I weep all weekends, so that I always feel happy on Mondays. [...] He said I pushed him into it [...] I've just sent him a note in return for his request that he might 'serve' me in any way he could, assuring him that the only way would be to let me horsewhip him.<sup>134</sup>

Kelly's footnote to this letter gives a more objective view of the situation: 'Dorothy hopes by skilful management to subdue & bring him back [...] Outlook doubtful. Madame is really very completely & devastatingly in love.'<sup>135</sup> Watkins recalls that this was a very difficult time for Edwards: '[s]he walked the hills alone for hours at a stretch, day after day, week after week, working off her "nerves", trying to find calm,' he claimed.<sup>136</sup> Edwards' encounter with Thorburn appears to have set the pattern for all her future relationships: as her list of his desirable attributes quoted above suggests, she appears to have valued Thorburn as a purveyor of knowledge as much as

---

<sup>133</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1920-1924]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 16 (b).

<sup>134</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones (with footnote from Winifred Kelly), n.d. [c.1925-6]. Reading Collection, packet 7, item 7.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 47.

on the basis of the depth of feeling between them. Such a pattern appears to have been established along the lines of her relationship with her father, and it is echoed in her encounters with men throughout her life. As I discuss later, she tolerated David Garnett's patronising of her on the basis of his authority as a member of the literary world, and her later infatuation with her father's friend and contemporary Stitt Wilson seems based on her desire to remain true to her socialist roots rather than any desire to find a lover and a partner (at the time, Wilson was married, almost twice Edwards' age, and safely out of reach in America).

Despite the emotional turmoil that Edwards suffered as a result of her encounter with Thorburn she continued to be a keen and intelligent student. Her Greek lecturer Kathleen Freeman 'was impressed by the ease and rapidity with which she mastered the language [...] and still more by her appreciation of and insight into Greek literature'.<sup>137</sup> References from other Cardiff academics at this time suggest that Edwards was considering undertaking some form of postgraduate research in philosophy; however, there is no evidence to suggest that she obtained a masters degree. Gilbert Norwood, Professor of Greek at Cardiff, gives his own sense of Edwards' likely future career in his character reference. 'She is extremely well-read in contemporary literature, not only English, and is an excellent critic. Moreover, I have been constantly impressed by the skilful elegance of her own English style,' he wrote.<sup>138</sup> Norwood was right: Edwards was preparing herself for an authorial career. Often to be found in the streets of Cardiff loaded down with 'half-a-dozen novels or

---

<sup>137</sup> Kathleen Freeman, reference for Dorothy Edwards, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1925. Reading Collection, packet 9, item 14 (2). Freeman was a 'lively and learned translator from the Greek' who wrote 'intelligent detective stories' under the pseudonym Mary Fitt. Jones and Quinn, eds., *Fountains of Praise*, 146.

<sup>138</sup> Gilbert Norwood, reference for Dorothy Edwards, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1925. Reading Collection, packet 9, item 2.

plays', she had already begun to produce some of her best short stories.<sup>139</sup>

Edwards graduated from Cardiff in 1924 with an upper-second-class honours degree. Job opportunities outside university, however, were few. Edwards, like many other university-educated young women of her generation, was expected to become a teacher. Given the limited nature of the opportunities open to her, perhaps it is hardly surprising that she expressed such distaste when friends and family attempted to persuade her to enter the profession. "Teaching is very tiring to the temperament", says Antonia Trenier in 'Rhapsody' (*R.*, 12), a view that Edwards apparently shared with her character. Instead, she declared, and adhered to, her ambition to become a full-time writer, despite the concerns expressed by her family and friends.<sup>140</sup> 'An author Dorothy wants to be, you know', said Vida to friends and family, perhaps unconvincingly. '[Vida] would have liked her [Edwards] to take a school-teaching job but the dear little lady seemed somehow to be in awe of Dorothy, and would do nothing that might hinder her from becoming a writer,' comments Harold Watkins.<sup>141</sup>

Edwards' refusal to teach, then, indicates another divergence from the norm for the young writer. At this time women entered higher education usually with the intention of becoming a teacher in order to gain an independent income, as Beddoe points out: 'it was the teaching profession above all others that ensured Welsh women a career and with it economic independence.'<sup>142</sup> The greater availability of higher education to Welsh women resulted in a rapid increase of professionally occupied women at the turn of the century, and teachers made up the majority.<sup>143</sup> Jones and Kelly certainly perpetuated this tradition: by the late 1920s they were both employed as schoolteachers in Yorkshire (substantiating Sian Rhiannon Williams' research into

---

<sup>139</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 43-4.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 43-44.

<sup>142</sup> Beddoe, *Out of the Shadows*, 30.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 37.

women teachers as constituting a specifically Welsh export).<sup>144</sup> But Edwards resolutely refused to follow in their footsteps. ‘It is absurd to work all day & then try & write in the evening’, she wrote to Jones, afraid that teaching would sap the energy that she wished to devote to writing.<sup>145</sup>

In 1925 all appearances suggested that Edwards was justified in her commitment to her art. Shortly after she had graduated, her short story ‘A Country House’ appeared in 1925 in Edgell Rickword’s influential but short-lived periodical *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, which he edited with Douglas Garman. A Modernist with an eye for talent, Rickword was quick to recognise Edwards’ potential, and two further stories of hers, ‘The Conquered’ and ‘Summer-time’, appeared in the *Calendar* soon afterwards. In 1926 ‘A Country House’ was included in Edward J. O’Brien’s *Best Short Stories*, alongside work by Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence.<sup>146</sup> Watkins recalled Edwards’ pride on her first publication:

One morning she arrived at our house in Rhiwbina bringing us a copy of the [...] magazine ‘The Calendar,’ which contained a short story of hers. She was characteristically modest about it but she knew how pleased we would be and there was no mistaking her sense of elation.<sup>147</sup>

Edwards’ own description of her feelings on being published is somewhat understated. ‘The Calendar is out & I am on the front page. I suppose that is nice,’ she wrote in a letter to Beryl Jones on the appearance of ‘The Conquered’ in April 1926.<sup>148</sup> At this point, it appears that Edwards’ dream of becoming a professional singer co-existed alongside her authorial ambitions. ‘I am going to write for three or

---

<sup>144</sup> Sian Rhiannon Williams, ‘Teacher supply and the Wales-England border, 1922-50: a gendered perspective’, in Henrice Altink, Chris Weedon, and Jane Aaron, eds., *Gendering Border Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, forthcoming).

<sup>145</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925-1927]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 12.

<sup>146</sup> Edward J. O’Brien, ed., *Best Short Stories of 1926* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926).

<sup>147</sup> Watkins, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 48.

<sup>148</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 15. ‘The Conquered’ appeared on the first page of *The Calendar of Modern Letters* in April 1926.

four years & then go to Milan', she wrote to Jones.<sup>149</sup>

Despite the obvious support for her writing from friends and family in Cardiff, Edwards found it very difficult to concentrate on her authorial career at home. With her university studies over, she began to find herself increasingly cut off from the round of lectures and social events that had kept her so busy during her college years. Furthermore, the responsibility for running the household was increasingly falling on her shoulders as her mother, who turned sixty in 1926, began to suffer from arthritis. Edwards' letters from this period are characterized by a sense of stifling isolation, a far cry from those of her University days barely a year earlier. 'I am fearfully bored except for Tolstoy & Hugo Wolf & Yasmin. I hardly ever see a soul', she says (Yasmin was her beloved cat).<sup>150</sup> Then, despite the poor financial situation in which she and her mother found themselves after Edward Edwards' death, in May 1926 Edwards embarked on a nine-month trip to Europe.<sup>151</sup>

There appear to be several reasons behind this trip. Perhaps the pain caused by the breaking off of her engagement to Thorburn was still raw, and Vida may have felt that the distance would benefit her daughter. Even while abroad Edwards gives brief but poignant insights into the effect that her relationship with Thorburn had had:

we all know my susceptible heart, & I find in myself a new & surprising tendency to run three miles away from anyone with whom there is the slightest possibility that I shall fall in love [...] who would have thought that poor John Thorburn could have made such an impression on my soul.<sup>152</sup>

Secondly, Edwards' love of music had led her for years to revere Austria and Italy on the basis of their musical and cultural heritage. Finally, she yearned to spend some

---

<sup>149</sup> As I have said, in Milan she intended to train as a singer. Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 18.

<sup>150</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925], Reading Collection, packet 4, item 16.

<sup>151</sup> During their trip, 9 Pen-y-dre was let. See Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 33.

<sup>152</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 29<sup>th</sup> June [1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 11.

time abroad for the benefit of her literary muse. ‘Dorothy believed that it is good for a writer to live abroad for some time, thus enlarging his [sic] field of experience’, claims Watkins in his 1946 essay.<sup>153</sup> Edwards had bemoaned the limitations that her lack of life experience imposed on her writing, and there is a suggestion that she needed external influences to give her authorial confidence.<sup>154</sup> Her love of music and art, her ambition to become an opera singer, her aptitude for languages, and the potential of release from everyday distractions, all combined to make the continent an attractive proposition for the young writer.

However, Edwards’ time in Europe was a far cry from the exciting and idyllic picture painted by some critics. Watkins, for example, states that:

she contrived to spend six months in Vienna, where she lived with a socialist bookseller and his wife. Apparently the arrangement was that she taught them English in return for their hospitality [...] It was not long before she went to Italy [...] As she lived there for nine months she got to know it well.<sup>155</sup>

This has served to give perhaps an overly-romanticised perception of Edwards’ time abroad. In all likelihood as a result of Watkins’ essay, Elaine Morgan, in her introduction to the Virago edition of *Rhapsody*, states:

[Edwards] quitted the damp, Bible-black climate of Glamorgan and headed for the warm South [...] she contrived nine months in Florence, soaking up beauty and learning about life and art.<sup>156</sup>

Documentation held in the Reading collection, however, particularly Edwards’ letters to Jones at this time, paint a less romantic portrait. Far from embarking on a single-handed tour, Edwards was in fact accompanied by her mother.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore,

---

<sup>153</sup> Watkins, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 44.

<sup>154</sup> Edwards, ‘On Writing’, 11-12. See pages 76 for further discussion of this.

<sup>155</sup> Watkins, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 44

<sup>156</sup> Morgan, ‘Introduction’ in *Rhapsody*, xii.

<sup>157</sup> Many of Edwards’ letters to Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, written during this trip, indicate that Edwards made this trip with her mother. On the travelling, for example, Edwards wrote to Jones: ‘We had a comparatively good journey. Mother did not turn a hair.’ Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, 23<sup>rd</sup> May [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 3. Several letters close with the phrase ‘Mother sends her love’; see, for example, Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26.

Edwards was very aware of the financial strain that the trip would occasion, not only during their travels but on their return to Cardiff.<sup>158</sup> In the run-up to her departure she wrote to Jones:

judging by the bill we are presently going to receive we shall be going to Vienna in high style. It remains to be seen how we shall come back. When I see how much this venture is going to cost my heart sinks into my slippers and I see a great many advantages in going to seek your fortune with a bundle tied up in a handkerchief.<sup>159</sup>

Edward Edwards' pension and an income from letting out their Cardiff home funded the trip, and although Edwards was engaged to teach English to a few young pupils by an agency, such jobs were often declined due to her commitment to her writing. 'I nearly got a job on Monday, but I refused that [...] on the strength of the *Calendar* wanting another story', she wrote to Jones.<sup>160</sup> Far from free to follow her whims, other positions were turned down as a result of her chaperoned status. 'A charming Italian lady who wants an English [speaking] girl to stay with her for a few months in Florence as a guest with plenty of time to study, merely to talk a bit', a perfect opportunity for a young writer seeking peace and inspiration in foreign climes, was declined. 'I nearly went myself only there is mother', she said.<sup>161</sup>

In Vienna, Edwards and Vida stayed firstly in a flat owned by a retired General, and then on the outskirts of the city in the home of a 'literary woman' whose connections, Edwards hoped, might serve to expand her own horizons:

---

At other points Edwards describe her mother's activities in Vienna, for example, 'Mother is very good here. She has every beggar she meets on her conscience in case they were wounded in the war & she gives away most of her income.' Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, [packet 7, item 3](#). In a letter from Florence, Edwards says to Jones, after inviting her to stay: 'I am sure that Mother would be as pleased as I to have you.'

<sup>158</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926-7]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 12. Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 43.

<sup>159</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 16.

<sup>160</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 27.

<sup>161</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 12<sup>th</sup> October [1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 16 (a).



The lady of the house [...] translates from English & from Swedish & apparently knows many Swedish novelists who visit her there. I hope that this will lead to some translating work later on[.]<sup>162</sup>

Among their acquaintances were musicians, journalists and publishers, including a Polish violinist with whom Edwards was particularly taken. There is no evidence, however, that she lived with or taught English to a Viennese socialist bookseller, as Watkins claimed.<sup>163</sup> As her letters have shown, it would have been very difficult if not impossible for Edwards to have done this with her mother in tow.

While in Europe, Edwards soaked up the cultural atmosphere. Her letters from this period are filled with long, vivid descriptions of visits to art galleries, trips to the theatre and to operas. ‘I never read!!!’ she tells Beryl Jones, ‘I am dependant [sic] for inspiration entirely on concerts.’<sup>164</sup> Her grasp of languages also increased: already able to read Greek fluently, her German quickly improved and she took Russian lessons. ‘I was able to translate everything put before me to my intense surprise. But now that I find that other people besides Dostoievsky & Turgeniev etc speak it, it has lost some of its charm,’ she jokes to Beryl.<sup>165</sup> But in her letters from Vienna Edwards often expressed contempt for the place and its people:

oh my God, these Austrians live like – I can think of no parallel – their houses are so ugly if they are poor, & so unhomely if they are rich. For them a house is only a place to sleep in. Most of them go out to meals & they are so untidy, not in an imaginative way, but in a clean stodgy way. I could not stand it for long.<sup>166</sup>

She missed discussing her writing with her friends, but it is clear that her work benefited from these new experiences, and she soon produced several new short

---

<sup>162</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26.

<sup>163</sup> Perhaps the lapse of time between Edwards’ trip (c.1926) and the publication of his article on her (1946) led to this confusion.

<sup>164</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 5.

<sup>165</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37. Edwards read Russian, and European, literature with avidity.

<sup>166</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26.

stories.<sup>167</sup> ‘The Conquered’, ‘Summer-time’, ‘A Country House’, ‘Rhapsody’, ‘Treachery in a Forest’ and ‘Cultivated People’, which were written in Wales, were soon joined by ‘Sweet Grapes’, ‘A Garland of Earth’, and ‘Days’, which were completed in Vienna.<sup>168</sup> Her early association with *The Calendar of Modern Letters* proved fruitful, and Edwards signed a contract with the Calendar Press for a collection of ten short stories.<sup>169</sup>

Now facing a deadline, Edwards began to rely heavily on Jones for help, who was engaged at the time in writing a thesis for an Oxford University doctorate.<sup>170</sup> Jones not only agreed to read and criticise Edwards’ work, but was responsible for more mundane, administrative tasks, including making copies of various stories, making any corrections necessary, and even putting the stories in the order that Edwards wished, while also maintaining a link with her publisher while Edwards was abroad. Despite this, the volume is not dedicated to Jones but to Edwards’ former music teacher, Fred Stibbs. Edwards was well aware of her debt to Jones, but defended her choice thus: ‘[h]is name is so deliciously surprising. I feel it ought by all

---

<sup>167</sup> In a letter to Jones, Edwards says: ‘I miss very much being able to discuss my stories with you and Kelly’. Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> In a letter to Jones, Edwards says: ‘I intend to finish the volume before I go away’, i.e. before departing for her European trip (see Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 20.) However, several letters held in the Reading Collection prove that Edwards was in fact still working on the volume while in Vienna. In one letter from Vienna, for example, Edwards says: ‘There are two stories ready. One is called Sweet Grapes and the other A Garland of Earth. See Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26. In this, and several other letters from Vienna, Edwards describes writing ‘the long short story’, which became ‘Days’. See, for example, Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, 25<sup>th</sup> October [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 25. It is unclear where ‘A Throne in Heaven’ was written, although the fact that Edwards intended to write ‘two small [stories] about young people’ before beginning ‘Days’ suggests that this may too have been written in Vienna. Dorothy Edwards, letter to Beryl Jones, 11<sup>th</sup> January [c. 1296]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 25.

<sup>169</sup> See contract between Dorothy Edwards and The Calendar Press for a collection of ten stories, dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1926. The contract is signed by E. E. Wishart, director of the Calendar Press. The collection, however, was eventually published by Wishart, London. Reading Collection, packet 12. Letters of the time suggest that the *Calendar’s* editor, Edgell Rickword, was integral in securing Edwards’ contract. Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 5.

<sup>170</sup> Jones eventually left Oxford without finishing her doctorate. I am grateful to Emrys Evans for providing this information. Emrys Evans, letter to Claire Flay, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

the laws of gratitude to go to you & Kelly, but I can't resist it.'<sup>171</sup>

Inspired by her own success at securing a contract, Edwards' enthusiasm for her writing increased, and in a letter from Vienna she outlines her plans for future projects:

Next week I shall probably start on the novel. It seems to me that I am improving steadily. Please read my last three stories in the proper order & tell me if that is true. The novel should be much better written. My enthusiasm is beginning to transfer itself to the novel about Cardiff.<sup>172</sup>

But even at this apparently fruitful, happy time, there are indications of Edwards' troubled nature, and of the unhappiness to come, in both her letters ('I am not altogether happy here, but it was impossible to stay in Cardiff any longer', she wrote to Jones)<sup>173</sup> and her work. Miss Wolf in the story 'Cultivated People', for example, is a German expatriate who teaches music and languages. Living in England, she suffers from a sense of homelessness (although she longs for no particular place) and experiences striking moments of despair and isolation:

She was thinking, 'Why am I here? But wherever I were I should feel like this. The world is the same everywhere. One part of it does not belong to me more than another. I go where there are pupils. If I do go home the stones and trees are not likely to know me. It is all the same that I stay here. Oh, my God!' (R., 93-4)

I would suggest that Miss Wolf's experience is Edwards'; apparently aware of the illogical futility of longing for place, but equally yearning to belong, Miss Wolf, like Edwards, is adrift, anchorless. Edwards' letters from this period offer the first indication of the depression that would go on to plague her for the rest of her life:

Everything is very nice here. I go to the opera & I go for wonderful tramps every Sunday with some comparatively nice student, & twice a week I teach a small fat Jewess English, & that only means going for nice walks with her & talking distinctly, & last night I went to a lecture on poison gas & understood at least a quarter of it. I am sunburnt & my voice is getting very strong again

---

<sup>171</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 5.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. The novel Edwards is referring to here is probably *Winter Sonata*.

<sup>173</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26.

and the Polish professor thinks it is good, and there are wonderful films on in the cinemas, even Russian films. And everything is very inspiring & charming. And I am ashamed to say that I am bored & depressed almost to extinction.<sup>174</sup>

The stories that she was writing at this time are characterised by diffident characters who are excluded from a particular world to which they yearn to belong (this pattern was to continue with *Winter Sonata*). Furthermore, her work is populated with children lacking one or both parents. It would appear that the circumstances of her own life were, albeit subtly, finding their way into her fiction.

But Edwards did not allow these feelings to thwart her writing and, in the spring of 1927, after a brief but expensive stay in Florence and Venice en route from Austria, Edwards and Vida returned to Cardiff to be greeted with the proofs of *Rhapsody*. 'I am very pleased with the publishers. Even the outside paper cover is nice. It is green & blue & very long & you know green & blue is my favourite combination of colours,' she wrote to Jones.<sup>175</sup> '[*Rhapsody*] cries out for some companion volumes, so I am endeavouring to write one,' she commented in a further letter.<sup>176</sup> She had begun a novel while in Europe, and once back in Cardiff she continued to write. Her travels had left her 'fuller of projects than of anything else – for an essay on Rozanov, a monograph on Hugo Wolf'.<sup>177</sup> Her appetite for travel whetted, and her mother appeased by her literary success, Edwards at once planned future trips, this time alone:

I intend spending next winter in Paris. Mother stays here. It depends of course on money. But I am so anxious to do it as a preliminary to persuading mother that I shall not be crucified upside down if I go to Moscow in the following year. In Paris I expect to be depressed, but I long for Moscow. Venice

---

<sup>174</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 11.

<sup>175</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926-7]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 25.

<sup>176</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926-7]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 4.

<sup>177</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1927-8]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 38.

brought back all my old enthusiasm probably.<sup>178</sup>

But Edwards' plans to travel alone were soon put on hold. Vida was becoming increasingly dependent on her daughter, who soon found it difficult to get away even for short periods. Edwards' sense of isolation, temporarily lifted by her (albeit chaperoned) European adventure, returned with a vengeance, though she attempted to uphold links with the academic and literary quarters of Cardiff. However, as Tony Brown notes, many of her literary neighbours like W. J. Gruffydd (at this time Professor of Celtic at Cardiff University) and his associates were, on the whole, substantially older than Edwards, closer to her mother's generation than to her own.<sup>179</sup> After the dispersal of her University peers post graduation, Edwards lacked company of her own generation. By this point, Jones had given up her studies at Oxford and had taken up a teaching post in Yorkshire. She was soon joined by Kelly, and the pair continued to live together in a closely bonded relationship until Kelly's death in the 1940s. Edwards' exclusion from this relationship, and the fact that Kelly also required Jones' support in her own creative ventures (she wrote poetry), appears to have left Edwards again feeling out-of-place and perplexed, as she saw herself in babyhood in relation to her parents, according to the diary entry quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

As the memory of Europe faded, her return to familiar surroundings and the demands and distractions of everyday life soon made the task of finishing her novel difficult. In a letter to Kelly she wrote:

I am fearfully stuck in the mud with my novel [*Winter Sonata*]. I ought to have a den [...] & go into it & lock the door & not come out until I had produced one. Only it is too reminiscent of the immaculate conception to suit my temperament.<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926-7]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 25.

<sup>179</sup> Brown, "A personal isolated odd universe", 143.

<sup>180</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c.1927]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item

*Winter Sonata* remained unfinished until Edwards managed to escape from Cardiff for a short period, when she paid a visit to Jones in Yorkshire. ‘I should most certainly never have finished the novel – if I had not finished it there,’ she wrote to Jones.<sup>181</sup> The novel’s writing had been interrupted by a request from Edgell Rickword for Edwards to contribute an essay on G. K. Chesterton to his *Scrutinies* collection, which appeared in 1928. But with the completion of *Winter Sonata* Edwards established a pattern: she was apparently unable to sustain or complete her creative work at home in Cardiff.

Edwards’ authorial success did little to alleviate the filial burden of her father’s socialist legacy. ‘She needed to justify herself in her own eyes for writing stories when she might have done other work more obviously forwarding the revolution,’ claims Jones in her 1948 essay on Edwards, and this certainly appears to be the case.<sup>182</sup> Edwards continually spoke of her intention to write a ‘Cardiff novel’ after *Winter Sonata*. Despite her father’s death and her removal from the working-class hub of Ogmere Vale, she persisted in maintaining a link with the socialist politics so central to her way of thinking. In 1928 she took an Economics class taught by Harold Watkins; as well as impressing the class with her voice (‘[her] singing was a revelation to the company’, he claims)<sup>183</sup> she also once again came face to face with the poverty prevalent in the industrial communities in which she was born and raised. ‘She was deeply concerned about the worsening of economic conditions in the south Wales coalfield and she was particularly worried about the plight of the unemployed miners and their families,’ claims Watkins, who goes on to say that Edwards was for a

---

13.

<sup>181</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1927-8]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 24.

<sup>182</sup> Jones, ‘Dorothy Edwards as a writer of short stories’, 185.

<sup>183</sup> Watkins, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 47.

time heavily involved in a campaign initiated by Mrs Watkins to provide clothes, food and lectures in Senghenydd, a mining district just outside of Caerphilly. Watkins recalled:

They got a committee going, an administrative centre was set up in Cardiff and often the two women walked over the Caerphilly mountain road from Rhiwbina to Senghenydd, where they called at all the houses to find out the most needy cases for medical attention, nutrition, clothing, etc.<sup>184</sup>

But the sight of such destitution and, perhaps more significantly, her guilt at her removal from it, led Edwards to give the work up as ‘hopelessly inadequate’. Apparently she felt that ‘what the miners and their families should have was not old clothes but peacocks’ eggs!’<sup>185</sup> Her anxieties over her ambiguous class position remained with her throughout her life, and became particularly problematic during her friendship with Bloomsbury author David Garnett, which I discuss in chapter six.

But her contact with her father’s world did not end there. In 1930 she became Vice-Chairman of the Rhiwbina Labour section, although she claimed that the reasons behind her election were far from political. In a letter she explained to Jones and Kelly:

There was a little cat in the meeting & I was so engrossed in nursing it that I absent-mindedly voted for myself when, had I been in my right senses, I should have hurriedly declined this doubtful honour.<sup>186</sup>

Despite her socialist roots, by this point it appears that Edwards became interested by the increasingly visible Welsh nationalist movement. Several of her contemporaries commented on the fact that as a young woman ‘she hadn’t even any trace of a Welsh accent’; perhaps it was her time at Howell’s School that removed the Welsh lilt that she may have developed in her native village and gave her the middle-class English

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, 18<sup>th</sup> January [c.1930]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 20.

accent that removed her even further from Wales in later life.<sup>187</sup> In later years Edwards' English friends were under the impression that she was Welsh-speaking and were surprised to find that she did not know the language. By the late 1920s she was receiving Welsh-language lessons from Gwenda Gruffydd, wife of W. J. Gruffydd. 'I have learnt Welsh for five months & am under no illusion about my knowing it', she says.<sup>188</sup> This did little to deter her from becoming concerned with political events taking place in Wales. "Sympathy with Welsh aspirations is the main thing," she used to say,' recalled Watkins, and to the surprise of friends and acquaintances she was soon adding Welsh Nationalist to her ever-increasing list of identities.<sup>189</sup> Evidence suggests that her father had been particularly sympathetic to the Welsh language, although it is unclear whether he himself spoke Welsh. In 1910 a school inspector commented: '[t]he Welsh speaking element in this part of the valley happens to be particularly small, but the teachers are mostly Welsh and the lessons seem to be fairly successful', suggesting that Edward Edwards valued the Welsh language and thought it important to teach it.<sup>190</sup> Perhaps the seeds of nationalism were planted in Edwards' mind by Keir Hardie and his support for home rule in Wales; they were certainly brought to fruition by Saunders Lewis, whom she greatly admired.<sup>191</sup> In later years, Edwards certainly made the strength of her patriotic feelings about Wales clear when over the border, as I discuss in chapter five.

But during the period following the publication of *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata*, Edwards' life became dominated not by her concern with socialist or nationalist politics, her attempts to learn her native language, or even her writing, but

---

<sup>187</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 45.

<sup>188</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, 2<sup>nd</sup> December [c.1928-1933]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 21.

<sup>189</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 45.

<sup>190</sup> H.M.I. Mr W. Edwards, recorded in Tynewydd Schools Logbook, 1910, 55.

<sup>191</sup> For further information on Edwards' correspondence with Saunders Lewis see Gramich, 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd'.



by domestic struggle and depression. Edwards' anxieties about her mother, her money-earning powers and the lack of progress of her writing, increased, and her depression became more and more crippling. In one letter to Jones and Kelly, written during this period, she said: 'I can feel another attack of depression coming on. If it is worse than the last, heaven help me.'<sup>192</sup> In another, which I date as 1932-3, she is more explicit, saying: 'I am discovering a few things about Wales which one only discovers when one has been on the verge of suicide in a country.'<sup>193</sup> Her descriptions of the physical effects that this depression had on her are unnerving to read and must have caused Jones and Kelly, her closest confidantes, some anguish. In a letter to Kelly, for example, she says:

I dont [sic] really quite know what is the matter with me. I feel about my mind what people must feel about their bodies when they are drunk. It works in much the same way as usual but I am damned if I know who is moving it, it aint [sic] me. This may be a direct revelation of God, only I haven't recognised it. I can neither plan nor see ahead, and I can't even worry about it in a reasonable and human manner. I just get these appalling fits of absolute unbearable depression which however don't last very long now.<sup>194</sup>

Her guilt over her mother's illness and her resentment of her carer role left Edwards feeling increasingly troubled. 'Mother keeps on being ill. She comes in from town crying because she can't walk. I don't know what to do,' she wrote to Kelly and Jones in despair, for Vida's Christian Science beliefs led her to refuse any medical care.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c.1928-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 19.

<sup>193</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, 4<sup>th</sup> April [c.1932-2]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 17 (a).

<sup>194</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c.1932-3]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 17 (b).

<sup>195</sup> As Tony Brown has suggested, it was perhaps as a result of this refusal and the difficulties that it caused her that Edwards made the following comment on Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, whose 'undoubted religious genius is too typically American not to appear irresistibly comic from this side of the Atlantic, but who, like all Americans who have attempted any spiritual achievement, did so in an isolation ghastly and utterly impossible for a European to conceive of.' Dorothy Edwards, 'Famous women: figures in history and romance' (review of H. E. Wortham, *Three Women: St. Teresa, Madame de Choiseul, Mrs Eddy; Diary of St. Helena. The Journal of Lady Malcolm; Marjorie Bowen, The Third Mary Stuart; Flora Annie Steel, The Garden of Fidelity. The Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1929. See also Brown, "'A personal isolated odd

In a letter to Sona Rosa Burstein, Edwards indicates that the difficulties of her situation at home were not only exacerbating her depressive state, but making it impossible for her to write:

This is what I am feeling. My mother is really ill – her hand shakes all the time with rheumatism & her leg is beginning to drag when she walks. She cries & complains & has visions of a depressing future when she can't move. Meanwhile I have to take over the housework. There isn't really much but she won't take her meals regularly and she won't let me manage the house at all. She holds the reins & I get blamed if the horses take the wrong turning. From morning to night I am likely at any moment to be rowed – though not very ferociously – for anything; while any bit of dust that is hiding behind the most remote piece of furniture is pointed out to me in the kindest way possible [...] There is not a single moment during the day except when she is out when I am sure of not being interrupted though of course I don't actually get interrupted all the time. But it is as much as I can do to get anything done, I get depressed & nervy & restless. I feel I ought to be detached enough not to mind being treated like this by a poor woman who is in pain but the constant complaints against everything & everybody give me a picture of the world which depresses me to the point of suicide. It is quite impossible for me to believe that I shall ever write anything again.<sup>196</sup>

Vida's dependence on her, the pressures of domesticity, and her own depression, created a vicious circle which inevitably hampered her creativity.<sup>197</sup> But the financial implications of Edwards' freelance status contributed extensively to the tension between mother and daughter. When Jones and Kelly sent Edwards a cheque for her birthday, she replied to their letter:

As a matter of fact the very sight of money in this benighted household at this moment rather relieves the tension. I think it wouldn't be a bad thing if I framed it & hung it over the mantelpiece to reassure mother [...] [who] wilts before the gaze of the bank clerk every time she cashes a cheque.<sup>198</sup>

There were reprieves - odd weeks snatched with Jones and Kelly - but in Rhiwbina Edwards found little escape from the drudgery of her everyday life. The one outlet

---

universe": Dorothy Edwards and her short fiction', 145.

<sup>196</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Sona Rosa Burstein, 30<sup>th</sup> August [c. 1930-32]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 30.

<sup>197</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c.1928]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 21.

<sup>198</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly, 4<sup>th</sup> September [c. 1929]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 2.

that she and her mother shared was the cinema. According to Watkins:

Regularly, twice a week, they went together to the cinema. I once asked Dorothy whether she went to please her mother or whether she was particularly interested in the film as a medium of culture and entertainment. 'The answer is in the affirmative on both counts,' she said playfully, 'but I'll let you in on a secret,' she continued: 'I'm chiefly interested in the scenarios; I study them all carefully because one day I hope to write one myself, and I want it to be a great one – one that will live!'<sup>199</sup>

Edwards never did manage to publish a screenplay, nor, in fact, her Cardiff novel. 'Some of Dorothy's friends felt disappointed that her ten years' pre-occupation with writing did not yield a greater output,' says Watkins.<sup>200</sup> Likewise, readers and critics have been disappointed by the lack of identifiably Welsh, or even identifiably autobiographical elements in Edwards' fiction. Elaine Morgan, for example, in her introductions to the Virago editions of *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata*, claims that Edwards 'ignored the cardinal rule commended to all beginners: "Write about what you know best."<sup>201</sup> But I suggest that, in fact, her work is filled with what she 'knew best'. Music, her greatest love, infiltrates all its aspects, from the titles of her two publications, to her characters' abilities; references to various composers, songs, operas, and technical terms abound in her fiction, and the structure of *Winter Sonata* is based on the sonata form. Likewise, myth and legend, particularly that of Greek origin, underpin the plots of her stories and her novel. Furthermore, the sense of exclusion quoted at the beginning of this chapter is echoed in her writing. Several of Edwards' stories feature young women, just out of school, trying to find their place in the world. The motherless Primrose in 'Mutiny', for example, spends four years in boarding school, the effect of which seems only to have sharpened her sense of the

---

<sup>199</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 45-6. Throughout her correspondence with Jones and Kelly, Edwards demonstrates her love of the cinema: she continually tells them the plots of films she had seen, and she idolised actors like Charlie Chaplin, Pola Negri and Buster Keaton - in fact, it is her faithful recording of contemporary films that makes it possible to date some of her letters.

<sup>200</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 48.

<sup>201</sup> Morgan, 'Introduction' in *Rhapsody*, xvii.

attractions of high class culture and leads her from the custody of one man to another. Her female characters are forced into teaching, marriage, or an idle drawing-room life. Bonds between women are absent; parental responsibility is lacking; children are usually missing one or both parents. There are few mothers in her stories. All of these features can be related to her own life. But most of all, in this thesis, I argue that Edwards' fiction is permeated with an awareness of power structures which, as a young Welsh woman, dominated her life.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DOROTHY EDWARDS AND SHORT STORY FORM

In 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' (1927), Virginia Woolf declared that the traditional literary forms of drama, lyrical poetry and the Victorian novel were unsuitable methods with which to capture the true nature of the modern experience:

Nobody can read much modern literature without being aware that some dissatisfaction, some difficulty, is lying in our way. On all sides writers are attempting what they cannot achieve, are forcing the form they use to contain a meaning which is strange to it [...] The great channel of expression which has carried away so much energy, so much genius, seems to have narrowed itself or to have turned aside.<sup>202</sup>

Woolf's comment here is suggestive of the difficulties writers experienced when attempting to depict the fluid and changing nature of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain. '[I]n or about December, 1910, human character changed,' wrote Woolf in her 1924 paper 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', referring, critics presume, to the first exhibition of post-impressionist art held in London at this time.<sup>203</sup> If the very nature of human existence had changed, then so, argues Woolf, must the manner of its expression:

we are not fast anchored where we are; things are moving round us; we are moving ourselves [...] it is in this atmosphere of doubt and conflict that writers have now to create, and the fine fabric of a lyric is no more fitted to contain this point of view than a rose leaf to envelop the rugged immensity of a rock.<sup>204</sup>

This new mode of representation in the modern era would give 'the outline rather than the detail [...] It will tell us very little about the houses, incomes, occupations of its characters' but would 'express the feeling and ideas of the characters closely and from

---

<sup>202</sup> Woolf, 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', in *Collected Essays: Volume 2* (London: Hogarth, 1972), 11-12.

<sup>203</sup> Virginia Woolf, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown', in *Collected Essays: Volume 1* (London: Hogarth, 1966), 320.

<sup>204</sup> Woolf, 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', 12.

a different angle.<sup>205</sup> Writers of the period, such as James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Richardson and Woolf herself, rejected the traditional realist novel and experimented instead with expression, narrative and form. This experimentalism is, essentially, at the core of the movement to which the notoriously difficult and retrospectively-applied term Modernism is attached.

Today, the essence of Modernism is encapsulated for many in the introspective narrative of Richardson (in her thirteen-volume sequence *Pilgrimage*, 1915-1938), Joyce (in *Ulysses*, 1922) and Woolf (in *Mrs Dalloway*, 1925, and *To the Lighthouse*, 1927, in particular). The general recognition of Richardson as a key figure of the Modernist period, however, is relatively recent. She, like Dorothy Edwards, though recognised in her day, has been largely overlooked, and her substantial contribution to Modernist literature has only been acknowledged since the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and 80s. In fact, by the time of her death in 1957, Richardson was so neglected that her claim to be an author was dismissed as a senile delusion by the staff of the nursing home in which she spent her final years.<sup>206</sup> Clare Hanson argues that women writers of the Modernist period have historically been overlooked as a result of ‘the spectacular success of a small group of male artists and critics [...] in publicizing and promoting their version of modernism in the early twentieth century.’<sup>207</sup> The elevated stature given to the work of male writers such as Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, combined with a more general reaction against the renegotiation of traditional gender roles that was beginning to take place, resulted, as Hanson suggests, in a specifically masculine form of Modernism:

---

<sup>205</sup> Woolf, ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, 18.

<sup>206</sup> Gloria G. Fromm, *Dorothy Richardson: A Biography* (Chicago & London: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 394.

<sup>207</sup> Clare Hanson, ‘Looking within: women’s writing in the modernist period, 1910-40’, in Marion Shaw, ed., *An Introduction to Women’s Writing: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, 1998), 203.

It is as though, fearing the incursion of women into the realm of art, male writers and critics sought to intensify the exclusiveness and the ‘masculinity’ of art, foregrounding such qualities as authority and autonomy. ‘High’ art could thus be coded as masculine, while women writers (who had traditionally been important as producers of popular fiction) could be associated with and directed towards the expanding mass markets [...] Modernist art thus maintained its avant-garde position by defining itself against mass culture and by implication against the feminine.<sup>208</sup>

Hanson argues that the difficulties encountered by women when attempting to publish their work further obstructed their entry into the marketplace and reinforced the superior status of male Modernist writing.

Despite the difficulties that Hanson describes, there is no doubt that substantial numbers of women were writing, supporting, or in other ways involved with Modernist fiction during this period, as the large number of critical texts now available on the likes of Woolf, Richardson, and Mansfield suggest. In their book *Writing for their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (1987), Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers show that many of these women formed a sort of network, akin to the London-based Bloomsbury group, linked in the first degree as women writers, and in the second as modern women.<sup>209</sup> Hanscombe and Smyers reclaim not only those recognised as Modernists today, such as Richardson and Gertrude Stein; they also acknowledge the contribution to modern literature of the likes of H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Bryher (Winifred Ellerman),<sup>210</sup> Djuna Barnes, Harriet Monroe, Dora Marsden, Harriet Weaver, Marianne Moore, Amy Lowell, Mary Butts, Mina Loy, Margaret Anderson and Sylvia Beach.<sup>211</sup> Critics active at the time, too, showed in their work an awareness of the many women who were writing, and writing well. H.

---

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 206.

<sup>209</sup> Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers, *Writing for their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (London: The Women’s Press, 1987).

<sup>210</sup> Bryher also helped in part to fund border writer Margiad Evans’ career, thus contributing to the development not only of modernist women’s writing but also Welsh writing in English. See Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, *Margiad Evans* (Bridgend: Seren, 1998).

<sup>211</sup> Hanscombe and Smyers, *Writing for their Lives*, 2.

E. Bates, an influential practitioner and critic of the short story, indicates in his critical survey *The Modern Short Story* (1941) that he was well aware of the many

‘distinguished’ women writing ‘modern’ short stories:

A projected anthology of the stories of women writers provided me, five or six years ago, with a preliminary list of nearly two hundred names. From this list that task (which proved impossible) was to select some thirty writers, among whom would certainly have been Malachi Whitaker, Elizabeth Bowen, Mary Arden, Kay Boyle, Dorothy Edwards, Pauline Smith, Katherine Mansfield, Winifred Williams, Katherine Ann Porter, Ruth Suckow, all of whom have brought distinction to the modern short story.<sup>212</sup>

Bates’ inclusion of Edwards in this list is significant, and his recognition of her work at this time suggests that she was recognised as a skilled short story writer. In the quotation above, Bates indicates the existence of a profusion of women short-story writers in the early twentieth century, and comments:

Though it may be only an incidental result of the larger movement of feminine emancipation, it is interesting that from 1920 onwards the list of distinguished women short-story writers grows, not only in Britain but in America, with astonishing rapidity.<sup>213</sup>

Bates argues that a contributing factor to the number of women writing was the proliferation of contemporary magazines and journals. Edwards’ own contact with such publications supports Bates’ assertion. In a letter to Beryl Jones she wrote: ‘*London Mercury, Criterion, Adelphi, [The] Calendar [of Modern Letters]*. I have had the honour to be rejected by all of them,’ revealing just some of the periodicals with which she attempted to place her work.<sup>214</sup> The accessibility of these literary publications in the early twentieth century, then, certainly made it easier for women to contribute a story here or there, without risking too much in terms of time or

---

<sup>212</sup> H. E. Bates, *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1941), 212. The fact that Bates had considered compiling an anthology of short stories by women writers also has significance in terms of gender.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-209.

<sup>214</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 2.



disapprobation.<sup>215</sup>

Recent critical theory on the short story, however, suggests that Bates' numerous 1920s women short story writers may have ideological, as well as circumstantial, implications. Clare Hanson suggests that 'the short story has been from its inception a particularly appropriate vehicle for the expression of the ex-centric, alienated vision of women':

The short story has offered itself to losers and loners, exiles, women, blacks – writers who for one reason or another have not been part of the ruling 'narrative' or epistemological/experiential framework of their society.<sup>216</sup>

As women living in industrial south Wales, Edwards and her peers were excluded from the dominant institution of male physical paid work and its attendant social and cultural institutions; in Edwards' case, her removal to Howell's School for Girls would also have emphasised her difference and her valleys roots. As a writer, too, Edwards suffered as a result of her exclusion by gender from the ruling narrative of her region. This is key to understanding her work, and constitutes a theme that I will return to throughout this chapter.

Other aspects of the short story certainly serve to render the form more fitting to the temporal and spatial demands placed on women's everyday lives. Nicole Ward Jouve suggests that:

[G]enerally speaking, the time of the writing of the short story is easier to adjust to the time of living. If you are a busy woman (man, sometimes), continuously interrupted by household or career duties, then the shorter span of the story will accommodate that fragmentation better.<sup>217</sup>

Critics have suggested that the fragmentary nature of women's lives, where time in

---

<sup>215</sup> As Gordimer points out: '[t]he novel that doesn't sell represents anything from one to five years' work [...] If a short story doesn't find a home [...] it does not represent the same loss in terms of working time.' Nadine Gordimer, 'The Flash of Fireflies', in Charles E. May, ed., *The New Short Story Theories* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), 266-267.

<sup>216</sup> Clare Hanson, 'Introduction' to *Re-reading the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 2-3

<sup>217</sup> Nicole Ward Jouve, 'Too Short for a Book?' in Hanson, ed., *Re-reading the Short Story*, 35-6.

which to write may be snatched between domestic tasks and family commitments, renders the short story particularly attractive. Short-story writer Katherine Mansfield, in a conversation with Olga Ivanova in 1922, describes the frustration she felt at having to perform domestic duties when she wished to be writing, and the assumption made by the male members of the household that this was her role:

The house seems to take up so much time...I mean when I have to clean up twice over or wash up extra unnecessary things. I get frightfully impatient and want to be working [...] I walk about with a mind full of ghosts of saucepans and primus stoves and “will there be enough to go around?” And you [Mansfield’s husband, John Middleton Murray] calling, whatever I am doing, writing, “Tig, isn’t there going to be tea? It’s five o’clock.”<sup>218</sup>

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Edwards, like Mansfield, found that the demands of domesticity impinged significantly upon her writing. The fact that, as Bates suggests, ‘a short story, like a short poem, may be written in an hour, an evening, or a day’, has practical implications for its practitioner.<sup>219</sup> And yet, as critics like Hanson have shown, the practical appeal of the short story (what Bates terms its ‘spare-time exponent’)<sup>220</sup> has meant that the short story has habitually been derided as both a lesser and a ‘female’ form. Hanson, in her introduction to Katherine Mansfield in the edited collection *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (1990) argues that:

Implicit in much [...] adverse criticism of Mansfield is the assumption that the short story is a minor art form [...]. I would suggest that there is a clear connection between Mansfield’s choice of the short story form and her marginal position.<sup>221</sup>

Mansfield herself indicated, in a conversation with Olga Ivanova in 1922, that she felt this keenly:

[Olga] ‘What do you do in life?’

---

<sup>218</sup> Katherine Mansfield, quoted in Tillie Olsen, *Silences* (London: Virago, 1980), 18.

<sup>219</sup> Bates, *The Modern Short Story*, 8.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Clare Hanson, ‘Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923)’, in Bonnie Kime Scott, ed., *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 300.

[Mansfield] 'I am a writer.'  
'Do you write dramas?'  
'No.' It sounded as if she were sorry she did not.  
'Do you write tragedies, novels, romances?' I persisted, because she looked as if she could write these.  
'No,' she said, and with still deeper distress; 'only short stories; just short stories.'  
Later on she told me she felt so wretched at that moment she would have given anything if she could have answered at least one 'yes' to the 'big' things.<sup>222</sup>

Perhaps it is hardly surprising that, given the elitist nature of high Modernist literature at this time, the short story form had a particular appeal for women. Bates points out that,

Constantly throughout the survey of the modern short story one is struck by the fact that the reputation is often of less importance than the art; the unknown, unprofessional writer appears with a fine, even a great, story; the voice speaks once and is silent.<sup>223</sup>

The fact that a 'great story' can be written by an 'unknown, unprofessional writer' suggest that the quality of the short story is far more important than the reputation of the writer. While such an emphasis on quality and skill, rather than reputation, is surely a positive aspect of the form, Hanson argues that the reputation of Mansfield and other female short story writers 'has been compromised and their work has been seen as minor *precisely because* they have been short story writers.'<sup>224</sup> [Original emphasis] According to Hanson 'Mansfield's work has been devalued because she worked in the short story form'; she suggests that the short story writers' 'choice of genre should not be held against them but should alert critics to the fact that they are expressing a difference of view which may be more illuminating than the view from the cultural center.'<sup>225</sup>

In his survey, Bates is quick to acknowledge the innovative nature of Welsh

---

<sup>222</sup> Katherine Mansfield, in conversation with Olga Ivanova in 1922. Quoted in Anthony Alpers, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 381.

<sup>223</sup> Bates, *The Modern Short Story*, 15.

<sup>224</sup> Hanson, 'Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923)', *The Gender of Modernism*, 300.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

short story writing: ‘Towards Wales [...] the English short story may perhaps begin to look for a new influence’, he says. It has been suggested that the appeal of the short story to Welsh writers may have the same practical and ideological implications as its adoption by women writers. In his essay ‘The Ex-centric Voice: The English-Language Short Story in Wales’, Tony Brown refers to Hanson’s theory regarding the appeal of the form to marginalized writers who find themselves excluded from the ‘cultural centre’ quoted above, commenting that ‘it is striking how frequently and how successfully English-language writers in Wales have chosen to express themselves in the form of the short story.’<sup>226</sup> Brown argues that:

Not only has Wales been for centuries geographically but (more importantly) politically and culturally away from the centers of power – especially London – but the Welsh writer in English is of course doubly marginalized. He or she is not English, not writing in the English literary tradition (though he or she will of course be very aware of that tradition, and writing within earshot of it). But the chances are that he or she will not be Welsh-speaking; aware of the rich and continuing cultural heritage in the Welsh language, he or she will be shut out from it.<sup>227</sup>

Addressing the work of a range of authors including Glyn Jones, Brown comments that ‘with the exception of Rhys Davies, none of these Welsh authors were full-time, professional writers [...] one might argue that to write short stories was perhaps easier than to attempt a novel, given the time and the imaginative energy involved.’<sup>228</sup>

Dorothy Edwards, writing in 1920s Cardiff, was not only ‘politically and culturally’ marginalised from the centre of power in the sense of England, but inhabited an ambiguous class status (the conflict between her socialist upbringing in an industrial working-class community and her removal to a middle-class world as a teenager has already been discussed in the previous chapter); in this thesis I argue that she was also marginalized in terms of gender, and that this combination of marginalizations are key

---

<sup>226</sup> Tony Brown, ‘The Ex-centric Voice: The English-language Short Story in Wales’, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 1/1, (2001), 25.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 25.

to the construction of her fiction.

While Brown in ‘The Ex-Centric Voice’ is ready to acknowledge the skill of Welsh female short story writers as on a level with that of their male counterparts, Jane Aaron has indicated that these women have not been accepted into the canon of Welsh short stories in English in the same way as writers like Glyn Jones, Rhys Davies and Gwyn Thomas. Aaron points out in her introduction to the female-authored short-story collection *Luminous and Forlorn* (1994):

no such tradition [of the female-authored short story in Wales] has ever been recognised: women’s short stories have been shunted into the margins of the canon of Welsh writing in English as inexorably as their protagonists have characteristically found themselves relegated to marginal existences.<sup>229</sup>

Aaron argues that it is the neglect and inconsistency of anthologists which has contributed to rendering such ‘a female tradition invisible’, for although the number of women included in twentieth-century Welsh short-story anthologies demonstrate consistently a relatively satisfactory ratio,

the names of women [included in these anthologies] bob up and down like corks on the contents sheet [...] consequently not one of them can be said to have gained recognition as an indispensable contributor to the genre, and no foundations have been laid for the development of a specifically female tradition in Welsh story-writing in English.<sup>230</sup>

While the points that Brown raises in his essay certainly have some relevance to Edwards, it must also be kept in mind that on the whole Dorothy Edwards was writing before such authors as Glyn Jones, Dylan Thomas, and Alun Lewis – in fact,

---

<sup>229</sup> Jane Aaron, ‘Introduction’ in Elin ap Hywel, ed., *Luminous and Forlorn: contemporary short stories by women from Wales* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 1994), xi.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, xii-xiii. Sally Roberts Jones, in her survey of Welsh short story anthologies, ‘Painting in the open air: an annotated bibliography of the Anglo-Welsh short story’, states that in the ‘canon’ of eight authors that appear regularly in anthologies of Welsh short stories written in English, only one woman appears: Kate Roberts. Roberts, of course, wrote in the Welsh language: the work that appears in these anthologies is translated. See Sally Roberts Jones, ‘Painting in the open air: an annotated bibliography of the Anglo-Welsh short story’, Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales (CREW), Swansea University, 2003. 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006, <[http://www.swan.ac.uk/english/crew/SRL\\_BIBAWSS](http://www.swan.ac.uk/english/crew/SRL_BIBAWSS)>.

by the time that the Welsh short story really began to flourish, Edwards had died.<sup>231</sup>

Rhys Davies offers the only potential comparison to Edwards in the sense that both were Welsh writers producing and publishing short stories contemporaneously (Davies' first short story collection, *The Withered Root*, appeared in the same year as *Rhapsody*). But, as Brown has pointed out, Davies was a full-time writer, and by the time that he began publishing his work he had moved to London, and wrote about Wales from the point of view of an exile. Furthermore, Davies' living arrangements left him free to pursue his writing in a manner that Edwards could not. Although he often found himself living in near poverty while in London, Davies experienced a degree of freedom and independence which, as a writer, Edwards was never able to enjoy, even when she found herself, in 1933, living for a period in the English capital.<sup>232</sup> When his financial situation became unmanageable, Davies frequently returned home to his parent's grocer's shop in Blaenclydach in the Rhondda, where he lived as a dependent; in 1920s Cardiff, however, Edwards found herself increasingly responsible for the welfare of her mother, and felt burdened by the necessity to succeed in her writing in order to provide for her mother financially.

Finally, as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Katie Gramich has pointed out in her Welsh-language essay on Edwards that such magazines as *Wales* and *The Welsh Review* that contributed to, as Glyn Jones terms it, the 'climate of interest and encouragement' in Welsh writing were not established until the mid 1930s.<sup>233</sup> As a result, I find that it is more relevant to locate Edwards on a 1920s

---

<sup>231</sup> Glyn Jones point out in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* that 'when several of the Anglo Welsh were beginning to write, in the thirties, the short story was enjoying something of a vogue in England'. Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, 52.

<sup>232</sup> See chapter six for a detailed discussion of Edwards' dependent status while living with the Garnett family in London in 1933.

<sup>233</sup> See Katie Gramich 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd: storïau byrion Dorothy Edwards a Kate Roberts yn y dauddegau', in M. Wynn Thomas, ed., *Diffinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 83-4. Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, 53. It is worth keeping in mind that *Life and Letters To-day*, which published Edwards' 'Mutiny'

modernist context. In this chapter, I argue that a close reading of Edwards' short stories, coupled with comments from her letters, reveals an attitude towards language and expression that is highly suggestive of a Modernist outlook.

In a 1928 letter to David Garnett, Edwards wrote

It seems to me that I am still wrestling with the possibility – or indeed it may be the ultimate impossibility – of finding a way of expressing in the English language something that seems quite alien to everything that language has been created and moulded to express.<sup>234</sup>

This concern or preoccupation with finding a new mode of expression is integral to the understanding of Modernist literature, and is evocative of the sentiment demonstrated by Woolf in 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' quoted above.

Christopher Meredith has argued that Edwards uses 'deliberately awkward prose'<sup>235</sup> which 'at its best is taut and stylized, intentionally repetitious, and sometimes intentionally clumsy' which defamiliarizes the reader.<sup>236</sup> The layered and shifting nature of narrative in Edwards' fiction contributes to the overall sense of instability of her narrative. 'Sweet Grapes' for example, a story which I discuss in more detail in chapter three, is narrated by a friend of Hugo Ferris, who gives the reader Ferris' story of his summer holiday as told to him by Ferris. So the realities of the events of Ferris' stay are mediated through several lens before reaching the reader, thus leading the reader to question not only the narrator's version of events but Ferris', revealing the very subjective nature of individual consciousness and the effect that this has on interpretations. Edwards makes things strange in her fiction. For example, she consistently gives her characters unusual names – such as Trenier, Sorel, Rahel – which reinforce the strangeness of the tone of some of the stories. As Tony

---

and 'The Problem of Life' posthumously in 1934, was also active in publishing English-language Welsh short stories.

<sup>234</sup> Edwards, letter to David Garnett, n.d. [1928]. Quoted in Garnett, *The Familiar Faces*, 86.

<sup>235</sup> Meredith, 'Rhapsody's Lost Story', 166.

<sup>236</sup> Meredith, 'The window facing the sea', 66-7.

Brown has commented, the ‘slight oddness and/or unEnglishness’ of the character’s names adds an ‘element of uncanniness [...] a ‘not-quite-realness’ in which what ought to be real has become defamiliarized.’<sup>237</sup> The repetition of these names in the volume adds to this effect - Trenier is the surname of both the young governess Antonia in ‘Rhapsody’ and the young narrator of ‘The Conquered’, Frederick. Likewise, the Christian name Leonora is used in both ‘Summer-time’ and ‘Days’, and the surnames of the main male characters are mirrored in both their rhyming and the fact that they are both names of plants (Joseph *Laurel* and Alexander *Sorel*).

As I stated in the introduction to this thesis, Edwards’ stories are generally set in unspecified locations, and there is often a certain fairytale or strange quality to the buildings in which much of the dialogue takes place (it is difficult to use the term ‘action’ in the case of Edwards’ stories, since more often than not so little takes place). In ‘Rhapsody’ the narrator Mr Elliott joins the Everett family at a cottage in Scotland where they are holidaying; on his arrival Elliott is perturbed by the fact that the roof of the cottage is visible from the very foot of the glen. ‘Everett had called it a cottage, but it looked more imposing than that’, he says.<sup>238</sup> (*R*, 13) But appearances are deceiving – when Elliott reaches the top of the glen, he discovers that it is the cottage’s elevated position that gives it an illusion of grandeur – it is, after all, just a cottage. In ‘Sweet Grapes’ Hugo Ferris finds that the house he has rented is in fact a rather ostentatious ‘ugly little castle’ which its owner, once he completed the building of it, had deserted immediately.<sup>239</sup> (*R*, 112) The motif of the castellated towers that adorn each end of the building recur throughout the story, and in ‘A Garland of Earth’ the characters visit a similarly unusual castellated building. Edwards’ lack of

---

<sup>237</sup> Tony Brown, ‘An isolated odd universe’, 151.

<sup>238</sup> See chapter three for a more detailed discussion of this story.

<sup>239</sup> The gothic elements of this story continue when Ferris sees Elizabeth the young female occupant of the house, in the tower of the house and then, almost immediately afterwards, he meets her in the garden. See Edwards, ‘Sweet Grapes’, *Rhapsody*, 115.



background or material detail, and her focus on the very strained relationships between people acted out in these generally claustrophobic buildings (even outside space is often presented as hemming her characters in, such as the woodlands in ‘Treachery in a Forest’ and ‘Days’) recalls Woolf’s description of the ideal form of Modernist expression quoted at the beginning of this chapter: ‘It will tell us very little about the houses, incomes, occupations of its characters’ but will ‘express the feeling and ideas of the characters closely and from a different angle.’<sup>240</sup>

All these factors lead me to read Edwards’ work in the context of early twentieth-century Modernism. In this chapter, I will look at two particular techniques that Edwards employs in her fiction that serve to render her work particularly amenable to a Modernist reading: her manipulation of the first-person narrative voice and her use of epiphany. But first, I will look more fully at the critical theory surrounding women Modernist writers in order to set Edwards in this context.

## I

The fluid nature of early twentieth-century culture and the accompanying innovation and experimentalism in literature meant for some women writers an opportunity to negotiate a specifically female space in terms of expression. In *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (1998) Randall Stevenson suggests that Woolf’s comment that ‘[I]n or about December 1910, human character changed’, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was of general historical, not just literary, relevance:

A fuller explanation should probably recognize 1910 as a turbulent time of agitation by trades unions, by the Home Rule movement in Ireland, and – probably most significantly for Woolf – by the Suffragettes, in many violent demonstrations on the streets of London [...] Some of the hierarchies, stratifications and gender divisions of British life, deeply inscribed in novelists’ views of character and relationship, probably seemed as a result

---

<sup>240</sup> Woolf, ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’, 18.

more shifting and precarious during or after December 1910 than they ever had before.<sup>241</sup>

This instability, suggest Hanscombe and Smyers, formed part of the appeal of the Modernist movement to women writers:

‘Modernism’ [...] did more than challenge convention; it upended it. And women had a special stake in seeing it upended. If literature could be renewed, women might just carve for themselves a legitimate place in the new order.<sup>242</sup>

In ‘Women and Fiction’ (1929) Woolf describes the problems facing the woman writer entering into a predominantly male system, and indicates the extent to which the traditional middle-class female role, the Victorian ‘angel in the house’, is at odds with the role of ‘writer’. In patriarchal society the female role entails self-sacrifice - women are to put the needs of their husband and their children first and foremost, be good wives and mothers and adhere to the socially-desired image of women as passive and accepting. In contrast, the writer must always be selfish for the sake of her art: as Hanscombe and Smyers point out, a ‘writer never takes second place voluntarily [...] How can she embody what is required, on the one hand, of a good wife, lover and mother and, on the other hand, of a good writer?’<sup>243</sup> Creative males, they argue, have historically prioritised their art over their other responsibilities:

Literary history is littered with stories of astonishing selfishness on the part of writers whose work evokes extraordinary acclaim: Balzac went through women and their chateaux at the exact rate that his purse could thus support his writing; D. H. Lawrence rages his way through every important relationship in his life in the service of his art [...] Joyce, Tolstoy, Marx, Freud...the list is endless, of men whose thought and writing has been deemed to excuse whatever excesses of selfishness they perpetrated. It is the degree of value we place on a writer’s work which measures the extent to which we excuse the way he lives. But can we say ‘she’ in the same way?<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction* (1992; new edn., London: Prentice Hall, 1998), 65.

<sup>242</sup> Hanscombe and Smyers, *Writing for their Lives*, 8.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

The incompatible nature of traditional gender roles with conventional creative aspirations is integral to Richardson's *Pilgrimage* and largely motivates her exploration of the female consciousness. In *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness* (1982), Gillian Hanscombe argues: 'all her [Richardson's] conflicts derive from one source, which is the impossibility of reconciling her sense of self with the expected role-typical behaviours and attitudes attributed by her society to women.'<sup>245</sup> The gulf between male and female consciousness is key to *Pilgrimage*, and is reflected in the central character Miriam Henderson's continual and conflicting identification with and eventual rejection of both the masculine and the feminine. Miriam can find solace in neither gender role, pre-defined as they are by an outmoded and irrelevant set of social and cultural values. 'What a hopeless thing a man's consciousness was. How awful to have nothing but a man's consciousness,' she thinks.<sup>246</sup> Richardson felt that the development of an individual, but specifically a female, consciousness was key to the success of the woman writer. She argued that it is not only the daily demands and constraints put upon women as a result of their sex which requires that they write in a different manner to men, but the specific nature of the female consciousness:

Ideal conditions [for writing] are more easily obtained by men than by women. However provided with service, space, leisure, a woman will not entirely escape transient preoccupations: with the welfare of her entourage, both animate and inanimate...nothing short of a dehumanised solitude will serve the woman at work. [...] All they produce is in the teeth of demands from which most men, for good or ill, are free.<sup>247</sup>

Richardson is essentially arguing, then, that even if a woman is free from domestic duties, she will always write under different conditions from those experienced by her

---

<sup>245</sup> Gillian Hanscombe, *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness* (London: Peter Owen, 1982), 116-117.

<sup>246</sup> Dorothy Richardson, 'The Tunnel', *Pilgrimage 2* (1919; London: Virago, 2002), 27.

<sup>247</sup> Dorothy Richardson, letter to Louise Theis, 5 Oct 1937. Quoted in *ibid*, 164-5.

male counterpart as a result of her culturally-constructed consciousness.<sup>248</sup> The accounts of friends and biographers indicate that Richardson herself went to great lengths to protect her thinking process from interruption, often at the expense of her personal relationships. The aim behind much experimental Modernist fiction, as we have seen, was to offer a ‘true’ representation of modern life: any method of depicting life that ignored the conflict that a woman of the period must have inevitably felt in trying to align her sense of self with what was expected of her as a woman would therefore fail. For many in early twentieth-century Britain, gender conflict was an integral part of being a woman, and as such, an integral part of a woman’s consciousness.

Perhaps, then, it is inevitable that many women writers of the Modernist period, like Woolf, Richardson, and Mansfield, lived to varying extents at odds with the prevailing heterosexual system, in contrast to many of their male contemporaries. Hanscombe and Smyers highlight the key difference between the male and female Modernists not in terms of their literature but their lifestyle:

Pound, Joyce, Eliot and Lawrence [...] however radical or innovatory or ‘creative’ their respective literary genius, lived conventionally male heterosexual lives; perhaps wild, sometimes, or eccentric or egotistic, but somehow within the norm. The women, by contrast, in their emotional and sexual lives, in where they lived and how they earned, in everything actual, were just as innovative as they were in their theory and practice of literature [...] Modernism, for its women, was not just a question of style; it was a way of life.<sup>249</sup>

According to Hanscombe and Smyers, then, male writers were able to combine innovation in their literature with relative conformity in their personal lives; women writers, however, personified the sense of innovation to such an extent that it infiltrated into all aspects of their lives. Of course conformity for men in the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain generally meant that they had a

---

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>249</sup> Hanscombe and Smyers, *Writing for their Lives*, 10-11.

woman to service their needs and thus provide them time in which to write; conformity for women would in all likelihood have resulted in quite the opposite situation.

Such radical internal and external conflict is embodied in the work of many Modernist women writers. Woolf, for example, indicated the extent to which she felt that the difference between male and female experience would affect their art:

[women] were excluded by their sex from certain kinds of experience. That experience has a great influence upon fiction is indisputable. The best part of Conrad's novels, for instance, would be destroyed if it had been impossible for him to be a sailor. Take away all that Tolstoy knew of war as a soldier, of life and society as a rich young man whose education admitted him to all sorts of experience, and *War and Peace* would be incredibly impoverished.<sup>250</sup>

Although gender boundaries were certainly being pushed during the early years of the twentieth century, they were far from being broken, and Edwards' own experiences reflect this.

Edwards was of a different generation, class, and nationality from Woolf and Richardson, and, as such, when compared to their lives, hers was a life of increasing contrasts. Unlike Woolf, Edwards was not denied a university education; during her years spent studying at Cardiff in the 1920s she and her female contemporaries formed an integral part of the social and cultural life of the college. They wrote for the college magazine, presented papers to the academic societies, and even played in charity rugby matches.<sup>251</sup> But despite the new opportunities that were opening up for women, some things had far from changed, and Edwards' own lack of life experience was a factor that she felt keenly. In a 1925 essay which she contributed to Cardiff University's magazine *Cap and Gown*, she described the difficulties she experienced as a budding author:

---

<sup>250</sup> Woolf, 'Women and Fiction', in *Collected Essays: Volume 2*, 143.

<sup>251</sup> See *Cap & Gown*, 1920-1926.

Now I thought of a wonderful story the day before yesterday, which would have made this Magazine sell like hot bricks, but unluckily, it was very important that my hero should cash a cheque. Now, up to this point in my career, it has never been necessary for me to cash a cheque, and half-way through the story, I found to my horror that I did not know what happened [...] so I had to abandon it.<sup>252</sup>

Her problem, she explained, stemmed from her inability to follow the standard line of advice to would-be authors, to ‘write about what you know’; her own lack of life experience making it difficult to do so. ‘Of course, the obvious solution was to write about far-off distant things, and be very symbolic’,<sup>253</sup> was her conclusion. Given her difficulties, then, it is perhaps hardly surprising that the short story became Edwards’ preferred vehicle of expression, requiring as it does the provision of minimal background or information. In the 1950s John Wain, for example, indicated that the process of writing a short story is very different from that of a novel, as ‘a short story does not need enormous amounts of information’, thus allowing its practitioner to deal with issues that may be outside their immediate experience.<sup>254</sup>

The nature of the short story, then, makes it an ideal form of expression for the modern period. Although much of Woolf’s fiction manifests itself structurally in novel format, her concept of the new, Modernist art form is very suggestive of the short story. In *The Modernist Short Story* Dominic Head argues that the short story ‘encapsulates the essence of literary modernism, and has an enduring ability to capture the episodic nature of twentieth-century experience.’<sup>255</sup> This factor has induced many fiction writers to utilise the short story as an experimental form; as Nadine Gordimer points out: ‘[s]hort story writers see by the light of the flash; theirs

---

<sup>252</sup> Edwards, ‘On Writing’, 11.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>254</sup> John Wain, quoted in Jean Pickering, ‘Time and the Short Story’ in Hanson, ed., *Re-reading the Short Story*, 51.

<sup>255</sup> Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 1.

is the art of the only thing one can be sure of – the present moment’.<sup>256</sup> Like life, the short story can be episodic, fragmentary, fluctuating, lucid; it does not require a sustained and chronological narrative; nor does it demand conclusion, so essential to the novel and yet so artificial and contrary to the true nature of life. Irish short-story writer and novelist Elizabeth Bowen highlights this appeal:

The art of the short story permits a break at what in the novel would be the crux of the plot; the short story, free from the *longuers* of the novel, is also exempt from the novel’s conclusiveness – too often forced and false: it may thus more nearly approach aesthetic and moral truth.<sup>257</sup>

The intensity of the short story (i.e. the fact that it can be read in one sitting) offers its practitioner the opportunity to focus on the tone and atmosphere of the story, rather than the narrative or plot, in order to leave a lasting impression on the reader.

The idea of a ‘unity of impression’, which originated with Edgar Allan Poe, has been central to debates surrounding the practice of short-story writing. According to

Valerie Shaw in *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983), Poe insisted that,

only when the desired effect or impression is clear in the writer’s mind should he go on to invent incidents and arrange them in the order best calculated to establish this effect. Whatever the subject, the aim is to pull the reader along towards a single moment when he finds impressed on his mind an effect identical to the one ‘preconceived’ by the writer.<sup>258</sup>

This ‘deliberate artistry’ outlined by Poe is considered by many to be key to the successful short story, and is an element that raises the form above merely being a ‘story’ (in the sense of a narrative) that is ‘short’ (in the sense of scale). Many short-story writers argue that the quest to achieve a ‘unity of impression’ makes short-story writing a complex and skilled technique. Irish short-story writer Frank O’Connor, for example, highlights this:

the very term ‘short story’ is a misnomer. A great story is not necessarily

---

<sup>256</sup> Nadine Gordimer, quoted in Hanson, ‘Introduction’ in *Re-reading the Short Story*, 2.

<sup>257</sup> Elizabeth Bowen, ‘The Faber Book of Modern Short Stories’ in May, ed., *The New Short Story Theories*, 261.

<sup>258</sup> Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983; Harlow: Longman, 1994), 9.

short at all, and the conception of the short story as a miniature art is inherently false. Basically, the difference between the short story and the novel is not one of length. It is a difference of pure and applied storytelling.<sup>259</sup>

In letters to Jones and Kelly, Edwards often summarised her ideas for short stories, suggesting that unity of impression was important to her as a writer. ‘I am finding it increasingly difficult to get from under the spell of the story & think what it is all about,’ she writes of ‘Days’, and her letters of the time suggest that, as Poe prescribed, she saw this story as a whole from the outset.<sup>260</sup>

The short story offered Edwards a structure within which to experiment without being hindered by her lack of life experience, or facing the temporal demands of a novel. However, as her authorial skills improved, the form offered much more to Edwards than a method with which to escape the menial restrictions of everyday life. I suggest that Edwards made deliberate use of her technique to emphasise issues of class, gender, and colonialism, thus focusing the social criticism that was so politically important to her through the short-story form.

## II

‘A Country House’, the first story that Edwards attempted to publish, was after its initial publication in *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, deemed of such quality as to be chosen by Edward O’Brien for inclusion in his *Best Short Stories* series of 1926. In this story, Edwards makes striking use of narrative voice. In this story Edwards, like many other writers of the Modernist period, she questions the authority of the first-person narrative and redefines the relationship between the reader and the narrator, but does so in such a way as to problematize the nature of gendered and class-based

---

<sup>259</sup> Frank O’Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1963), 27.

<sup>260</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37. See also Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 26.



paradigms as much as that of literary representations.

This story is narrated from the perspective of a middle-aged country gentleman who, addressing an implied sympathetic audience, reveals to devastating effect his own tyrannical and power-obsessed nature, his sense of ownership over his own wife and his command over those he considers to be beneath him on the social scale. Edwards underlines the narrator's role as possessor throughout: he is never named, so the reader has little choice but to categorise him as 'the owner', and the fact that he neglects to give his wife's name emphasises his view of her as lacking an integral self, being, in effect, his property. The couple live in a large, isolated country house; on a whim, the owner decides that the house should be supplied with electricity. He takes steps to arrange this but is told that the local electrician, Richardson, will not be available until September as he is about to take a holiday. The owner's reaction to this tellingly reveals his own sense of privilege as a result of his class position. Faced with denial, his whim becomes a matter of urgency:

Now I suddenly felt that there was a great hurry. I wanted it done before September. They had no one else they could send, and it would take some time if I decided to have it done. I asked them to send for the electrician. I would pay him anything he liked if he would put off his holiday. (*R.*, 28)

Richardson agrees and, as the installation progresses, so the increasing irrationality in the narrator's behaviour towards his young wife is revealed.

Far from using him as a reliable, authoritative figure, Edwards employs the first person narrative to undermine the narrator, who inadvertently discloses to the reader the fact that he uses his standing and wealth to manipulate those below him on the social ladder. Edwards' owner cuts a comic figure; pompous and assuming, he continually, and unconvincingly, tries to justify his actions to his audience. His assumption of shared values with his implied reader indicates the prevalence of such oppressive patriarchal values as those he presents. At one point he spies on his wife

and the electrician and justifies his own actions as perfectly normal:

They stood up, and I waited for them to come through the door. *I suppose nobody could expect me to hide behind a tree so as to cause them no embarrassment* [...] However, they chose to go back by the other way along the bank of the stream. (*R.*, 41) [My emphasis]

Throughout 'A Country House' the owner continually attempts to control and oppress his wife, fearing that if she is left to her own devices she will become completely wild and uninhibited. Her suppression is symbolised on their wedding day by the tying back of her long, curly hair, and from then on the owner attempts to destroy or remove anything untamed or natural that pleases her. The woman has taken particular pleasure in a wild part of the garden. As a result her husband has it severely pruned without her knowledge, symbolising his attempts to restrain anything natural within her:

When we got to the bottom of the garden and through the door which opens on the bank of the stream she gave a cry of horror. And I will tell you why. It was because I had had the grass and weeds on the bank cut.

She turned to Richardson. 'I am so sorry,' she said. 'You should have seen this before it was cut. It was very pretty. What were those white flowers growing on the other side?'

'Hemlock,' I said. 'It had to be cut.'

'I don't see why,' she said. 'It is a pity to spoil such a beautiful place for the sake of tidiness.' She turned to him petulantly.

Now that is all nonsense. A place must be tidy. There were bulrushes and water-lilies as it was. What more must she have? A lot of weeds dripping down into the water! There is a difference between garden flowers and weeds. If you want weeds, then do not have gardens. And I suppose I am insensible to beauty because I keep the place cut and trimmed. Nonsense! Suppose my wife took off her clothes and ran about the garden like a bacchante! Perhaps I should like it very much, but I should shut her up in her room all the same. (*R.*, 34-5)

The wife is associated with the natural world throughout, whereas her husband, in his desire for electricity, seems to represent a sort of false, unnatural existence as a result of his association with the technological. Edwards makes use of her extensive knowledge of Greek myth to further reinforce her point and emphasise the owner's view of his wife as an emotional and irrational being. The reference to the Greek

‘bacchante’ above recalls the female followers of Bacchus, or Dionysus, ‘bringer of ecstasy and of wine’, whose disciples ‘went outside the established order of society and laid themselves open to inspired frenzy’.<sup>261</sup> The narrator treats his wife as a force of disorder which must be controlled by his male rationality, and locked up if she transgresses, just as the natural order of day and night will be undermined as a result of his electric generator.

The deliberate manner in which the owner’s controlling and domineering nature is revealed creates a unity of impression which leaves the reader with a lasting sense of the inequity of sexual and social hierarchies. The intensity of the short story form is particularly amenable to this technique: Edwards’ manipulation of the male first-person narrative would certainly have proved more difficult to sustain in a longer form. By imitating an English middle-class voice so convincingly in stories such as ‘A Country House’, I suggest that, rather than actually aspiring to a middle-class male English status in her writing, Edwards is deliberately mimicking this group in order to attack it, thus focalising the social criticism that was so politically important to her through the short-story form.

A similar technique can be found in the work of Katherine Mansfield. In her short story ‘Mr Reginald Peacock’s Day’ (1920), Mansfield’s self-centred male focalizer, Mr Peacock, reveals his ill-treatment of his wife through his unrelenting defence of his lifestyle. The story opens with Peacock’s anger at his wife’s method of rousing him from his slumber:

If there was one thing he hated more than another it was the way she had of waking him in the morning. She did it on purpose, of course. It was her way of establishing her grievance for the day, and he was not going to let her know how successful it was. But really, really, to wake a sensitive person like that was positively dangerous! It took him hours to get over it – simply hours. She came into the room buttoned up in an overall, with a handkerchief over her

---

<sup>261</sup> Sabine G. Oswalt, *Collins Concise Encyclopaedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* (1965; Glasgow: Collins, 1969), 55, 91.

head – thereby proving that she had been up herself and slaving since dawn – and called in a low, warning voice: ‘Reginald!’  
 ‘Eh! What! What’s that? What’s the matter?’  
 ‘It’s time to get up; it’s half-past eight.’ And out she went, shutting the door quietly after her, to gloat over her triumph, he supposed.<sup>262</sup>

As the story progresses it becomes clear that Mrs Peacock is little more than a domestic slave, and her husband’s attitude makes it impossible for her to hire any help. Begrudging her money for the family’s food, he says to her,

‘Simply because all the women we have had in the past have been failures and utterly upset my regime, and made it almost impossible for me to have any pupils here, you’ve given up trying to find a decent woman. It’s not impossible to train a servant – is it? I mean, it doesn’t require genius?’<sup>263</sup>

Such use of a male point of view, as discussed in relation to ‘A Country House’, is characteristic of *Rhapsody*. Of the ten stories included in the volume, four make use of a first-person male narrator, who is also a central character (‘Rhapsody’, ‘A Country House’, ‘The Conquered’, and ‘A Garland of Earth’). The remaining six make use of an unnamed narrator to whom we are never introduced, as does ‘La Penseuse’ (a story that Edwards originally intended for inclusion in *Rhapsody*). But even when the narrator is unnamed or unspecified, on the whole they are nonetheless implicitly male. ‘Sweet Grapes’, for example, opens with the line, ‘My friend Hugo Ferris decided, a few summers ago, to taste to the full the pleasures of solitude’ (R., 111). While this may not be enough to allow us to identify the narrator as definitively male, the attitudes and observations subtly put forward throughout the narrative are. When Elizabeth, the young female occupant of the house in which Ferris is spending his holiday asks if she may borrow the book that he is reading when he has finished with it, the narrator’s response is suggestive of Edwards’ pompous male narrator: ‘It was a book on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and hardly likely to interest a

<sup>262</sup> Katherine Mansfield, ‘Mr Reginald Peacock’s Day’, *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1945; London: Penguin, 1981), 144.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 147, 150.

girl of nineteen,' he says (such a book would, of course, have interested a nineteen-year-old Edwards) (*R.*, 114).

Ironically, it seems that Edwards' innovative use of a male narrative voice in order to condemn patriarchy out of the patriarch's mouth, as it were, has served to contribute to her neglect by feminist critics. In her essay on May Sinclair's 1904 novel *The Divine Fire*, Diana Wallace argues that the author's choice of a male protagonist has led to its neglect by those who played key roles in reclaiming Sinclair's other works. Wallace suggests that:

feminist critics have not been attracted to this novel with its lower-class hero and lack of immediately obvious feminist themes [...] [they] have tended until very recently to focus on writers' depictions of women as a way of exploring the construction and problematics of femininity.<sup>264</sup>

Edwards' failure to perpetuate the Modernist technique of *écriture féminine*, or writing of the female body, then, has in part led to her neglect. But I suggest that her use of the male narrative voice has substantial implications for feminist theory, and must no longer be overlooked, for, through her manipulation of the male narrative voice, Edwards exposes the power-based nature of gendered constructions. According to Ben Knights,

An author who ventriloquises a member of the opposite sex forces us to re-examine our assumptions about the relations between text and the author's experience [...] If a woman takes the much more unusual step of deciding to write 'as though' she were a man, that act too demands attention, though because of the differentials of cultural power it is not symmetrical.<sup>265</sup>

Women writers utilising such a technique have been subject not only to neglect from feminist critics, but censure from those who feel that it is inappropriate for a woman writer to adopt a male voice. '[T]here have been strong taboos regarding

---

<sup>264</sup> Diana Wallace, "'A Sort of Genius': Love, Art, and Classicism in May Sinclair's *The Divine Fire*", in Andrew J. Kunka and Michele K. Troy, eds., *May Sinclair: Moving Towards the Modern* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 50, 52.

<sup>265</sup> Ben Knights, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 138.

the ways in which women writers depict male characters,' argues Wallace, citing a succinct example of this from Modernist American writer H.D.'s autobiographical novel *Bid Me to Live* (1960):

Rico (based on D. H. Lawrence) comments on the poem sequence *Julia* (H.D.) has given him to read: 'Stick to the woman speaking. How can you know what Orpheus feels? It's your part to be a woman...Eurydice should be enough'.<sup>266</sup>

As Wallace suggests, no such arguments have been put forward against men voicing women. But far from prioritising a male perspective, writers like Edwards question the very nature of patriarchy. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) Judith Butler says that cross-dressing 'implicitly suggests that gender is a kind of impersonation that passes as the real [...] [it] destabilizes the very distinctions between the natural and the artificial, depth and surface, inner and outer through which discourse about genders almost always operates.'<sup>267</sup> Butler is writing here of men in drag, dressing and posing as women, but I feel that this argument is equally valid in terms of women posing as men, and has significant, though different, implications in terms of social commentary for the understanding of Edwards and other writers who choose to mimic a male voice. In her essay 'Ventriloquising the Male: two portraits of the artist as a young man by May Sinclair and Edith Wharton', Wallace suggests that the key issue in female writers using the male voice is power politics: 'a cross-dressing [or cross-writing] woman is masking her *lack of power*' [original italics].<sup>268</sup> Wallace argues:

This ventriloquising of the male does not silence the male but exposes masculinity as constructed and contingent, thus undermining its traditionally universalized and normative status.<sup>269</sup>

---

<sup>266</sup> Wallace, "'A Sort of Genius'", 51.

<sup>267</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), viii.

<sup>268</sup> Diana Wallace, 'Ventriloquising the Male: two portraits of the artist as a young man by May Sinclair and Edith Wharton', *Men and Masculinities*, 4, 4 (2002), 327.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, 327.

In her use of a male narrative voice, then, Edwards is bringing into question the nature of power relations implicit in her society, which in turn has implications not only in terms of gender, but of class and ethnicity. Knights argues that:

For a male author to write his way into a woman may be seen as an act of colonisation. Conversely, the woman writing her way into a man may be engaged in an activity which has much in common with post-colonial rewriting of traditional power relationships. Just as the exploration of liminality has characterised much 'post-colonial' writing, so these are male narratives reread through the lens of marginality. There are strong parallels between reforming the relations between the former colony and the metropolis and realigning the relations between woman and patriarchy.<sup>270</sup>

Edwards, through the *lack* of a female voice, reveals the oppressive nature of male dominance and the relegated position of the female and exposes subtly and comically, but to devastating effect, a male sense of self-righteousness, an assumed superiority over others. As Clare Tomalin states in her introduction to Mansfield's *Collected Stories*, 'this is a comedy to make patriarchs tremble.'<sup>271</sup> By deconstructing the primacy of the male through her use of the narrative voice, Edwards questions the validity of hegemonic standard in a manner comparable with her female Modernist forerunners.

### III

Several of the stories in *Rhapsody* make use of an epiphany or crisis-point to reveal a key truth about the situation of Edwards' characters, a technique which again aligns her with Modernist writers. Chris Baldick indicates that the concept of the epiphany was coined by James Joyce 'to denote secular revelation in the everyday world, in an early version of his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) later

---

<sup>270</sup> Knights, *Writing Masculinities*, 139.

<sup>271</sup> Claire Tomalin, 'Introduction' in Katherine Mansfield, *Short Stories* (1983; London: Dent 2000), xix.

published as *Stephen Hero* (1944)'.<sup>272</sup> Baldick goes on to argue that in this novel, Joyce defined an epiphany as ““a sudden spiritual manifestation” in which the “whatness” of a common object or gesture appears radiant to the observer.”<sup>273</sup>

According to John Paul Riquelme, in *Stephen Hero* ‘the central character, Stephen Dedalus, claims that one function of writing is “to record [...] epiphanies with extreme care”, since “they [...] are the most delicate and evanescent of moments”’.<sup>274</sup> This concept of the epiphany, very specific to Joyce’s own work (and his 1914 short-story collection *Dubliners* in particular), has been expanded upon by Vicki Mahaffey, who argues that:

Joyce also used the epiphany to signify a psychological revelation of repressed or subconscious truth through slips or errors [...] According to Stanislaus’s [Joyce’s brother] account, the epiphanies began as satiric attempts to expose the pretensions of others, and they grew to include brief realizations of unconscious knowledge as it is unexpectedly unlocked by language or dream.<sup>275</sup>

Jean Pickering argues that the epiphany is another aspect of the short story that allows its practitioner to omit background information; the reader must instead ‘grasp the nature of characters in a moment of revelation’.<sup>276</sup> However, Ian Reid has emphasised that the epiphany is not an essential element of characterisation in the short story. Indeed: ‘if a significant revelation does occur, it *may* involve a perceived moment of truth for a character, but frequently it will be for readers only.’<sup>277</sup> Reid’s description of the epiphanic moment is very similar to the technique utilised by Edwards. In *Rhapsody*, the moment of realisation is not a stimulus of change in her

---

<sup>272</sup> Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 72. I refer to the concept of the epiphany, rather than Joyce’s prose sketches that he likewise entitled *Epiphanies*.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> John Paul Riquelme, ‘*Stephen Hero*, *Dubliners*, and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: styles of realism and fantasy’, in Derek Attridge, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 103.

<sup>275</sup> Vicki Mahaffey, ‘Joyce’s shorter works’, in Attridge, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, 193.

<sup>276</sup> Pickering, ‘Time and the Short Story’, 51.

<sup>277</sup> Ian Reid, *The Short Story* (1977; London: Routledge, 1994), 56, original emphasis.



characters, but rather serves to reinforce the static and unchanging nature of their lives. The reader realises that the character has reached a crisis-point, an opportunity for self-realisation and change; the character, however, wavers on the brink... but then withdraws quickly, refusing to acknowledge the nature of the revelation and continuing to live in the same way with the same (seemingly obvious) problems.

In the story 'Summer-time' Edwards uses the epiphanic moment to particularly comic effect in order to highlight the vanity of the central character, Joseph Laurel. From the start, the narrative indicates that the central theme of this story is, indeed, revelation. The story opens thus:

The most foolish things happen to people in the summer. For instance, this summer a most foolish thing happened to Mr Joseph Laurel, and yet, of course, in a way it was a revelation too. (*R.*, 97)

Laurel accompanies his tennis partner, Beatrice Hammond, on a trip to stay with her sister, Mrs Chalen, at her home in the country. At the house are Beatrice's niece, Leonora, and the girl's cousin, Basil; both are just out of school, and are filled with an enchanting youthful exuberance. As the holiday progresses Laurel associates himself increasingly with the two young cousins rather than with his contemporary, Beatrice:

The curious thing is that he does not remember noticing Beatrice much during all this time [...] so completely had he given himself up to the atmosphere of the country and the garden and the roses, and Leonora with them. (*R.*, 104)

Laurel demonstrates a childlike, and somewhat irritating, naivety in his relations with Leonora, executed with comic precision by Edwards and encapsulated in a conversation between the two about school:

he thought what a large gulf there was between them [...] Not, you know, that he was nearly forty and she seventeen, but merely that he had left school a term before her. (*R.*, 106)

Unable to comprehend the warnings held in Beatrice's 'little smile[s] of malice and veiled amusement' (*R.*, 104), Laurel continues to perceive Leonora and Basil as his

peers, appearing increasingly foolish in his attempts to effect his inclusion in their activities. When the party return home from a picnic, for example,

Basil began to sing, beating time with a dusty branch in his hand, and Leonora joined in. Mr Laurel did not know the song, but he joined in too, singing anything to the tune. And again he caught Beatrice looking at him with a malicious little smile, which he resented without quite knowing why. (*R.*, 106)

The sight of Laurel, a middle-aged man, attempting to sing along to what is in all likelihood a contemporary popular tune with which he is unfamiliar, in order to fit in with his school-aged companions, is clearly ridiculous to both Beatrice and the reader, and it is fitting that his moment of epiphany should be equally conspicuous.

The following day Laurel is forced to realise the impossibility of his relations with the young cousins when, unobserved, he watches Basil and Leonora in the garden:

[Basil] bent down, put his arms round her shoulders, and kissed her, on the cheek though, not on her mouth.

[...] Basil laughed, and felt, I dare say, awfully wicked and daring. But he was a little embarrassed too. For lack of anything to say he kissed her again, and she hid her face against his macintosh. They sat down side by side, and could not even look at each other. Then Basil said something with a casual air, nonchalantly turned a cartwheel somersault on the wet grass, and they walked out through the gate, looking straight ahead of them, and with the mark of the brown turfs across the backs of their macintoshes.

And as they passed out of the gate it seemed to Mr Laurel that his youth vanished with them [...] He felt an overwhelming melancholy within his soul, and yet it seemed, too, as if he were on the threshold of a thought that would console him, when, looking up, he saw Beatrice sitting reading just outside the house. She was in white again, ready to play when the grass was dry. He suddenly began to see why she had smiled with such malice. It was at the spectacle of him fatuously running after a schoolgirl, anxiously watching each little blush, as though blushes were not simply a physical characteristic of schoolgirls. He nearly blushed himself at the thought. It would have been far more appropriate if he had carried on a flirtation with Beatrice, who was nearer his own age. He suddenly felt even more alarmed. He recalled the number of times he had played tennis with Beatrice and taken her out, without ever having considered that she was of a marriageable age. But now that he had discovered that he was himself middle-aged, he began to see that he had behaved in a most compromising manner. He almost ran across the lawn, intending in a few moments' conversation to efface his unconscious behaviour of years. But he stumbled up the steps, and when he got to her he felt a little embarrassed, perhaps not unnaturally.

Beatrice looked slowly up from her book as though she believed he had come especially to tell her something. This put what he had meant to say

out of his head, and after a moment's embarrassing silence he hurriedly looked down the garden and said, 'It will soon be dry enough for tennis.' (*R.*, 107-9)

This is a prime example of Edwards' technique, and as such is worth quoting at length. Firstly, her sense of comedy, demonstrated throughout *Rhapsody*, is integral to this scene, which is executed with cinematic precision. Laurel's realisation is vehement and visually effective; we can see the confusion and panic in his face as he recognises the implications of his actions, follow him as he mounts the steps and stumbles, and watch as his courage leaves him when confronted with the formidable Beatrice. At the same time, Edwards succeeds in purveying a sense of isolation and the futility of human actions. The 'overwhelming melancholy within his soul' that Laurel feels when he realises his separation from Basil and Lenora, and his 'discovery' that he 'was himself middle-aged' highlights the fleeting nature of human existence. Most of all, we are left with a sense of the inability of individuals to connect in a meaningful manner, a theme which dominates Edwards' work, and ultimately, her outlook on life.

Unable to face travelling back to town with Beatrice, Laurel makes an excuse to end his holiday early and, rather than acknowledge and apologise for his behaviour towards her, he goes to extreme lengths to avoid her:

Now he has decided to go abroad for the winter, because he finds that his diary is full of engagements with Beatrice, and he is only waiting to keep some quite inevitable ones and to take Basil to lunch with the dancers, and then he will escape. (*R.*, 110)

Laurel's experience is characteristic of *Rhapsody*; Edwards' characters rapidly approach their moment of realization, Joyce's epiphany, only to pause and fail to seize the opportunity for change, or to miss the nature of the epiphany altogether. Laurel's realisation, for example, is as much of the loss of his youth as the inconsiderate manner in which he has treated Beatrice. Reid argues that this is a trait of the short

story:

what makes some stories linger in the mind is that we are left uncertain about the nature and extent of the revelation, peak of awareness, that a character has apparently experienced. We sense that, while there has indeed been an important shift of perspective in her/his view of things, its significance may not yet have been fully apprehended by that character.<sup>278</sup>

Like Joyce in *Dubliners*, Edwards 'offers fragments of human experience that may or may not amount to defining moments.'<sup>279</sup> The failure of Edwards' characters to embrace their epiphanies signals the inability of human character to change. 'People do not change their lives suddenly. That is, they don't except in literature', says Richardson in 'A Country House' (*R.*, 40). For Edwards' characters, more often than not, there is a suggestion that the significance of the epiphany or revelation has completely passed the experiencing character by.

Given Edwards' marginalized position, it is not surprising that sensations of exclusion are strongly reflected in her work. Both *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* feature diffident characters excluded from a particular world to which they yearn to belong, and reflect 'a sense of alienation from dominant culture and ideology which may be frightening in its intensity.'<sup>280</sup> *Rhapsody* is characterised by poignant and recognisable moments which emphasise the extreme isolation of the characters. The next example of Edwards' crisis-point that I will discuss is a prime example of this. In 'Treachery in a Forest', for example, Mr Wendover is left painfully aware of his single status after a brief acquaintance with a holidaying couple. Wendover is spending his annual summer holiday in a dilapidated cottage on the outskirts of a forest. While walking one day he meets Leo and Elizabeth Harding, and during the following few days Wendover builds up their brief acquaintance into something quite

---

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>279</sup> Terence Brown, 'Introduction' in James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914; London: Penguin, 1992), xliii.

<sup>280</sup> Hanson, 'Introduction' in *Re-reading the Short Story*, 5.

significant. He visits their cottage one evening, carrying carefully three eggs as a gift. '[W]hy did you bring three instead of two?' asks Elizabeth, emphasising Wendover's exclusion from them as a couple (*R.*, 68). There is no hiding his dismay when they inform him that their holiday ends shortly, and he prepares himself for their final meeting by 'walking as far as the place where he had first met them, as though to revise the first stages in their acquaintance' (*R.*, 76). He returns from this walk to a note informing him that they have had to depart earlier than planned, and that their farewell gathering can no longer take place.

This note is key to Wendover's lost epiphany. He notices that, in her note, Elizabeth has signed her surname as 'Ellcot':

Suddenly he thought, 'Why, what an extraordinary thing! She has put the wrong name!' In contemplating this and in trying to find a reason for it a certain feeling of pleasure came back to him. 'It is her name before she was married,' he decided. 'She forgot.' (*R.*, 77)

Wendover is pleased at the idea that Elizabeth in writing to him could forget her marriage; such is his innocence. However, that he refuses to consider the notion that she and Harding may not, in fact, be married, and thus the implications that this would have for the possibility of making such a connection or partnership of his own, are lost. Instead, his heart sinks, he feels 'acutely disappointed' and suddenly realises the 'fatal significance' of the packing case that stood outside their cottage (*R.*, 76, 77). He writes a response to Elizabeth, thanking them for their company and regretting its loss (he has only known them for three days), but does not post it: 'On the way back to the house he began to feel depressed, and before he reached there he tore up the letter and did not send it after all' (*R.*, 77). Such incidents, O'Connor suggests, are characteristic of the form. He says:

Always in the short story there is this sense of outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society [...] As a result, there is in the short story at its most characteristic something we do not often find in the novel – an intense

awareness of human loneliness.<sup>281</sup>

*Rhapsody* as a whole leaves the reader with a sense of the soul-destroying isolation of the individual, and the inability of people to make meaningful contact with one another.

‘You must be a realist or you must invent a personal isolated odd universe composed exclusively of your own experience’, Edwards wrote in a letter to Beryl Jones.<sup>282</sup> It is precisely Edwards’ method of constructing this ‘odd universe’ that I feel aligns her with other Modernist women writers of her time. In her fiction, Edwards destabilises gender conventions and uses alternative perspectives to force the reader to question their own view of society. In *Writing for their Lives*, Hanscombe and Smyers point out of Modernist women writers such as Dorothy Richardson: ‘For these women, like other Modernists, it was essential to present not what had *happened* to them, but what it was like to *be* them.’<sup>283</sup> I suggest that this is precisely what Edwards does via her use of the male voice. While her men reveal their weaknesses and idiosyncrasies by saying too much, the very invisibility of her female characters speaks volumes. Recent feminist criticism has acknowledged the complex and subversive nature of such narrative mimicry and its implications for understanding women’s writing.

French feminist Luce Irigaray argues:

To play with mimesis is [...] for a woman, to try to locate the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of the ‘perceptible’, of ‘matter’ – to ‘ideas’, in particular to ideas about herself that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make ‘visible’ by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible [...]<sup>284</sup>

---

<sup>281</sup> O’Connor, *The Lonely Voice*, 19.

<sup>282</sup> S. Beryl Jones, ‘Dorothy Edwards as a Writer of Short Stories’, *Welsh Review*, 7, 3 (1948), 187.

<sup>283</sup> Hanscombe and Smyers, *Writing for their Lives*, 9 (original emphasis).

<sup>284</sup> Margaret Whitford, ed., *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), 71.

By revealing ‘what was supposed to remain invisible’ in her society through questioning the cultural superiority it endowed upon the male, Edwards is destabilising accepted values and thus participating in a female Modernist literary tradition. In the following chapters, I will discuss the way in which issues of gender, class, and ethnicity are presented in Edwards’ fiction, and the relation that these have to her own life experiences.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**NARRATING MALES/MUTED FEMALES: SILENCE AND SONG IN**  
***RHAPSODY***

In the last chapter I suggested that Edwards' lack of a female voice may have occasioned her neglect by feminist critics, just as her lack of a Welsh voice has led to her disregard by critics of Welsh writing. But in the last five years Edwards' work has benefited from a resurgence of interest within Wales, and from the zeal of literary critics and historians for rediscovering and making available women's writing. Nevertheless, despite the fact that her writing cries out for analysis in terms of feminist theory, as I argued in the previous chapter, it has yet to attract in-depth feminist attention.<sup>285</sup> Of the critical articles that have appeared on Edwards, only one, Teleri Williams' "Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things": The feminine stories of Dorothy Edwards', focuses exclusively on the 'feminine' aspects of her fiction.<sup>286</sup> As insightful and original as this piece is, the confines of a journal article hardly offer the scope within which to analyse one of the most complex and interwoven elements of Edwards' work.

In this chapter, then, I intend to suggest a new way of reading Edwards' fiction in order to highlight its gender-subversive elements. I argue that Edwards' upbringing and early experiences inform her depiction, and critique, of the constraints imposed on women via the traditional female role, particularly in relation to her stories 'Summer-time', 'A Garland of Earth', 'A Throne in Heaven', 'Sweet Grapes', and the until recently unpublished story 'La Penseuse'. The repeated and multi-faceted use of

---

<sup>285</sup> Critics such as Jane Aaron, Katie Gramich, and Teleri Williams, have long acknowledged the gender-specific elements in Edwards' fiction; however, little in-depth or detailed feminist critical analysis has emerged as yet.

<sup>286</sup> Williams, "Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things", 63-66.



music as both an expression of female sexuality and feminine power is a much commented-upon but understudied element of her writing, and I shall look at this in relation to ‘Rhapsody’, ‘Cultivated People’, ‘A Country House’ and ‘Treachery in a Forest’. This chapter will conclude with an analysis of the final story featured in *Rhapsody*, ‘Days’, where, I suggest, Edwards explores the implications of enforced female passivity and inactivity.

## I

In ‘The Conquered’, a story as interesting for its criticism of imperialism as of gender, Edwards comments on the limited opportunities available to women in a patriarchal, capitalist society. The young male narrator of the story, Frederick Trenier, has returned to the Welsh border country to visit his aunt and his two female cousins, Ruth and Jessica. Frederick makes it clear that there are far more important things that he would like to be doing: ‘I must say I went there simply as a duty [...] I took plenty of books down so that it should not be a waste of time’, he says (*R.*, 45). He considers himself to be an experienced and accomplished young man, culturally superior to his cousins, and he expects to find the place dull and restrictive: after doing his ‘duty’ he intends to move on quickly to his ‘proper’ holiday (*R.*, 45). Frederick indicates his comparative worldliness in a naively arrogant manner, failing to acknowledge the fact that, as a young man, he has far more avenues of opportunity open to him than his female contemporaries:

[Ruth] remembered far more about what we used to do than I did; but I suppose that is only natural, since she had been there all the time in between, and I do not suppose anything very exciting had happened to her, whereas I have been nearly everywhere. (*R.*, 46)

Similarly, in ‘Summer-time’, the contrast between the plans of the two young people, Basil and Leonora, serves to emphasise the lack of opportunity, or choice,

open to young women. Basil has decided to be a dancer, but Leonora appears to have no particular ambition. Her mother, Mrs Chalen, asks Mr Laurel's advice on Leonora's future:

[Mrs Chalen] 'I don't know what to let her do.'  
'Has she any particular talents?' he asked.  
'None that I know anything about,' said her mother, looking at Leonora severely.  
[...] 'I think she should go to an art school,' he [Laurel] said to her mother.  
'Do you really think so?' said she. 'Can you paint, dear?'  
'I don't know,' said Leonora.  
'Oh, that doesn't matter,' said Mr Laurel, smiling at her. 'Some artist will marry her because he wants to paint her hair, and they will live happily ever afterwards.'  
'Yes,' said Leonora, with innocent approval.  
'You really think so?' said her mother, smiling a little doubtfully.  
'Undoubtedly,' said Mr Laurel.  
And thus her fate was decided, for sure enough she has gone to an art school. (R., 99)

Laurel's suggestion that Leonora should attend an art school in order to find a husband, rather than embark upon a creative journey of her own, is apparently kindly meant, but the inappropriate and socially regressive nature of the comment is clear, as Edwards tellingly puts such a comment into the mouth of a ridiculous male character. Laurel's humiliation at the end of the story on his sudden and fleeting realisation of the inappropriate nature of his behaviour towards the various women he has encountered is, as I suggested in the previous chapter, presented as just punishment for all his ignorant assumptions about women. Equally, though, Mrs Chalen's quandary here about her daughter's future is very telling – she is at odds about what to 'let' Leonora do. Such a verb would not be used in relation to a son. Mrs Chalen, of course, would have had the same decision made for her future at Leonora's age, suggesting that a woman may be justified in being active on behalf of her children, but must remain passive in all decisions regarding her own destiny. In contrast to Leonora, who is waiting for someone to tell her what she is to do in life, Basil has

made a very definite decision as to his own future career path, and appears to have reached this conclusion without any outside interference or advice. His decision too, while his own, is interesting in terms of gender, as he has selected a traditionally feminine career.

In fact, several of Edwards' young male characters find themselves drawn to stereotypically effeminate roles. In 'A Throne in Heaven', the pre-pubescent Sidney Mihail is a budding poet sensitive to the natural world around him, who usually spends his holidays in the boarding school of which he is a pupil, reading Rossetti and writing poetry under a large horse-chestnut tree in the school grounds. Yet another of Edwards' orphaned children, Sidney is invited by an old friend of his father, Mr Merrill, to spend the holiday at the family home, with Merrill's daughter Elizabeth, who is of a similar age, for company. During Sidney's stay, he and Elizabeth spend their time playing, reading and writing in a nearby pine forest, where Sidney reveals his poetic aspirations: '[he] looked down at the ground, not from shyness, but of course because he knew the importance of what he said' (*R.*, 144-5). When Sidney asks Elizabeth of her future intentions her reaction is quite different: "'I expect I shall get married,'" is her answer (*R.*, 145). Her only insistence for her future is that she remains in her family home. As yet, gender and class conditioning has not yet fully permeated the minds of these two young people, and they are able to enjoy an equal and innocent relationship as a result of their ignorance of social, and indeed sexual, conventions. Sidney, for example, makes Elizabeth a thyrsus, because he has read of one in Swinburne, but is unaware of its connotations of sexual excess.<sup>287</sup> But the threat of socialisation looms large: Elizabeth is described as a 'tomboy' (*R.*, 146) by the housekeeper Hannah, and in her attitude towards this woman Elizabeth already

---

<sup>287</sup> In Greek myth a thyrsus is a symbol of phallic fertility carried by the worshippers of Bacchus, the Bacchantes. Reference to the figure of the Bacchante is also made in 'A Country House' (*R.*, 35) and *Winter Sonata* (*WS.*, 121).

demonstrates an increasing awareness of the class-based nuances of their relationship.

She says to Sidney:

‘But haven’t you noticed Hannah calls me Elizabeth? She won’t call me Miss Elizabeth, and she wasn’t really my old nurse at all; she was the servant, and now she is the housekeeper. What do you think?’

‘I don’t know,’ he said; ‘but I like her.’ (*R.*, 145)

The ‘Throne in Heaven’ of the title is the pre-socialised world which the children inhabit when they are alone, free from the civic rules and conventions that will all too soon come to dominate their lives in adulthood.

But not all of Edwards’ female characters are passive when it comes to their life occupations. In ‘A Garland of Earth’, Edwards makes use of the male narrative voice in a manner similar to her technique in ‘A Country House’. The narrator, Mr Leonard, is an elderly gentleman visiting his younger friend Mr Coleman and his family at their isolated home near the coast. In preparation for his visit Leonard purchases gifts for Coleman’s children: a fan for his seventeen-year-old daughter Rahel, and a book by Herman Melville for his eleven-year-old son Jimmy. He says:

I had brought for Rahel a very beautiful fan, the kind of present that it is a great pleasure to buy. I gave it to her.

[...] She took the fan and looked up at me seriously out of her pale grey eyes. Then suddenly smiling, she took my hand and said, ‘Thank you very, very much. Nobody has ever given me a present like this before.’

But she put the little fan into her pocket. She did not hold it up to her face before the mirror. (*R.*, 128-9)

Leonard is clearly perturbed by the fact that Rahel did not react to his gift in what he considers to be a feminine manner. In fact, Rahel does not live her life within the boundaries of a traditionally female role. The house has a large, ugly laboratory built onto its side; Coleman is a scientist, as is Rahel, and her mental capability is well-respected and admired by both her father and his assistant, Mr Froud. “‘She is a genius, you know’”, says Froud to Leonard (*R.*, 132). Edwards gave some clue to the type of character that she was trying to create in Rahel in a letter to Beryl Jones. She

wrote of 'A Garland of Earth':

The girl in it I got from a newspaper - & therefore probably quite inaccurate, picture of the daughter of Madam Curie, who was aged 16 & already a Ph.D or something.<sup>288</sup>

Much of the comedy, and indeed the criticism, in this story is centred on Leonard's attitude towards Rahel. For, despite his conscious attempts to be modern-minded, he continually makes ignorant and potentially offensive remarks. He recalls one occasion when, during one of their regular walks, he inadvertently offended Rahel:

Rahel always carried a tin specimen-case with her and collected botanical specimens, and she said that she was making a map of the flora of the district. I remember when she first told me about this, and I said, 'Ah, yes, of course, pressing flowers.'

She looked at me in surprise, and with perhaps a little impatience. But I had meant only that she was the modern equivalent of the young ladies of another generation who pressed flowers. I am no opponent of the higher education for women. (*R.*, 130)

Through such comments, Leonard unconsciously reveals that no matter how hard he tries he cannot help but revert to his traditional and outmoded views, despite his protests to the contrary. 'She likes me, but she cannot answer me because she thinks that I do not believe in the higher education for women. Ah, what barriers the young build around themselves!', he thinks after one conversation, unable to see that it is his own views, not Rahel's, that create a barrier between them (*R.*, 134). The comic effect created by means of this representation of the bumbling but well-intentioned old man is as impressive in its craftsmanship as it is subtle yet effective in its indictment of accepted patriarchal standards. And yet this character voices one of the most moving and suggestive interior monologues in Edwards' oeuvre. Leonard, after a walk with the children and Mr Froud, unwittingly falls asleep in his armchair after being drenched in a sudden thunderstorm. His last waking thought is

---

<sup>288</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37.

I have had a long and a pleasant life. But how can I know what will come before it is over? These few years that I have yet to live will bring something as new and strange to me as anything these children have before them to see. One comes, an old blind man, like old Oedipus at Colonus, leaning on the arm of a girl, looking down with blind eyes on the earth, and suddenly one sees little pink flowers, like children looking up to the sky. One may not rest yet, one may not rest yet. (*R.*, 138)

Edwards' reference to the Greek myth is telling. In Sophocles' play Oedipus, elderly and sightless, is led by his daughter Antigone (who in the subsequent play in the series goes on to stand up against patriarchy) into Colonus, where he is suddenly able to see the 'little pink flowers' (which in Edwards' story are, I think, representative of women), to which he has previously been blind. In Edwards' story the thunderstorm that soaked the group during their walk, which has perhaps prompted Leonard's realisation, is likened to the wrath of the Erinyes, the fearful mythical sisters who avenged wrongs and punished those who transgressed natural boundaries or social laws, especially those associated with matriarchal law:

gradually from the other side of the bay there came a great black cloud. It rose up slowly, gathering strength as it came, and, like one of the Erinyes, stretched its grey hands above us and called to its sisters to follow, as if it brought to one of us the vengeance for some blood-guiltiness[.] (*R.*, 136)

I would suggest that Leonard here acknowledges the transient and fluctuating nature not only of life, but of social laws and proprieties that govern life, that have led him to the conclusion that Rahel's scientific experiments extend only to pressing flowers. Edwards had witnessed in her short lifetime such changes in the perceived roles of women, their political and social rights, and indeed of society in the light of her country's involvement in the First World War, that she is able with confidence to make such a comment.

But if Edwards in 'A Garland of Earth' reveals Mr Leonard's kindly but somewhat condescending attitude towards women, some of her other male narrators are positively misogynistic. The owner in 'A Country House' would find a kindred

spirit in Hugo Ferris in the story 'Sweet Grapes'. Ferris has rented a section of a mock castle in the Peak District for his holiday; the building's only other occupants are its housekeeper, Mrs Lester, and her nineteen-year-old cousin Elizabeth. The story is narrated by a friend of Ferris who appears to consider himself kindly disposed to the plight of such vulnerable young women as Elizabeth, but his speculations on her feelings, coupled with the fact that he continually claims to share Ferris' outlook, reveals a poisonous attitude towards women. Both Ferris and the narrator assume that Elizabeth has been dreaming of the advent into her life of a man like Ferris:

it is a great embarrassment when a young girl has lived so much alone without friends and has dreamed about the future and about love and all that sort of thing, and has made, as it were, a whole world of her own; and then suddenly someone who is not only a dream but also a fact comes into this world, and immediately this fact seems to her to fit exactly into the framework she has made, or, if it does not fit, she forces it to do so, and stands weeping and breaking her heart because she can neither give up the dreams nor the reality. (*R.*, 113-4)

Her simple request that Ferris should recommend to her some contemporary authors results in a derogatory response not only to Elizabeth's intellectual capabilities (he initially recommends Aldous Huxley but withdraws the comment as 'she would not understand the conversations,' *R.*, 115) but to women in general ('he knew that most women only talk about reading, and this is merely the preliminary to talking about love,' *R.*, 115). Ferris and Elizabeth spend some time together and share the odd kiss, but he makes it clear that he is not only uninterested in her, but downright bored in her company. The narrator, despite his continual proclamations that he does 'see Ferris' point of view', appears to demonstrate a more kindly attitude towards Elizabeth, but he also discloses, without appearing to recognise that he does so, his own predatory attitude towards young women like her, and his envy of his friend for what he was apparently offered. He says:

And of course I quite understand that his relationship with Elizabeth did not

provide any suitable conversation. And yet one would think that a young girl growing up there, with her soul opening out, so to speak, hanging on the lowest bough waiting to be plucked and all that sort of thing, would be rather nice. (*R.*, 123)

Ferris, however, continues to treat Elizabeth as if she is undeserving of the courtesy and respect that he, as a cultured and intelligent man, would show his fellow (presumably male) human beings. On the day before he departs the following conversation takes place:

[Elizabeth] 'You are going [home] tomorrow, aren't you? [...] You won't be able to kiss me then, you know [...] Won't you be sorry?'

He became serious, and reflected for a moment. 'No, on the whole, I shall not,' he said truthfully.

The tears came to her eyes and she looked down at the grass. Of course it was fearfully embarrassing for him. I believe he walked away or did something like that. (*R.*, 124)

Both Ferris and his narrator friend conspire to construct Elizabeth as a dim-witted, overly emotional, sentimental child, with nothing of value to give to the world, in order to reinforce their own view of themselves as intelligent, rational, and superior beings. And yet, in 'Sweet Grapes', the narrator reveals, by virtue of the information that he discloses, the fact that Ferris did not find his holiday, nor Elizabeth, as dull as he claims. Through disclosing how much he had been told of the intricacies of Ferris' stay, the amount of time that he spent with Elizabeth, and her beauty and grace (to which Ferris claimed to have been impervious) the narrator reveals that Elizabeth had personality and presence enough to make her, in fact, difficult to forget.

But the most haunting image of the tale is the 'Sleeping Beauty' aspect of its portrayal of women as forced to wait in passivity for the advent of their 'prince', with no opportunity to create a life of their own. In 'La Penseuse', the most overtly autobiographical of Edwards' stories, a stark contrast is drawn between the opportunities available to young women compared to men, and the implications this has for one's outlook on life. It was written in 1925-6, before Edwards embarked



upon her visit to Europe with her mother, and is therefore also one of the earliest stories she wrote (about half of the stories included in *Rhapsody* were written during this trip).<sup>289</sup> Although narrated from an assumed male perspective, in this story Edwards' focus rests more completely than elsewhere on a female character. It also covers an unusual time-span in terms of Edwards' work; far from adhering to the holiday motif that structures most of her fiction, 'La Penseuse' begins when the central character, Mary, is seventeen years old, and ends when she is thirty-six.

'La Penseuse' was the only story that Edwards rejected for inclusion in *Rhapsody*; she instructed Beryl Jones, 'Both copies are to be burnt.'<sup>290</sup> Jones had apparently found 'La Penseuse' dull; other letters suggest that Edwards' editor, Edgell Rickword, was equally unimpressed with the story.<sup>291</sup> Perhaps as a result of Jones' reaction, Edwards was quick to dismiss her story in her usual flippant manner: 'I may send 'La Penseuse' to the *English Review*. I don't like the *English Review* & I don't like 'La Penseuse' but it can't be helped,' she wrote to Jones.<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, the gendered nature of the story's title evidently caused Edwards some concern: 'I regret the title a little,' she wrote to Jones.<sup>293</sup> Edwards was apparently well-aware of the contemporary debates about finding a specifically female mode of expression. 'I know that there is nothing women novelists nowadays more object to than being regarded as women novelists,' she wrote in a 1929 review of four novels by women

---

<sup>289</sup> As I have shown in chapter one, letters written by Edwards to Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly during her European trip prove that Edwards was accompanied by her mother. These same letters, which are generally written from Vienna, chronicle for Jones the writing of about half of the stories in *Rhapsody*. See pages 45 and 47.

<sup>290</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925-6]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 5.

<sup>291</sup> See Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 11<sup>th</sup> January n.d. [c. 1925-6]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 25.

<sup>292</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1925-6]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 2.

<sup>293</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 5.

writers.<sup>294</sup> As her only attempt at an overtly female-orientated story met with such a critical reaction, perhaps it is unsurprising that she continued to write from a male perspective in her other stories.

Perhaps her friends were right in advising Edwards to exclude 'La Penseuse' from *Rhapsody*. Although some similarities exist between this tale and those finally published in *Rhapsody* (a foreboding sense of isolation, for example, permeates 'La Penseuse' as much as the other stories), it does sit uncomfortably with the volume as a whole. The descriptions of the characters lack the traits that typify her portrayals in other stories: there is no Mr Gallon with 'a head which was flat at the back like a Dutch doll's' or Mr Wendover with 'a grey moustache that drooped down on either side of his mouth like the horns of a cow' (*R.*, 83, 61). The characters are not of the upper class, whiling their lives away in idle pursuits, but the lower and middle-class inhabitants of a small village, intent on developing their careers and their minds. Further, when the story is read alongside the rest of the *Rhapsody* collection, the absence of the musical motif is noticeable. Nonetheless, it is a valuable addition to Edwards' oeuvre, and its discovery adds to our understanding of Edwards' attitude towards gender. Edwards was evidently aware of the discrepancies in its theme and focus: commenting on the collection as a whole, she told Jones,

In all the stories the uncommon people are most important & the commonplace ones less so. In 'La Penseuse' the commonplace people are more important. Now that's very clever, but of course quite dull.<sup>295</sup>

Edwards' judgement here that the 'commonplace' is 'quite dull' is belied by the defensive tone with which she speaks of 'La Penseuse', suggesting that this is not, in fact, her own opinion, but one which she has adopted as a result of critical reactions to

---

<sup>294</sup> Dorothy Edwards, 'Four novels by women: reaction to modern tendencies' (review of Catherine I. Dodd, *Scarlet Gables*; Marjorie Terry, *The Continental Courier*; Ethel Mannin, *Crescendo*; Phoebe Fenwick Gaye, *Vivandiere*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1929.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

the story. In her letters Edwards hints at her own fondness for this story, and her disappointment with the negative response that it received from her friend. ‘Still didn’t you like Richard a little wee bit?’ she asked Jones, referring to one of the chief male figures in the story.<sup>296</sup> It is important to keep in mind here that Edwards was writing before working-class literature became fashionable. Rhys Davies, for example, though he focussed on the ‘commonplace’ in his 1920s stories about Wales, experienced the bulk of his success in the 1930s when the social climate (after the 1926 General Strike and the Depression) had altered and working-class fiction was more popular with the general reader.

But the most noticeable discrepancy between this tale and *Rhapsody* as a whole is that ‘La Penseuse’, although narrated from an assumed male perspective, is primarily focussed on a female character. Mary, the female thinker of the title, is a young woman ‘possessed by a perfect fever for acquiring knowledge’ who lives in near poverty with her elderly and invalid aunt on the outskirts of an unnamed village (*R.*, 198). Her only pleasure comes from her friendship with two local boys, Sidney Mertris and Richard Warnham. Both are following in their fathers’ footsteps; Sidney is a doctor’s son and is at medical school, and Richard, the son of government official, is a language student intent on entering the consular service (*R.*, 197). Mary, whose life is marked by domestic drudgery and restricted as a result of her gender and class, ‘considered wasted every moment she spent with them in which they did not impart to her something interesting and instructive’ (*R.*, 198-9), and both Sidney and Richard do their best to teach her:

Sidney taught her a fair amount of anatomy with success, and there was nothing in philosophy, if Richard could explain it to her in language that was not technical, which she did not understand, though he had not at that time read very much on the subject himself. (*R.*, 199)

---

<sup>296</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 11<sup>th</sup> January [c.1925-7]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 25.

Intelligent and quick to learn, Mary has available to her none of the opportunities that open before the two young men, and this, I suggest, is a key theme in this story.

After her aunt's death, Mary acts in a proactive manner unknown to Edwards' other female characters. 'Determined to widen her horizon by travel as she had hitherto done by reading', she spends six months in Holland as a lady's companion (*R.*, 204). Firmly of the opinion that men are 'more intellectual' than women Mary, now middle-aged, seeks employment 'as a housekeeper to a gentleman' in London (*R.*, 204). By what Christopher Meredith describes as an 'implausibly [...] big coincidence' (the lengths to which Edwards goes to provide circumstantial background is a particular weakness of this story) she finds herself employed at Sidney's home, and the pair immediately fall back into their teacher-pupil roles.<sup>297</sup> He proceeds to educate her in the intricacies of various operations, while Mary, once her limited housekeeping duties are over, spends her time pouring over the books in his library. Here she finds 'essays on art and architecture and on travel' by Richard; Sidney, too, has published extensively on medicine and surgery (*R.*, 207). Mary acts more as Sidney's literary assistant than his housekeeper: she is privy to his conversations with his medical friends, 'listening avidly to everything they let fall', and finds herself helping him with a book that he is writing (*R.*, 208). Although Mary soon 'knew exactly how to perform many delicate and difficult operations' (*R.*, 213), the reader is not allowed to forget that she is merely a guest in the male intellectual realm, and Edwards draws a sharp contrast between the domestic and the intellectual spheres:

Sidney, as he finished each page of his book, read it to her or handed it to her to be read. Much of it she copied out in the handwriting with which she wrote the dates on the covers of jampots. (*R.*, 207)

---

<sup>297</sup> C. Meredith, '*Rhapsody's* lost story', 163.

‘La Penuseuse’ has one of the most desolate endings of the whole of Edwards’ oeuvre. When Sidney’s book is finished, Mary spends her spare time reading in the library. Sidney, however, strives to achieve another of his goals. After a few weeks of regularly going out to dinner, he announces to Mary that he is engaged ‘to the daughter of one of the richest surgeons in England’ (*R.*, 213). The match is driven by Sidney’s ambition rather than any love or even affection for his future bride: “‘Really I am very lucky. She is young and beautiful and very distinguished and it is a good match in every way,’” he says to Mary (*R.*, 213). In his selection of his wife, Sidney is more concerned with material, rather than spiritual and intellectual, qualifications, and while he admires his bride’s ‘expensive clothes’, his future father-in-law ‘lighted in astonishment on Mary’s knowledge of surgery’ (*R.*, 214). As soon as Sidney is married Mary returns to the village of her birthplace, but under very different circumstances. Having given up her life to the pursuit of knowledge she has nothing to show for it, whereas Sidney has a successful career, practice, and now a wife, and Richard too has his substantial list of publications. Mary has largely been a passive receptor which Richard, but particularly Sidney, have been able to use to work out their own ideas, theories, and plans for their futures. This story ends with a Joycean negative epiphany, revealing ‘something hidden, something underneath the glossy surface of the most latent that might suddenly cut through to reveal an underside that had been kept “repressed”, but that could alone give an intimation of the truth’.<sup>298</sup> In a scene that epitomises both female passivity and the contrast between the opportunities available to women as opposed to men, Mary, lonely, unfulfilled and rejected, ‘sat before the fire and began to think about her life’ (*R.*, 215).

---

<sup>298</sup> Klaus Reichert ‘The European background of Joyce’s writing’, in Attridge, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, 60.

## II

Most of Edwards' females are voiceless, marginalised by illness or age and overpowered by domineering men. In her stories, music is the only form of expression that is specifically and consistently linked to women. Equally, though, musical ability is seen as a desirable attribute in women by many of Edwards' male characters. In the title story 'Rhapsody' music has become an obsession for the central character, George Everett. The story is narrated from the perspective of Mr Elliott, who works in Egypt but has returned to England for his three-month summer holiday. He meets Everett in a London café, where it emerges that Everett is on a rare excursion to a concert. "I never have the opportunity to hear very much [music] now [...] My wife is an invalid, so that I do not like to leave her for very long," he explains (*R.*, 3). Mrs Everett, once an accomplished pianist, is now housebound due to an unspecified illness and can no longer play her instrument. It emerges that Everett has always relied on the women around him to provide him with music. He says to Elliot: "When I was a boy I had a sister who played everything for me, and then my wife was a beautiful pianist, so I never practised myself" (*R.*, 4). The discussion that follows convinces Everett that he has found in Elliott a kindred spirit, and he invites him to stay at the family home. Elliott, feeling rather isolated in London, readily accepts.

During Elliott's stay, it becomes clear that Everett's pursuit of music has become a source of tension between him and his wife:

It was curious how, whenever Everett mentioned music, he looked at her a little apprehensively, and she almost imperceptibly frowned. I wonder if she had awakened one day to find that he had married her because she was a beautiful pianist, and perhaps she took a dislike to music from that day? (*R.*, 6)

Elliott's observation about Everett's motivation in selecting his wife appears to be

justified. Rather than learn himself now that his wife is no longer able to play, Everett instead hatches a deceptive plan to satisfy his thirst for music. Under the guise of providing a governess for his young son Vincent, who is due to leave for boarding school in two months' time, Everett advertises for a music teacher with a knowledge of general subjects.

The covert manner in which Everett arranges for the appointment of a governess indicates that he is, on some level, aware of the inappropriate nature of his exploitation of the situation. He asks Elliot to ensure that Mrs Everett is otherwise occupied when the interviewee, Antonia Trenier, arrives, saying: 'Though there is no harm at all in what I am doing, I should so much prefer it if my wife were not present at the interview' (*R.*, 9). Similarly, the manner in which Everett approaches music at other points in the texts suggests that he associates private, secret feelings with its practice, as Elliot soon discovers:

After dinner that evening he led me solemnly into the drawing-room. In spite of his passion for music the room had a desolate, unoccupied air, and the music was arranged too neatly. He shut the door very carefully and drew a heavy curtain across it. (*R.*, 9)

Elliott proceeds to sing for his host, but the manner in which this takes place is strange and uncomfortable: 'he made me sing until I was hoarse', he says (*R.*, 9). The family, accompanied by Antonia and Elliott, visit Scotland for a holiday, where Mrs Everett's health rapidly declines as Everett's obsession grows. Elliott says of himself and Antonia:

We obeyed Everett like slaves, even to the extent of playing or singing a single phrase a dozen times over, while he, standing on his toes in the middle of the carpet, strung up to a pitch of the most rapturous torment, would drink in the essence of every note. (*R.*, 14)

Inevitably, Antonia's musical ability makes her an object of sexual attraction for Everett and, following the discovery that she has kept hidden her beautiful singing

voice due to a lack of confidence, he no longer conceals his interest in her as a replacement wife. Mrs Everett dies, lonely and neglected, and her husband demonstrates the same disregard and detachment on her death as he did during her illness. But Edwards makes it clear that Antonia did not set out to entrap Everett and steal him from his wife. The fault lies with Everett; he has orchestrated the entire pattern of events solely for his own benefit, rejecting his wife on her deathbed and ignoring his son. Elliott, able to see the whole picture, remains silent: he is unwilling to confront Everett and criticize his actions, but instead steps quietly but firmly into a guardian role for Vincent, as well as acting as a companion to the rapidly failing Mrs Everett. Antonia remains above reproach, as Elliott is able to see that she has been exploited by Everett and is not acting on any agenda of her own. At one point, when Mrs Everett is seriously ill, he comments

I caught myself wondering if Antonia watched the doctor every day as he passed the lodge on his way back from the cottage; but then I was angry with myself, because it was a woman very different from Antonia whom I imagined leaning out of the window to gaze intently at his face. (*R.*, 23)

The story ends when Elliott, Everett and Antonia depart from their holiday in the same train as Mrs Everett's body. But there is no suggestion of new life in the relationship between Everett and Antonia; on the contrary, the overriding feeling is that Antonia will suffer the same fate as her predecessor, relegated to the parlour-room once Everett has sucked all her creativity from her, like a vampire drinking in her essence. The 'Rhapsody' of the title, it seems, is for Mr Everett alone.

In the story 'Cultivated People', set in a music club in an unspecified town, two middle-aged men compete over a musically talented female contemporary. On first appearance, there is little to suggest that Miss Wolf will be such a desired figure; a middle-aged German expatriate who teaches languages, piano and violin, she has 'a rather fat, pale face, and small, very sad brown eyes' (*R.*, 80). Her suitor, the bachelor



Mr Challis, a prime example of Edwards' pompous middle-class male, 'has a bald head and exceedingly short legs, and he is not thin' (*R.*, 79). Challis demonstrates a sense of superiority and ownership epitomised in his smug performance at the club: 'He stood on the platform and smiled as though he had invented the song and music itself, and even sound as well' (*R.*, 93).

Mr Gallon, Challis' married friend, also finds himself drawn towards Miss Wolf. At a musical reception at their club, Challis attempts to propose marriage to Miss Wolf only to be continually and deliberately interrupted by Mr Gallon:

Just as they reached the place where Mr Challis and Miss Wolf were, Mr Gallon stopped suddenly and stared at them. Mr Challis was standing up, bending slightly to speak to her. It was clear that he was saying something very important. In fact he was saying, 'If you could for one moment, Fräulein, consider me in such a way, I should be most happy.'

'Oh, for Heaven's sake!' said Miss Wolf impatiently.

Mr Gallon did not speak, but walked straight up to them and sat down with them. He did not speak at all, simply sat down there in front of them to prevent them from talking together. (*R.*, 94)

This scene is filled with comic pathos, and Miss Wolf's disgust, Mr Challis' pomposity, and Mr Gallon's stubborn interference are delineated with precision. Mrs Gallon's reaction, however, is arguably the most bizarre. She seems quite aware of what is going on, but marches straight past the three to the piano and begins to play, thus gaining the attention of them all:

[Mrs Gallon] glanced at them and went on up to the platform. She picked up the music and opened the top of the piano, sat down and stared at the wall. People stopped talking and she began to play.

That woman thumping the piano up there, how is it that she can make such sounds? She has never played as well as this before at the club. She must have practised this piece very hard, perhaps for months.

Mr Challis came out of the smoke-room and sat down quietly on a chair near the door, and Miss Wolf sat next to him, and Mr Gallon stood at the door looking at his wife playing up there. (*R.*, 94-5)

I suggest that this performance is best read perhaps as an act of defiance, rather than an expression of repressed sexuality; Mrs Gallon ignores her husband's behaviour and

asserts her own identity through her musical prowess.

Edwards was not alone amongst the women writers of her period in using music as a motif descriptive of the state of feeling of female characters. The above scene from ‘Cultivated People’ is reminiscent of an episode in May Sinclair’s *The Three Sisters* (1914) in which Alice Cartaret, the youngest of the eponymous sisters, strains against her father’s concepts of feminine propriety but finds herself trapped in the vicarage to which he has moved the family from his previous living as a result of Alice’s involvement with a man. Very early on in the novel Alice’s frustration at her sense of internment finds an outlet through music. Positioning herself ‘with the open window behind her’ and aware that ‘she could be seen from over the wall by anybody driving past’, Alice proceeds to play the piano:

And she played. She played the Chopin Grande Polonaise, or as much of it as her fingers, tempestuous and inexperienced, could clutch and reach. She played, neither with her hands nor her brain, but with her temperament, febrile and frustrate, seeking its outlet in exultant and violent sound [...] All the life of her bloodless body swam there, poised and thinned, but urgent, aspiring to some great climax of the soul [...] To let it loose thus was Alice’s defiance of the house and her revenge.<sup>299</sup>

In this scene Alice’s performance is suggestive of her repressed sexuality: she proceeds to perform ‘with the abrupt and passionate gesture of desire deferred’; her music is not only her own outlet but is ‘a signal and appeal’ that is ‘flung out through the windows into the night’.<sup>300</sup> But, as in ‘Cultivated People’, it is also an act of defiance against the father who incarcerates her, and the society which categorises her sexuality as dangerous and deviant.

In Edwards’ work, ‘A Country House’ is probably the best example of musical performance as representative of female sexuality, from a male perspective. The story’s unnamed owner, whose intense narrative voice was discussed in chapter two,

---

<sup>299</sup> May Sinclair, *The Three Sisters* (1914; London: Virago, 1982), 13, 14, 15.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

is obsessive and jealous. As the story progresses he becomes increasingly compulsive and erratic in his behaviour, particularly with regard to the relationship between his young wife and the electrician, Richardson. The owner is fearful of his wife's sexuality and its potential expression. Music is imagined as its medium, and as a result the husband considers his wife's choice of music to play to the electrician to be inappropriate:

She played a Chopin nocturne. Now I could watch girls dancing to Chopin's music all day, but to play Chopin to a stranger that you meet for the first time! What must he think of you? I can understand her playing even the nocturnes when she is alone. When one is alone one is in the mood for anything. But to choose to play them when she is meeting someone for the first time! That is simply wrong. (*R.*, 32)

The fact that both Edwards' and Sinclair's female characters chose to play Chopin warrants comment in the light of early twentieth-century conceptions of the composer and his work. In his 1903 study *Chopin: The Man and his Music* James Huneker claims that 'in Chopin the feminine note was over emphasized - at times it was almost hysterical', a comment highly suggestive of Freudian theory on the relation between hysteria and female sexuality.<sup>301</sup> By playing Chopin for Richardson, then, the owner's wife, as the owner sees it, has expressed the sexuality that her husband fears and continually represses. Unable to perform musically, the husband is excluded from his wife's and Richardson's enjoyment, and from this point he watches the two constantly.

Such reactions can be seen throughout *Rhapsody*: in 'Treachery in a Forest', for example, Mr Harding becomes increasingly antagonistic and jealous as his mistress, Elizabeth, and Mr Wendover explore their shared passion for music, and particularly so after Wendover and Elizabeth play a piano duet together. In *Rhapsody*, I suggest that female musical performance, rather than being consistently indicative of

---

<sup>301</sup> James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and his Music* (London: Charles Scribner, 1903), 253.

a repressed desire on the behalf of women, is read by men as expressive of a sexuality of which the women appear unaware. In her work on contemporary female performance Susan McClary suggests that '[w]omen on the stage are viewed as sexual commodities regardless of their appearance or seriousness':<sup>302</sup>

women's bodies in Western culture have almost always been viewed as objects of display [...] Centuries of this traditional sexual division of labor [...] [threaten] to convert her [the female performer] [...] once again into yet another body set in motion for the pleasure of the masculine gaze.<sup>303</sup>

A close reading of Edwards' work in the light of such gender-based theory indicates that on the whole exhibitionism is not the intention of Edwards' female performers. Instead, by filtering such observations through a male narrative voice, Edwards is deconstructing male exploitation of the female not only as performer, but also as muse, or so I argue in the following section.

### III

In 'Days', the longest story in *Rhapsody* and the last to be written, music and creativity facilitate both independence and oppression for the central female character Leonora Morn. Here, Edwards begins to analyse the female psyche in much more detail than in any other story in the collection. Leonora is, on the surface at least, atypical of the female characters in *Rhapsody* as a whole in that she has a successful career of her own. George Morn, her husband, is a writer who has decided to purchase an ugly house in a barren, desolate location on the outskirts of the village in which he was born, which also forms the setting of most of his novels. An accomplished musician, Leonora spends much time apart from her husband as a result of her career, as Edwards illustrates succinctly: 'George Morn came here in January [...] his wife

---

<sup>302</sup> Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid*, 138.

wrote to say that, after giving a concert in June, she would be able to stay there with him for the three summer months' (*R.*, 156). His wife's arrival has a significant affect on his concentration and ability to write:

During the first days after she came he worked very hard. He read the first few chapters to her, and this made him write more quickly. And she collected the loose sheets of paper on which he wrote and put them in order, and recopied what was necessary. He wrote neatly and legibly, but he inserted scraps of paper in so many places that her help was quite necessary. (*R.*, 157)

As the above passage suggests, Leonora immediately falls into the role of helper or muse to her husband in a very practical sense, much as Mary does for Sidney in 'La Penseuse', where 'Sidney as he finished each page of his book read it to her or handed it to her to be read', and Mary too performs the task of copying out Sidney's work (*R.*, 207). In 'Days', however, Edwards' manner of presenting this situation serves to build up the impression that it is not only Leonora's practical help that is essential to Morn's creativity, but her very presence. His increasing activity is contrasted starkly with her passivity:

He could hear her practising sometimes in the drawing-room, but the rest of the time she sat with a book open on her lap, not reading, but looking at her hands or thinking. (*R.*, 157)

Morn's new flurry of activity seems to positively feed off his wife's passivity; as he is writing, he takes comfort in her stillness.

The arrival at the house of Leonora's composer friend, Alexander Sorel, means that her attention is increasingly drawn away from Morn and to their visitor. At one point, towards the end of the story, Sorel is composing music and Leonora, in another room, is copying out the completed sections for him. Morn, aware of this, cannot concentrate:

Morn took the sugar-basin and went out of the room and down the stairs. He put some of the lumps of sugar into his pocket and put the basin on the bottom pillar of the balusters. He put his hand on the door-handle of the drawing-room where Leonora had begun the copying. He listened for a moment. She was

whistling softly, almost under her breath. But he did not go in. He walked into his study, moved one or two papers on the table, and went and stood by the window and looked out into the darkness. The dead rose tree was just distinguishable on the lawn. He began to eat a lump of sugar. He stayed there a few minutes, and afterwards he went into the dining-room. But there was nothing there. He went out and stood at the bottom of the stairs, half meaning to go up again, but instead he took up the sugar-basin, which was still there, and carried it into the kitchen. There was no one there. (*R.*, 186-7)

Morn needs the silent attention offered by his wife in order to be inspired in his writing; when he knows that her focus is elsewhere, he cannot work.

Sorel too demands Leonora's attention: a great admirer of Morn's work, he finds himself overwhelmed in the presence of the author, and instead directs his literary enquiries to Leonora. She takes him to see the various locations around the village in which Morn had set certain scenes from his novels, and even acts as a guide during his literary 'pilgrimage' to the house where Morn was born and raised. She also attends to his practical needs while he is composing, taking him ink, and copying out his work, and forms at times his inspiration. "I thought a lot about you when I wrote the second part of the dance," he says to her (*R.*, 193). Teleri Williams, in her brief analysis of the passive role of women in *Rhapsody*, comments on this situation:

Both male characters seem to need Leonora's attention in order to work and appear to draw on her state of 'being' or calmness which their own consciousness cannot provide, while Leonora appears to be contentedly self-contained.<sup>304</sup>

While I agree with Williams' conclusions here in so far as they relate to Morn and Sorel, I would suggest that Leonora's position is quite the opposite to that which Williams suggests. Far from being 'contentedly self-contained', Leonora seems in fact shut off from the world as a result of the passive state that she is forced to endure.

The idea of 'being' that Williams refers to in the above quotation is one which she sees as key to Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, as well as to the story 'Days'.

---

<sup>304</sup> Williams, "Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things", 66.

According to Williams:

Richardson develops the theory that, while men are concerned with ‘becoming’ – they are preoccupied with the material world and are driven by ambition to achieve – women do not instinctively experience this need. From their position of detachment, a state which is connected with ‘being’, women are more able to understand the world about them and to see its real truths. The experience of ‘being’ is one which requires quiet, solitary contemplation rather than the discussion and argument which in *Pilgrimage* is associated with men.<sup>305</sup>

This idea of ‘being’, as a passive state, as opposed to ‘becoming’, an active state, is developed in D. W. Winnicott’s *Playing and Reality* (1971). Winnicott, an English paediatrician and psychoanalyst, writes of the idea of ‘being’ as ‘the pure distilled uncontaminated female element’ and claims that it ‘forms the only basis for self-discovery and a sense of existing.’<sup>306</sup> In ‘Days’ (and *Winter Sonata*, which I discuss later) Edwards’ representation of ‘being’ manifests itself visually in lack of motion. ‘Days’ is punctuated by scenes emphasising Leonora’s calm immobility or slow movement; these scenes are usually monochrome, with greys or whites emphasised, drawing attention to the drab and dull nature of her life at home with Morn.

Physical stillness seems key to Leonora’s mental awareness and sense of her own life:

It seemed to her that she had not had time to think for years. She had the curious feeling of living over again some of the days of her girlhood. There was the same quiet and solitude as then. She used in those days to have a music lesson once a week, and except for that she did nothing after her practising but sit, as now, and think. Only then she sat, as it were, at a window always looking out and always expecting something, whereas now everything was settled for her and nothing new could come from the outside. Then it was for the meaning of *her* life that she anxiously scanned the passers-by; but now, as one gets old, it is not the meaning of one’s life but of life itself that one tries to understand, looking at one’s hands or on the same black-and-white pages of a book. That was the difference. There seemed, too, to be something pressing heavily upon her, but it was almost pleasant not to have to throw that feeling quickly off. (*R.*, 157-8) [Original emphasis]

---

<sup>305</sup> Williams is the first to draw a comparison between Edwards and Dorothy Richardson. Williams, “Women like sibyls” and “whisps of things”, 65.

<sup>306</sup> D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (1971; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 97, 99.

This scene is reminiscent of 'La Penseuse', where we see Mary at the end of the story sit in front the fire 'think[ing] about her life' (*R.*, 215). Indeed, there are many similarities between Mary and Leonora, particularly in their support of two career-driven men.<sup>307</sup>

Leonora's stillness and calmness, which I suggest is reflective of her passivity, is contrasted with Sorel's movement; he is depicted as a rather fidgety, unstable, excitable man, and this is epitomised when he describes his feelings when he is in motion. He says: "I have been walking quickly. I like the sensation of moving very quickly. There is something even sublime about trees and houses streaming past me" (*R.*, 189). Immediately after this he begins to weep; when asked what is the matter, he replies: "Oh, my God, I don't know" (*R.*, 190). Interestingly, in adhering to the required role of supportive wife and friend, Leonora destabilises conventional male/female binary oppositions. Sorel is presented as overly emotional, susceptible to sudden rushes of feeling, irrational, needy; in short, he is given the attributes traditionally ascribed in patriarchal discourse to women. In contrast, Leonora is able to control her emotions, she is logical and rational. There is no sexual tension between Leonora and Sorel, and Morn feels no jealousy in the marital sense over the time that his wife spends with Sorel, only in a creative sense.

Williams argues that 'being' in Edwards' work, as in Richardson's, is a largely positive experience, leading to a more profound awareness of the world. I would argue, however, that Edwards' depiction of 'being' has negative connotations and is quite different from Richardson's account. For Edwards' women, the idea of 'being' might be an ideal state, if it were not for the behaviour of the men in their worlds. But

---

<sup>307</sup> I would suggest that 'La Penseuse' is in fact an early forerunner of 'Days'; in the latter tale Edwards employed the holiday motif and made the characters middle rather than working class, keeping it in line with the other stories in *Rhapsody*, while focusing in more depth on the female aspect.



within the confines of a male-dominated society, 'being' entails a dehumanising, introspective numbing of the senses and emotions, a deliberate shutting off of the self from the outside world. Leonora reveals her awareness of her isolation in a conversation with Sorel:

'Leonora,' he said, 'do you know I am always alone?'

She looked down at him and did not smile.

'So am I,' she said.

He looked again up at the sky, but without knowing it he had grasped a fold of her white dress in his hand. (*R.*, 192-3)

Sorel, with his revelation of being 'always alone', still unconsciously but somewhat desperately makes an attempt at human contact, holding a piece of Leonora's skirt like a baby clinging onto its mother. Leonora, however, makes no response. She appears reconciled to her isolation as an inevitable aspect of her life which, as a woman, she must endure in order to survive. As the story progresses it becomes clear that the apparently strong, calm Leonora is as silenced as Edwards' other women. She is allowed some independence when apart from her husband, but when they are together (indeed, when Leonora is in the presence of any male) she is expected to devote her full attention to them at the expense of her selfhood. Edwards' women endure an enforced passivity as a result of the patriarchal society in which they live: the suggestion is that this is necessary because of the demands placed on women as a result of traditional gender roles. Although Leonora is expected to aid both her husband and her male friend in their artistic ventures, she is allowed no creative outlet herself – her role is solely to aid and interpret their *male* creativity, and even her musical ability is in effect an extension of this. The male characters in *Rhapsody*, then, exploit the female both as performers and as muse, even if they fail to actually create anything themselves, like Mr Everett in 'Rhapsody'.

Feminist theory on musical composition and on creativity generally indicates

that Leonora's experience is common. McClary states:

There have been many obstacles preventing women from participating fully (or, at some moments in history, from participating *at all*) in musical production. Most of these have been institutional: women have been denied the necessary training and professional connections, and they have been assumed to be incapable of sustained creative activity. The music that has been composed by women (despite all odds) has often been received in terms of the essentialist stereotypes ascribed to women by masculine culture: it is repeatedly condemned as pretty yet trivial or – in the event that it does not conform to standards of feminine propriety – as aggressive and unbecoming a woman.<sup>308</sup> [Original emphasis]

This, I feel, applies to Leonora in 'Days' particularly well. Being a channeller of music is a woman's role as it is 'feminine', yet being a composer or connoisseur of music is a male role. Thus Leonora is a mediator of creativity for the benefit of the male, on several levels – she performs the mundane tasks that are above the notice of the creative males, and she channels their creativity so that it becomes available for (male) enjoyment without risk to the masculine identity (i.e. without risk of the male becoming effeminate), whilst still occupying a 'safe' female role without challenge to the status quo. McClary's suggestion that in patriarchal society women 'have been assumed to be incapable of sustained creative activity' is not entirely distinct from nineteenth- and even twentieth-century assumptions that serve to denigrate women's writing.

In 'Days', as in *Rhapsody* as a whole, Edwards uses music to suggest the male's vision of the female in the sense that he sees what he wants to see, and not the reality. In a scene that takes place towards the end of the story, Leonora and Sorel play for Morn and his friend Mr Carmen a Greek dance that Sorel has composed:

Sorel sat that the piano and looked round at her. The cello rested against her white dress. Her head was bent in an attitude of strength and the position of her arms gave her shoulders breadth. There is something strange about a woman playing the cello. Women like sybils, with strength like iron, do not exist any more. Goddesses now are wisps of things. But there are still women

---

<sup>308</sup> McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 18-19.

who play the cello. She began to play the Greek dance.

All the time while Sorel played [...] he could see Leonora quite clearly in the air in front of him. (*R.*, 179-180)

For Sorel, Lenora's performance underlines his view of her as a strong, dependable woman, not as a sexual being in the way that, for example, Mr Everett in 'Rhapsody' or Mr Gallon in 'Cultivated People' view performing women. But I would suggest that Sorel, just like Everett and Gallon, is seeing in Leonora's performance what he wants to see, the role in which he himself has cast Leonora, and not the role that she in reality occupies and, in this sense, I suggest that this scene is not one of female strength, but of male voyeurism. As Christopher Meredith has suggested, Sorel is 'the temporary point of view'; it is *his* interpretation of Leonora that we see, the 'strong female archetype' that he needs, and not necessarily the reality of Leonora's character or her situation.<sup>309</sup> Fascinatingly, Leonora seems more aware of the significance of Sorel's view of her than he is: in an earlier scene, when Sorel tells Leonora that she was in his thoughts while he composed his Greek dance, she responds by saying, "And do I mean for you strength and the spirit that reflects?" (*R.*, 193).

In Edwards' work, then, even the ostensibly strong female characters are not impervious to the strain of adhering to the roles that their society demands. By the end of 'Days' it becomes clear that Leonora, lacking the nurturing support that she is required to lavish on her husband and friend, and denied the possibility of expression through her own creativity, is like the rose tree in her husband's garden:

He [Morn] worked in a room at the back of the house, by a window looking on to a lawn of coarse grass, in the middle of which was a dead rose tree.

There was no shelter there and no bud ever came on the tree.

But Morn never noticed it. (*R.*, 156-7)

Through depicting the restrictive nature of traditional gender roles and showing their

---

<sup>309</sup> C. Meredith, 'Rhapsody's Lost Story', 166.

potentially harmful effects, and by consistently imitating a male voice in her fiction in order to emphasise the silence of the female in patriarchal society, Edwards is engaging with feminist issues in a way that has previously been ignored. In the following chapter, I will continue this argument to suggest that, in her 1928 novel *Winter Sonata*, Edwards criticises constructions of class in a similar manner to that of gender.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**SEASON OF DISCONTENT: CLASS BARRIERS AND THEIR**  
**CONSEQUENCES IN *WINTER SONATA***

In a 1926 letter to Beryl Jones, Edwards indicates the extent to which musical form influenced the style and tone of the short stories included in *Rhapsody*:

At this point I am restraining with great difficulty a desire to perform a little puzzle upon this blameless page showing the repetition of details in the different stories. I won't do the puzzle [...] but I must explain what I mean though I am afraid it is rather silly when I think of it – I mean only the mushrooms in Conquered and Cult People, Laurel holding Leonora's dress in Summertime and Sorel holding Leonora's in the nameless one ['Days'], & that sort of thing. I feel that the stories are quite inseparable from each other in the same way that the parts of a musical composition are connected, & I do want a name for the book which will express that.<sup>310</sup>

But it would appear that the title *Rhapsody*, suitable as it seems because of its musical associations, was arrived at in a more arbitrary fashion than has previously been thought. 'I can't think of any thing particularly expressive but I have decided if they will let me to call the whole volume 'Treachery in a Forest', she says in one letter;<sup>311</sup> in another she claims, 'I said to Wishart & Co "Oh dear I don't know. Call it whatever you like."' And they called it *Rhapsody*.<sup>312</sup> And yet it is the case that, as the quotation above indicates, Edwards' love and extensive knowledge of music greatly influenced the style and tone of her writing. Nowhere is this more evident than in her 1928 novel *Winter Sonata*, which constitutes an unique attempt to construct a work of fiction based on a musical structure.

Inspired by the success of *Rhapsody* and her experiences abroad, Edwards

---

<sup>310</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37.

<sup>311</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 18<sup>th</sup> January [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 1.

<sup>312</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1927]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 25.

began writing *Winter Sonata* as soon as she had finished 'Days'. In a letter to Jones from Vienna in 1926 she summarized her novel's intended plot:

I have begun the novel, only just begun [...] There is an old man who plays the organ in church who gives music lessons & he goes every other evening to visit a gentleman of Welsh descent who lives there – but every evening that is not an other he goes to the inn which is called the Golden Bell & goes home drunk. And his friend is suddenly ordered abroad for his health & his two nieces come to live in the house, so the organist instead of rapidly drinking himself to death, now visits them. When I have invented a respectable way of getting them there there will be two men also in the house – a fat little man – perhaps another uncle & another man, a friend of the elder sister. He is the hero. You must understand that it is winter & all the trees are black, with no leaves on them. There is the nephew of the post-master who has come to the country for his health, & is the telegraphist there. He plays the cello & is very shy & has rather a long neck. He admires the elder sister very much. The organist takes him there to play. The organist lodges with a woman who has a daughter of 16, a bit of a huzzy in an innocent sort of way & he teaches her to sing. Imagine her singing Hugo Wolf's New Years Song in Church. She embarrasses the telegraphist fearfully by giggling at him. The elder sister gives her an old frock of orange colour. The hero has such a pleasant winter – there are three girls & all different. The uncle writes to them that he is going to marry a lady that he has met there. Soon afterwards they hear that he is dead. Of course the girls must go away, & the organist will go every evening now to the Golden Bell. I hope it will turn out alright.<sup>313</sup>

But the novel that Edwards eventually produced was very different from that outlined above. The organist, who was apparently destined to be the central character, is actually assigned a very minor role; he is referred to in passing only, and is never drawn in detail. The Golden Bell inn, frequented by the aforementioned organist, appears only once, and we are never taken through its doors. But the most significant omission, perhaps, is that of the 'gentleman of Welsh descent' – any mention of national identity in Edwards' work is rare, and this detail may have indicated her intention to move in her work towards her home country. The Welshman, however, makes no appearance in the final published version. At a glance, then, *Winter Sonata* seems to have lost much of its intended meat: what would have been, presumably, the gritty atmosphere of the Golden Bell inn is exchanged for yet another Modernist

---

<sup>313</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37.

drawing-room, and the ethnic implications of the uncle's Welsh descent replaced by the non-specific but apparently English backdrop, common to most of Edwards' short stories, that has in part contributed to her neglect. But in this novel, even as it stands, Edwards finally chooses to depict some working-class characters far more relevant to her own background.

The impermeable nature of class boundaries is key to the plot of the novel, and a continual contrast is drawn between its working- and middle-class characters and the different worlds which they inhabit. The text, which is divided into four chapters, focuses on the interactions between Arnold Nettle, a young telegraph clerk, and a middle-class family that lives on the outskirts of his village. Nettle, who lodges with the explosive Mrs Clark, her seventeen-year-old daughter Pauline, and young son Alexander, is new to the village: he has a tendency to fall ill, and hopes that the country atmosphere will be far kinder to his health than another town winter (*WS.*, 1). Physically frail and emotionally vulnerable, Nettle does not escape illness but spends much of the second and third sections of the novel bed-ridden as a result of an unspecified complaint which causes him to feel tired, lethargic and depressed. He becomes infatuated with Olivia Neran, a young woman who lives with her seventeen-year-old sister Eleanor in a white house set on a hill above the village. The house had belonged to their uncle, with whom they had lived since infancy; following his recent death, Mrs Curle, their snobbish and obnoxious aunt, has taken it upon herself to come and live with the sisters. With Mrs Curle is her rather pompous but inoffensive son George Curle, the 'fat little man' of Edwards' initial summary, who has invited his literary critic friend, David Premiss, to stay with the family: Mrs Curle's presence evidently solves the problem of respectability that Edwards mentions above. Premiss arrives at the very end of the first chapter of the novel and departs at the end of the

third. '[R]ather accustomed to feminine admiration' and considering himself to be "devoted to the most important things in life [...] the 'higher things'", the construction of Premiss' character is as interesting in terms of gender as it is in terms of class (WS., 106,108). Charming but fickle, he remains true to Edwards' initial vision of her ironic 'hero', spending his time flirting, in very different ways, with the 'three girls & all different', Eleanor, Olivia and Pauline.

In this novel, the issues of class and gender so central to Edwards' own way of thinking combine to form a fascinating and complex portrait of early twentieth-century life, within the very rigid confines of the sonata structure. I discuss the implications of this characteristic Edwards scenario in terms of class and gender in the first section of this chapter. Pauline Clark's overtly sexualized nature, indicated from the outset in her first encounter with Nettle, is explicitly constructed in relation to her class position. In the chapter's second section, I analyse how the other members of the community respond to this, particularly Eleanor and Olivia, and Premiss. In the third section I consider the manner in which the construction of passivity as a socially desirable element in middle-class women is depicted in relation to Olivia, whose increasing lethargy and depression is apparently a result of her self-repression. This section analyses the way in which Olivia's inactive state is reflected not only in the subdued winter tones of the landscape in which the novel is set, but also in Edwards' use of Greek mythology to underline and reinforce the theme of imposed female passivity throughout the novel. Finally, in section four, I return to the question of the musical form of the novel.

## I

*Winter Sonata* opens with Nettle's first day in the village. His position as a working



man is emphasised from the outset, when he is shown leaving his lodgings for the post office where he works. In this opening scene Pauline Clark and her young brother Alexander immediately demonstrate the uninhibited behaviour later to be revealed as characteristic of their family. Alexander, deceived by the unseasonable warmth of a mild day in early winter, ‘took off his dress in the middle of the road’; Pauline ‘slapped him until he cried’ (WS., 2), then left him sobbing on the pavement while she contrived to steal a glance at their new lodger:

She went in and asked for a telegraph form. Arnold Nettle gave it to her. He was a strange young man, and much better dressed than any of the choirboys. She smiled at him, and then looked down at her feet and began scraping one of them on the floor. She looked up again as if she could not help laughing at him. He blushed. (WS., 2-3)

Into this scene of everyday working-class life comes Olivia Neran, clothed in a pure white woollen dress. She drifts in and out again silently, unobtrusively, in contrast to Pauline who stares conspicuously after her, ‘interested [...] only in her dress. Both the Neran sisters always had nice dresses, and they were moreover pretty’ (WS., 3). The contrast between Pauline and her family on the one hand, and Olivia and her family on the other, raises issues of ownership and control that recur, in relation to gender as well as class, throughout Edwards’ work. Nettle is the link between the two households - although nominally part of the Clarks’ world, he aches to belong to the world of sophistication and leisure that for him the Nerans epitomise, and is a typical Edwards character in his isolation. Nettle does not feel at home anywhere, not even when he is with his uncle and his family:

[At his uncle’s home] he sat quietly and only answered their inquiries and smiled at them without feeling in any way at home there [...] But if he ever met any of the people from Olivia’s house, then he was very happy to be with them and heard everything they said as though it were important and of significance for his own life, as if they were in a way beings from another world [...] they really were people whose life was in every way different from his, while Pauline and her mother and Alexander were quite ordinary things in his life, and were painted in the dull colours of everything that is too near.

(WS., 37-8)

Nettle is first invited to visit the Nerans' home by Mrs Curle, who, if she 'ever saw anybody in the village who, she believed, could entertain her in any way [...] hurriedly made his acquaintance' (WS., 7). When Mrs Curle becomes aware that Nettle can play the cello, she invites him up to the house to perform for the family:

Mrs Curle walked along slowly, looking in front of her, and she went past Mr Nettle, but then, evidently because the form of the cello had impressed itself on her mind, she stopped and looked back. She took hold of her son's arm to bring him back with her and returned a few paces.[...]

'Do you play that?' she asked.

Holding the cello in a tight embrace, Mr Nettle smiled, and said, 'Yes.'

'We are going for a walk,' began George Curle conversationally, but his mother interrupted him and said urgently, 'You must come up some evening to play to us. What time does the post-office shut?'

'Six o'clock,' said Mr Nettle.

'I will send and let you know on which day,' she said, beginning to walk on.

[...] Mr Nettle looked after them in some astonishment. (WS., 8)

This is a characteristically comic scene, and Mrs Curle is one of Edwards' most harshly drawn characters. Physically she is 'rather fat, and also she looked a bit like a goose, and just as a goose looks cruel in a stupid way she had that expression too' (WS., 6). With no redeeming feature, she is rude, ignorant and only interested in others for their entertainment value. During Nettle's first visit to the house she demands of him, "Is there anyone else in the village who can play or do anything?" (WS., 13). Through the depiction of her interactions with Nettle, and later Pauline, it becomes apparent the Mrs Curle feels that such civilities as courtesy and respect need not be extended to those below her on the social scale. But, for Nettle, the Neran family epitomises breeding, beauty, and social distinction, and he is blind to the arrogance and social snobbery which they also demonstrate.

In fact, Nettle himself maintains and reinforces such class boundaries in his personal interactions with the Clark family, and especially Pauline, whom he

considers to be beneath his notice: '[a]lthough Mr Nettle lived with these people [...] he could not be said to be interested in them at all' (WS., 37). Nettle visits the Neran home several times, and is beginning to feel himself their friend when, in their quest for entertainment, the family, and Premiss in particular, insist that Nettle invite Pauline to the house to sing. The invasion of the everyday into his dreamland threatens to shatter his illusion, and '[h]e felt suddenly angry at Pauline's intrusion into this quite different world' (WS., 47). Extremely reluctant to convey the message to Pauline, he does so in a rather commanding manner:

She came into his room to clear away the tea-things, and he said, 'Miss Neran would like you to go up there and sing a song for them.'

'Which Miss Neran?' she asked.

'All of them up at the house,' he said, a little impatiently.

She half smiled. 'When?' she asked.

'You are to go up there Thursday evening, about seven o'clock. Take something with you to sing. You are not to stay there long, you know,' he added in explanation, 'but just sing a song or two, and then go home.'

Pauline considered this in silence. She was perfectly satisfied with the idea, and did not take his advice at all in bad part. (WS., 88-9)

During their visit, Nettle tries his best to disassociate himself from Pauline, to the extent that he 'deliberately waited for half an hour after she had gone [up to the Nerans'] before he started' (WS., 89). The discomfort he experiences as a result of Pauline's presence is perhaps a consequence of his suppressed but very real awareness of his own class position. When Pauline is also present in the Neran household, he cannot so easily fool himself into thinking that he shares their world: 'he felt rather angry, though by this time he was not sure why. He did not somehow feel as happy there as he used to' (WS., 91).

During her visit, Pauline's lower-class status becomes even more apparent. Her song book is 'torn and dirty', and when Premiss asks her if she can sing any Bach, she looks at him 'blankly, because she did not know the names of the composers' (WS., 90). It is, of course, hardly surprising that Pauline does not share

the awareness of the Neran circle of the social proprieties upheld in middle-class society. The fact that Eleanor and Pauline are the same age serves to emphasise how social difference has directed their experiences. At seventeen years old, Eleanor has just left school and spends her time reading, walking, and sitting idly in the drawing room, while Pauline is performing menial domestic duties and appears to have had little if any education. Yet, despite her apparent vulgarity and ignorance, Pauline shows a far more incisive appreciation of music than the Nerans would credit her with. On one occasion when performing in the church choir, for example, she muses:

It seemed to her that the organist was an old fool, but she liked to hear him play the organ. She would stop singing to hear him, and she knew she could never sing like that, like a great strong pillar reaching up to heaven. (WS., 17)

Despite the fact that they are the only providers of artistic beauty in the text, both Nettle and Pauline are considered by the Nerans to be ignorant of the aesthetic value of their own music because of their social standing. Like the women in *Rhapsody*, Nettle and Pauline are merely purveyors of music for the enjoyment of the Neran household, but are excluded, by virtue of their lower-class standing, from any deeper understanding of their art. In a conversation with Olivia, for example, Eleanor says of Nettle: ““you know, considering that he probably knows nothing at all about it, it seems to me he plays really rather decently”” (WS., 29). Little has changed in her attitude by the end of the novel: when handing Nettle a book of essays written by Premiss, ““You must tell us what you think of it,” she said kindly, though she did not really think that he would be able to give an opinion on it’ (WS., 238-9). As the sole members of the ruling class in their village, the family consider themselves to be the only people qualified to appreciate art and culture, yet they do not actually participate themselves (except, perhaps, for Olivia, who accompanies Nettle and Pauline on the piano); they are merely voyeurs, just like Mr Everett in ‘Rhapsody’. Edwards, then,

draws a specific parallel between class-based and gender-based subjugation. As Susan McClary suggests, '[s]truggles over musical propriety are themselves political struggles over whose music, whose images of pleasure or beauty, whose rules of order shall prevail.'<sup>314</sup>

Pauline Clark is fully aware of her status in the village and the nuances of her role as performer for the Nerans' pleasure. She does not expect any form of friendship, and is prepared to leave once she has completed her allotted task: 'She sang two more songs. She knew then that it was time for her to go' (WS., 92). Nettle, however, is unable to appreciate the nature of his association with the Neran household, attributing his connection with them to Olivia rather than the dull nature of their idle middle-class lives and their constant desire for entertainment. He thinks, '[i]t must have been because she spoke of him at home that he was first asked up there - to play, too, of course, but that was as good a way as another of beginning an acquaintance' (WS., 51). The narrator, however, makes it clear that, to most of the Neran household at least, Nettle is little more than a diversion to be called on in times of boredom. On the sole occasion that he calls at the house uninvited, and without his cello, Mrs Curle is 'a little astonished' while Eleanor 'looked across at Olivia interrogatively, as if she meant to ask if she had told him to come' (WS., 54, 53). Their treatment of Pauline Clark is very similar, if a little more transparent. Pauline goes for a walk past the house one afternoon only to be found by Mrs Curle, who to all intents and purposes orders Pauline to go in and sing for the rest of the family. Eleanor's response is: "'That's fine. We were wondering how to amuse ourselves'" (WS., 111).

As much as he tries to align himself with George, Olivia, and the rest, their

---

<sup>314</sup> McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 28.

class difference, it appears, forms the basis of the family's appeal for Nettle. Rather than try to cross or even destroy these boundaries, an action which might ultimately result in a closer connection with Olivia, he instead reinforces their superior social status by admiring them from afar. When speaking to Curle, for example, 'it impressed him very much to realise how these people who seemed to him not to possess any of the customary human failings should be so full of humility' (WS., 228). And when Curle is 'despondent [...] about his work [...] Nettle would have liked to reassure him in some manner, but he could find no way of expressing his feelings about George's immense learning and cleverness' (WS., 226). Nettle clings to the established social order; even his dreams have connotations of social distinctions. The sensation of a particularly vivid dream remains with him for some time, and during the following day he recalls:

There had been a large shield, with arms of some kind on it [...] The shield was very big, as high as a man [...] But the important thing was, of course, the extraordinary emotional significance this shield had for him [...] he could see quite clearly a hand mailed in silver holding the great shield [...] against the rush of thousands of bright silver spears [...] the ground [...] was disturbed everywhere with the prints of horses' hoofs, [and he stood looking] at a garland of white flowers made to fit a woman's head. (WS., 67, 69, 71)

The suggestion is that Nettle appears in his dream as an adoring knight, protecting the old world of feudal rank, a system even more rigid than the social divisions presented in the text, against the onslaught of the modern world, for the sake of his mistress or queen Olivia, represented in his dream by the garland of white flowers which rests on the ground - Nettle had previously revealed that he 'always saw her [Olivia] with a garland of white flowers around her head' (WS., 49).

In the final scene of the novel he has recovered from his winter illness enough to resume his visits to the Neran household, where his admiration apparently reaches new heights:

They sat around the table like stars, and when they spoke their voices seemed to come to him from far away, as though by some chance the heavens had opened for a minute and a fragment of some angelic conversation had floated down to him upon the earth. With innocent and lonely awe he listened to every word that came from their lips. (WS., 241)

I would suggest that Nettle's reluctance, or downright refusal, to attempt to breach the class barriers so rigidly enforced in his society is in part the source of his depression and illness. The difficulty of his struggle against the class ideology, with which he collaborates even as he seeks to break through it, in part contributes to his marginalized position: his refusal to make a stand against this is, I suggest, translated into his physically disabled condition. During his illness, Nettle and Mrs Curle have a rather absurd encounter which, as a result of its repetition at the end of the novel, serves to highlight the very real nature of the boundary between Nettle and the members of the Neran household:

One day when Mrs Curle was passing his house she saw him in the window. He was standing there looking out. She went up and spoke to him, but since the window was closed he could not hear what she was saying and looked rather alarmed and worried, and since it did not at first occur to him to go and open the door, they stood there, rather stupidly, without being able to communicate. (WS., 179)

Nettle and Mrs Curle are unable to communicate as a result of the literal barrier between them (the glass); neither of them are able to identify the simple way of breaching this (opening the window). This image is repeated in the final scene of the novel, when Nettle leaves the Neran's home:

"Do you prefer to leave by the window or the door?" she [Eleanor] asked smiling, as George came up to them.

Nettle, taking the suggestion seriously, obediently climbed over the window-sill, and stood on the grass waiting to say goodbye. (WS., 244)

Although to all intents and purposes Nettle has literally crossed the (invisible) boundary that had previously prevented his communication with Mrs Curle, he has done so on the basis of his inability to interpret Eleanor's bantering tone (he does so

‘obediently’), rather than any real attempt on his part to set his relationship with the Neran household on a level footing. At the end of the novel, he remains as much in awe of the members of the Neran household as ever.

## II

Nettle’s relationship with Olivia develops little through the course of the novel: he finds her beautiful and admires her from afar, and even claims to love her - although ‘he simply thought the words without attaching much meaning to them’ (WS., 70) - but does not appear to be physically attracted to her. There is no hint of lust in this invalid young man. He has ‘a nameless fear of girls’ and is terrified by any expression of female sexuality (WS., 3). Pauline’s interest in the opposite sex embarrasses and confuses him throughout the novel. Nettle is a very proper young man, quite different to the men that Pauline is used to; she notes: ‘He was a strange young man, and much better dressed than any of the choir-boys’ (WS., 2).

Pauline is by far the most overtly sexual of Edwards’ women: she is aware of male interest in her and is equally interested in men. She has an early forerunner in ‘Days’, the nearest story in Edwards’ oeuvre to *Winter Sonata* not only in terms of style, tone, and length, but also chronology. ‘Days’ features a young working-class girl, Bessie; like Pauline, she is depicted as rather uncouth and unaware of social proprieties. Described as a ‘big girl, rather pretty, but a little stupid-looking’, she takes a liking to composer Alexander Sorel and proceeds to contrive meetings with him (R., 166). In ‘The Problem of Life’, published posthumously in 1934, this archetype persists. Mr Rose is visiting his friend Mr Barron in the country; when hurrying to a dinner engagement, he notices a maid, Rhoda, waiting outside a glasshouse in the garden of the home which he is visiting. The maid is described in similar terms to Pauline and Bessie; she is ‘a dark thick-set girl’ with ‘rather coarse



black hair' (R., 257). Rose, as he is passing,

let his hand pass lightly and with a casual air over the front of her dress. She blushed and began to giggle, but he had already walked away. 'That,' he said to himself, 'is the sort of girl I like,' and he made a gesture with his hand that indicated to himself that she was not too thin. As he turned the corner of the house he stopped to wave amiably to her. (R., 257)

Pauline is described as a sexual being from the outset of *Winter Sonata*. She is curious about Nettle on his arrival but, after she has discovered that he has no interest in her, she soon finds another way of making use of him as an unwilling aid to her late-night escapades with the local lads:

Pauline had found, after all, that Mr Nettle was not very interesting, and for this reason she made him useful. It was more fun to go round with the choir-boys [...] More than once, when he [Nettle] was getting ready to go up [to bed], he heard Pauline's light tap on the window. He pulled up the blind and she signed to him to let her in. (WS., 16, 24)

Pauline's everyday life is drab and dull, and her physical appearance reflects this: she is described as 'rather short and thick-set' with 'untidy short hair of no distinctive colour' that refuses to grow (WS., 86). Her life, punctuated only by conflict with her mother and her fleeting late-night encounters with the choirboys, and later her early-morning walks with Premiss, is a cycle of hard manual labour:

Her mother came to wake her so early that it was still dark. Often she had to be dragged out of bed; she hated being awakened [...] She went downstairs and did the work she had to do, but she sulked all the morning. She sulked until there was a chance to go out to the shop and see people. She would stay out as long as she dared, and when she got home her mother would give it to her, call her 'a huzzy; a good-for-nothing; a slut.' (WS., 18)

Pauline's relationship with her mother is volatile and explosive, and very different from the strained and tense but always stifling propriety of the middle-class relationships that characterise Edwards' fiction. On one occasion, Eleanor has gone to Nettle's lodgings to give him a book of essays by Premiss. As she is waiting, Pauline and Mrs Clark set the table ready for tea, with the following scene taking place in front of Eleanor:

[Before Pauline] was quite out of the room her mother in a fury gave her a violent push and shut the door after her.

Eleanor was very much embarrassed [...] The little scene had rather upset her ideas, and she wondered now how she could possibly have gone there believing that she could have anything approaching a conversation with Mr Nettle. (WS., 214)

This is the only mother-daughter relationship in Edwards' oeuvre; it is as startling as it is telling in its complexity and may well owe something to Edwards' relationship with her own mother. Like Pauline, Edwards felt that she was constantly harangued over domestic tasks: 'From morning to night I am likely at any moment to be rowed – though not very ferociously – for anything,' she said in a letter to Sona Rosa Burstein.<sup>315</sup>

Edwards' treatment of Pauline, then, is sympathetic and well as rigorous. Pauline is depicted as uncouth, undisciplined, curious, insolent and lazy, but she is judged entirely by the social standards of others. The narrative suggests that on the contrary Pauline could merely be a misunderstood young woman. Her insolent half smile, for example, could be as a result of shyness: 'Pauline smiled up at him [Curle] in her rather insolent way. It may have been from gratitude' (WS., 179). Pauline's attention-seeking may be an attempt to replace the lack of affection shown to her by her mother, and her interest in the Neran sisters an escape from the drab and punishing routine of her working-class life. Equally, her interest in the choirboys and Mr Premiss may constitute a search for a male role-model or paternal figure: Pauline's father does not appear in *Winter Sonata*, and there is a suggestion that his absence is a source of much pain and discomfort to the family. When Mrs Clark sees her daughter return from an early morning walk with Premiss, for example, her reaction suggests that her husband's absence is the result of some sexual misconduct:

[Mrs Clark to Pauline]: 'You mark my words; you'll get into trouble some

---

<sup>315</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Sona Rosa Burstein, 30<sup>th</sup> August n.d. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 30.

day [...] you're like your father, that's what you are. No daughter of mine ought to behave like that.'

'What did my father do?' asked Pauline, looking her straight in the eyes, and smiling impudently, because she knew very well.

Her mother bit her lip and got red.

'Never you mind what your father did,' she said. 'He's dead now.'

Pauline smiled her disbelief, and her mother, becoming suddenly more angry than she had been before, slapped her face with all her force. (WS, 129)

This mother-daughter relationship is clearly volatile, yet the overriding suggestion is that neither woman is at fault: Pauline, in her innocence and curiosity, places herself in precarious situations, the danger of which her mother is all too aware of as a result of her own experiences.

The inappropriate gifts that the Neran family, and Eleanor and Olivia in particular, give to Pauline during her visits emphasise her subordinate status and their privilege, and also signal her entry into a market of exchange. An initial gift of a box of chocolates is soon followed by a few drops of perfume, a completely unsuitable orange dress from Olivia, and a long string of green beads which Eleanor contrives to present to Pauline, naively, in the street (WS., 156). "'Thank you, *and* for the scent,'" Pauline says to Olivia, gratefully enough, despite her perceived insolent nature (WS., 115) [original emphasis]. But the pleasure that Pauline and her brother Alexander get from these gifts demonstrates Edwards' skill at depicting the nuances and innocence of the young siblings, and highlights the barren, pleasureless nature of their lives. Alexander is overawed by the mysterious gifts that his sister brings home, despite their overtly feminine nature: when he sees Pauline in the orange dress 'his wonder made his eyes wider and wider', and the following day he continually peeps into a trunk where Pauline hides the dress for fear of reprisal from her mother (WS., 116-7,118). The scent, too, occasions a similar reaction in Alexander; when Pauline gives him the perfume-drenched handkerchief, he 'smelt it, looking up at her over it, and when she began to take it away he put his hand up to keep it there for still another

moment' (WS., 117).

It is worth noting here that Edwards apparently demonstrated a peculiar attitude towards colour at the time she was writing *Winter Sonata*. According to Harold Watkins,

in 1928, Dorothy attended my Economics Class at Caerphilly. One night over coffee at her mother's house the conversation turned to colour. About that time, Dorothy appeared to be going through a rather queer phase – she looked at everything in terms of colour, each colour having a particular significance for her, red meaning courage, green jealousy, blue generosity, grey honesty and so forth [...] I happened to say that in the following week [...] I should be dealing with the Gold Standard. 'Gold,' exclaimed Dorothy, 'what a brilliant, beautiful colour!'<sup>316</sup>

In the novel, the orange dress's striking colour has, it appears, invested the garment with a life of its own, so much so that, to Premiss, 'it appeared as something quite individual in itself, quite independent of its wearers' and he 'could have fancied himself flirting gently with it behind the backs of its two mistresses' (WS., 118-9). The following day, Pauline takes the dress to Nettle's room in order to try it on in front of his mirror, where it rests on his bed 'like something strange and not altogether belonging to the place' (WS., 118). Unfortunately, Watkins failed to list the significance of the colour orange to Edwards, but it would appear to imply a vitality which the characters of the novel – with the exception of Pauline herself – lack, as a result of their being bound by the social conventions of their world.

In *Sisters and Rivals in British Women's Fiction, 1914-1939* Diana Wallace discusses the construction of class within gendered paradigms in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918). In this novel an upper-class soldier, Chris Baldry, returns from fighting on the front line having lost all memory of the last fifteen years, and demands to be reunited with his first love, Margaret Allington, now married and living in a cramped terrace house on the outskirts of the nearby industrial town. His

---

<sup>316</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 46.

cold wife Kitty, a perfect example of the Victorian ‘angel in the house’, and his cousin, Jenny, the narrator, contrive to maintain a distance from Margaret which is grounded in class difference, regardless of their shared gender. Wallace argues:

To admit their similarity, their shared oppressed status, with the suffragette or the working-class woman, would be to relinquish the power and protection they gain from their class status as ‘ladies’.<sup>317</sup>

This argument applies equally well to Olivia and Eleanor’s treatment of Pauline Clark. The sisters reinforce Pauline’s inferior class status through their kindly intended but somewhat patronizing bestowal of gifts which emphasise the fact that although they are of the same sex Pauline, as a result of her social grouping, is quite different.

On his part, Premiss has an intricate knowledge of the class systems in society, their boundaries, and how to manipulate them. Pauline naively but blatantly seeks any sort of male attention, and during his early morning walks Premiss is happy to flirt with and even kiss her. He does indulge in some flirtation with both Eleanor and Olivia, but Pauline receives more of his interest. By directing his attentions at Pauline rather than Eleanor or Olivia he escapes the threat of marriage, or indeed of any serious emotional engagement, that would inevitably present itself had he approached either of the Neran sisters in the same manner. Edwards’ selection of prefatory poem for the volume is particularly suggestive in the light of her depiction of class-based social conventions in the novel. ‘Lob des Winters’, is by the Middle High German poet Walter von der Vogelweide (c.1170-c.1230), an innovative lyricist who wrote on the subject of courtly love and consummated relationships. The poem, which Edwards quotes in the original middle German, translates as:<sup>318</sup>

---

<sup>317</sup> Wallace, *Sisters and Rivals*, 106.

<sup>318</sup> I am indebted to Dr Marion Löffler at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, National Library of Wales, for this information and the direct translation of ‘Lob des Winters’, and to John Koch for facilitating the translation.

Winter has a short day,  
But a long night  
So that the lover from love may  
Rest while day is awake.  
What have I said?  
Oh dear, had I been quiet,  
I should always lie like this.

[Hât der Winter kurzen tac  
sô hat er die langen naht  
daz sich liep bî liebe mac  
wol erholn, daz ê dâ vaht.  
Wâz hân ich gesprochen? owê jâ  
haete ich baz geswigen  
sol ich iemer sô geligen.]<sup>319</sup>

This poem, initially at least, appears to have little relevance to the stifflingly dull lives which form the subject matter of *Winter Sonata*, and serves to reinforce the restrictive and ultimately unhealthy nature of divisive class structures in the novel. In fact, the only character who engages in any sort of genuine physical human contact such as that being experienced by the first-person speaker of the poem is Pauline Clark. Her late-night escapades with the choirboys are suggestive of sexual curiosity, and indeed its potential exploration:

On choir-practice nights, as soon as the clock struck seven, even if she were in the middle of some work, she would put everything down and run across to the church [...] After the practice she ran out of the churchyard like a little cat and walked slowly up the road pretending she liked to take a walk by herself [...] in winter it was already dark, and almost before she turned the corner she could walk slowly, and some of the boys would follow her [...] (WS., 16-7)

The following morning, Pauline must be ‘dragged out of bed’ by her mother, deprived of the morning’s slumber so important to Vogelweide’s narrator, who rests ‘while day is awake’ (WS., 18). The only compensation that Pauline receives for her early rising is the opportunity to meet with Premiss, who she finds even more fascinating than her choirboys:

---

<sup>319</sup> Dorothy Edwards, *Winter Sonata*, vii. According to Löffler, it is unclear whether the Middle High German word ‘geligen’ in the final line means ‘to lie’ as in to lay down, or ‘to lie’ as in to tell an untruth. Marion Löffler, e-mail correspondence with Claire Flay, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

[Pauline] saw Mr Premiss pass the house as if he were going for a walk, for it was a fine though cold morning. She ran down a road which would lead her back to the main road, along which he was walking, without her having to pass him [...] He was just turning the corner and coming towards her. Her heart gave two big thumps. (WS., 83)

Premiss, who sees himself as something of a daring flirt, is curiously void of passion during his encounters with Pauline. His physical attentions towards her are apparently driven by an interest in human responses rather than by any sexual urge, and there is a suggestion that Pauline expects something more than a kiss from him:

He began to push the hair back inside her collar, and, since she showed no reluctance, laughing with immense amusement, he kissed her once or twice. He stood looking at her to see what effect it had produced, but she was looking at him equally attentively to see if he was going to kiss her again. (WS., 100)

In fact Premiss, like Nettle, appears strangely desexualized, and his physical appearance is suggestive of a lack of vigour and strength: on his arrival he is described as 'rather short and exceedingly pale' (WS., 72). But he relishes the irony of the situations Pauline finds herself in. When she sings for the family, for example, '[i]t gave him immense pleasure to hear the voice of Bach's Virgin come from Pauline's lips' (WS., 112). Premiss likens Pauline's temperament to that of a Bacchante, emphasising his view of her as an overly sexualized and physical, not intellectual, being (WS., 121), just as the owner in 'A Country House' viewed his wife as a potentially deviant creature (R., 35). But ultimately, Pauline and her family do not suffer the continual self-repression endured by the occupants of the Neran household. Pauline consistently acts on her instincts without fear of reprisal or social consequences, as does her brother Alexander. In the opening scene in which he removes his clothing as a result of the unseasonable heat, for example, he is responding with directness to his physical surroundings (WS., 2). A physical and emotional existence, it appears, is ultimately far less stultifying than a cultured but repressive middle-class lifestyle.

By virtue of their class, then, Eleanor and Olivia appear prevented from expressing such genuine human feeling and emotion in the way that Pauline does. Edwards illustrates this, in relation to Eleanor in particular, by means of another poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In a scene that occurs towards the end of the novel, Eleanor quotes Rossetti's 'Known in Vain' (1881) to Curle:<sup>320</sup>

[Eleanor] ' "but sitting oft  
Together within hopeless sight of hope  
For hours are silent."  
You can't say that isn't beautiful.' (WS., 171)

As beautiful as Eleanor's chosen lines may be, they are also highly suggestive of the situation in which she, and more specifically Olivia, find themselves as a result of their status as middle-class ladies. I suggest that it is Olivia and Nettle who are 'Together within hopeless sight of hope' as a result of their refusal to cross the class boundaries which preclude them from the possibility of a relationship with one another. The poem continues: 'When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze/After their life sailed by, and hold their breath';<sup>321</sup> in the following section, I argue that these lines are key to an understanding of Olivia, who finds herself trapped in a perpetual hibernation.

<sup>320</sup>

The full text of the poem reads:  
As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,  
Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,  
The Holy of holies; who because they scoff'd  
Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope  
With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope;  
Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laugh'd  
In speech; nor speak, at length; but sitting oft  
Together, within hopeless sight of hope  
For hours are silent: - So it happeneth  
When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze  
After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.  
Ah! who shall dare to search through what sad maze  
Thenceforth their incommunicable ways  
Follow the desultory feet of Death?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Sonnet LXV. Known in Vain' (1881), reprinted in Jerome McGann, ed., *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Collected Poetry and Prose* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, 156)

<sup>321</sup>

*Ibid.*, ll. 10-11.



### III

In *Winter Sonata* much more attention is lavished on descriptions of the scenery than in any of Edwards' other works. The backdrop against which the characters move is often presented in some detail, generally in a wintry monochrome, as in the following passage:

The sky was uniformly *grey*, not *dark* with rain-clouds, but *grey* with no *white* in it anywhere. On either side of the *white* road the bare hedges and sometimes the *grey*, naked branches of a leafless tree overshadowed it a little. Some *grey* sheep moved about silently in the fields. Down in the hollow below the road, where a stream ran, the trees looked *black* and like little feathery clouds, and far upon the other side bracken lay in broad *brown* patches on the *pale*, short grass. (WS., 21) [My emphasis]

Such use of a monochrome backdrop emphasises the lethargic tone of the novel. The landscape is void of colour and serves as a base; often in such scenes colour is introduced, slowly and deliberately - the green of the fir trees, the reddish streaks of a rising or setting sun. This pattern occurs from the very beginning of the novel: on Nettle's first morning in the village, at the opening of the text, the scene is described thus:

Everywhere the trees were nearly bare, but a few golden leaves still clung to the black branches. The black curving lines and the gold leaves looked as if they were painted on the pale grey sky. (WS., 1)

The repetition of the black trees and their golden leaves serve to emphasise this almost colourless visual image and to signify the coming winter; the scene is beautiful, but bare and barren, with none of the vitality of the summer months. This is a scene described with an artist's eye; the picture is very visual, one can imagine the painter's brush at work. When describing the natural world in *Winter Sonata* this detailed impressionistic technique is one that Edwards returns to again and again, so much so that she says of herself in a letter to Beryl Jones 'I begin to suspect the ease

with which I handle scenery.’<sup>322</sup> In her 1929 review of *The Landscape of Thomas Hardy* by Donald Maxwell, Edwards indicates the importance to her of such a technique in literature. ‘The landscape in Thomas Hardy’s novels is more than a background for the story. It is much more than this – it is even more important to the plot than any of the characters; it is rather the chief character’, she notes.<sup>323</sup> This is precisely how landscape is treated in *Winter Sonata*.

Of the novel’s characters, it is Olivia who most consistently reflects the wintry palette that comes to dominate the novel. From the outset she has been associated with the bleak and barren winter landscape; she first appears in a white woollen dress, and ‘[a]s she came down between the bare grey trees and along the hard grey road it was difficult to tell whether the white figure was more like summer going sadly away from the earth or like winter stealing quietly upon it’ (WS., 3). As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that it is winter that she embodies. Emphasis is continually placed on her ‘round pale face’ with its ‘large dark eyes’ (WS., 28), which reflect the monochrome landscape that surrounds her home. She is associated with the fir trees throughout the novel: Premiss, for example, says to her “‘I will think of you every time I see a fir tree’” (WS., 138). But this association with the fir is not necessarily positive: despite their potential to represent a sense of continuous life as a result of their evergreen nature (they contrast starkly with the bare barren skeletons of the deciduous trees that surround them), in their association with Olivia they come to represent the unchanging, static nature of her existence: they do not participate in the seasonal change so essential to life. The novel’s German epigraph, for example, suggests that seasonal change and the potential for contact that winter provides is

---

<sup>322</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, 11<sup>th</sup> January [c.1926-7]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 25.

<sup>323</sup> Dorothy Edwards, ‘Hardy’s Wessex: the spirit of the landscape’ (review of Donald Maxwell, *The Landscape of Thomas Hardy*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1929.

essential to ensure new life in spring. But instead of embracing this opportunity, as the story progresses Olivia becomes increasingly withdrawn and reflective:

Olivia went in these days for walks by herself, thinking and even dreaming as she went along between the delicate black lacework of the leafless hedges under the soft grey sky, or she sat in the house with her hands lying idle on her lap, not reading or doing anything. She felt [...] a certain lassitude of mind which made her scarcely desire to talk to anyone or even to read, and she sat most of the day without moving, her hands lying idle in her lap. (*WS.*, 133, 183)

Olivia's mental passivity begins to manifest itself in a physical stillness, in a similar manner to that experienced by Leonora Morn in 'Days' and discussed in the previous chapter. Like Leonora, Olivia spends much of her time sitting with her hands in her lap, an image which emphasises her passive nature (her hands are literally still) as well as the suggestion that there is nothing more to her life, and shows the destructive effects of enforced passivity on the female psyche. In contrast to Olivia, the male characters are restless and searching: George Curle is continually in pursuit of the meaning of his life, and often takes out the frustration caused by his existential angst on his mother, who cites ambition as the source of her late husband's discontent: "he was very ambitious, and that never made him do anything out of the ordinary; it simply made him impatient," she tells George of his father (*WS.*, 161). Olivia, on the other hand, is aware of the value of contemplation over ambition. She says to Curle:

'I think perhaps if one could learn to be absolutely receptive of every sensation and every impression as it comes, without any reference to what one expects, or to what one wants, one would be perfectly happy.' (*WS.*, 168)

But in her case, with no outlet of expression, her passivity results in fatigue and eventually depression. Indeed, Olivia seems to be experiencing a form of emotional hibernation as a result of the continual repression of her physical and emotional needs. As a 'proper lady', she is required by society to behave in a predefined manner – to be

passive, observant of social proprieties, elegant and well-dressed: she adheres to this role perfectly, but, it appears, at the cost of her selfhood.

Olivia's repression is underlined throughout the novel, not only by means of her association with the winter landscape, but through Edwards' sustained and suggestive use of mythology. Edwards had studied Greek and Philosophy at Cardiff University, and references to various mythological characters are made throughout her fictions. In *Winter Sonata*, the Greek myth of Persephone's abduction is a key theme. At one point in the text, in a passage describing the landscape, direct reference is made to this myth. The scenery in which the Neran household stands is presented from Premiss' point of view:

the leafless trees were indeed extraordinarily beautiful just here in all their misty colours of black, grey, brown, and sometimes a curious red. Here and there among them was the dark, deep green of fir trees which seemed to stand down there among the shades like heroes who alone can descend living into Hades. Somewhere in their midst, half concealed by their bare lifeless branches, was the wonderfully delicate green of a young fir, like a strange little maiden who had wandered by some mischance into that baneful place, like poor Persephone herself, with her beauty obscured and veiled by joyless shadows. (WS., 193-4)

I suggest that myth is used in the novel to highlight the gendered nature of repression that was as present in Greek society as in Edwards' world:

The notions [...] that a man should be active and aggressive, a woman passive and subject to the control of the men in her family, are expressed in virtually every Greek myth, even the ones in which the women seek to gain control of their own lives.<sup>324</sup>

As I have argued above, Olivia's passivity is emphasised throughout *Winter Sonata*.

An understanding of the heavily gendered Persephone myth serves to deepen this aspect of the text.<sup>325</sup> By the end of the novel she is 'motionless', even her beauty is

---

<sup>324</sup> Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (London: Duckworth, 2007), xv.

<sup>325</sup> Two versions of the myth of Persephone's abduction exist, but little differentiates them except the name of Persephone's abductor: in some sources he is named Hades whereas others cite Pluton, whose kingdom is called Hades. As Edwards uses the version where Hades is the name of the underworld and not the abductor, I too shall refer to this version.

‘subdued’ just as Persephone’s beauty is ‘obscured [and] veiled by joyless shadows’ in the above quotation.

In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Persephone, daughter of the corn goddess Demeter and king of the gods Zeus, is picking flowers in a meadow with other goddesses when her attention is drawn to a beautiful narcissus. But unknown to her this flower has been sent as a trap by the order of Zeus, who has an agreement with Pluton, his brother, that Persephone will rule the underworld Hades with him, as his wife.<sup>326</sup> Persephone picks the flower, and Pluton rises up from the underworld to claim his queen and take her back down into Hades. After Persephone’s abduction her mother Demeter leaves the kingdom of the gods and searches the earth for her daughter but to no avail. In her grief, she refuses to allow the cycle of the earth to continue:

The oxen ploughed the fields in vain and the seeds did not sprout, because Demeter withheld their growth [...] she said that she would not return or allow the fruits of the earth to grow until she set eyes on her daughter again.<sup>327</sup>

Her daughter’s abduction causes Demeter to show ‘a terrifying capacity for destruction. She holds the seed within the earth so that no crops can grow and men starve and have no sacrifices to offer the gods.’<sup>328</sup> Persephone’s father Zeus intervenes, and orders his brother Pluton to return Persephone to her mother so that normality can be restored and sacrifices to the gods can once again be made. But Pluton tricks Persephone:

Pluton smilingly allowed her to go, but secretly gave her a sweet seed of the pomegranate to eat, so that she would have to return to Hades again [...] Then Zeus decreed that for one third of the year Persephone should rule as queen in the kingdom of the dead with Pluton, and for two thirds of the year should be with Demeter, on the earth. Then Demeter walked over the barren and leafless

---

<sup>326</sup> Helene. P. Foley, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>327</sup> Oswalt, *Collins Concise Encyclopaedia of Greek and Roman Mythology*, 83.

<sup>328</sup> Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth*, 101.

earth, making it fruitful again.<sup>329</sup>

As a result of Pluton's trickery, Persephone is under a spell which forces her to return to Hades every year: she 'was allowed to remain above ground only for four months (though some say six) of each year, her return marking the beginning of spring'.<sup>330</sup>

Olivia will not go outside when it snows as '[i]t gave her a curious and unpleasant feeling of helplessness to see the earth quite hidden from her sight, as if it were perhaps no longer really beneath her feet', suggesting a sense of distance from the earth on her part that echoes Persephone's abduction and incarceration in Hades (WS., 204). Edwards continues Olivia's underworld associations through her evocation of a specifically Welsh myth from the *Mabinogi*. Olivia is out walking one day, lost in her own thoughts, unaware that Mr Premiss is frantically trying to catch her up. He calls to her, and she pauses:

[Olivia] heard someone calling behind her and she looked round. Mr Premiss was coming along the road after her. [...]

'I have been trying to catch you up for miles,' he said, 'but every time I got nearer you walked more quickly than ever, and I was left behind again [...]. It was like a magic spell. I felt as though some wicked fairy was keeping the distance between us always the same. No effort of mine seemed to be any good.' (WS., 134-5)

A similar scene occurs in the first of the four branches of the medieval Welsh myths featured in the *Mabinogi*. Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed, is sitting on Gorsedd Arberth, a mountain in his kingdom, when he sees 'a lady on a big fine pale white horse, with a garment of shining gold brocaded silk upon her, coming along the high-way that led past the mound'.<sup>331</sup> Despite the white horse's 'slow even pace',<sup>332</sup> several attempts to catch up with the lady fail; at last Pwyll speaks to her:

[Pwyll] turned after her and let his horse, mettled and prancing, take its own

---

<sup>329</sup> Oswalt, *Collins Concise Encyclopaedia of Greek and Roman Mythology*, 83-84.

<sup>330</sup> David Kravitz, *The Dictionary of Greek & Roman Mythology* (London: New English Library, 1975), 182-3.

<sup>331</sup> Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (1949; London: Everyman, 2000), 8.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

speed. And he thought that at the second bound or the third he would come up with her. But he was no nearer to her than before. He drove his horse to its utmost speed, but he saw that it was idle for him to follow her.

Then Pwyll spoke. 'Maiden,' he said, 'for his sake whom thou lovest best, stay for me.' 'I will, gladly,' said she, 'and it had been better for the horse hadst thou asked this long since.'<sup>333</sup>

The lady is Rhiannon of Annwn (or Annwfn), the Celtic Otherworld or Hades. Like Persephone, Rhiannon protests against a marriage arranged against her will, from which she is rescued – in Rhiannon's case, by Pwyll. The similarities continue in medieval Welsh literature: fourteenth-century poet Dafydd ap Gwilym 'speaks of Summer as retreating to Annwfn when Winter comes', just as, in the Greek myth, winter arrives when Persephone is forced to return to Hades.<sup>334</sup> But Olivia, it seems, is without rescuer: neither Premiss or Nettle are strong enough to liberate her from her underworld.

The same winter landscape, however, has a very different effect on Eleanor, who unlike her sister ventures outside: '[s]he looked round with her blue eyes at the white monotonous countryside. It made her feel like a bird whom no obstacle prevents from spreading its wings and flying to and fro over the earth' (WS., 205). It is Eleanor, rather than Olivia, who is linked with spring. Eleanor discovers some snowdrops in their otherwise barren and lifeless garden: '[t]here, where the thick dark branches of the little fir tree sheltered the garden from the wind, the whitish-green leaves of snowdrops were pushing their blunt tops up through the hard earth' (WS., 206). I would suggest that Olivia, with her association with the fir tree, endures her perpetual emotional and physical hibernation in part in order to protect Eleanor, represented by the snowdrops, and allow her to achieve her 'spring'. For as Olivia's lethargy and depression grows, Eleanor 'felt very happy and gay. It seemed to her at that moment that the whole world might have been contained within herself. It made her feel as if

---

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>334</sup> Stephens, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, 16.

everything around her were on the point of springing into life' (WS., 218). While Eleanor and Curle admire the snowdrops enthusiastically, Olivia is dismissive, 'looking down wearily at the little leaves' (WS., 206), and is assailed by a wave of the depression that increasingly affects her throughout the novel:

A sudden feeling of loneliness had come upon her, so intense, that the place and the people around her, the hard, stony garden and the trees, stood out empty and bare as though without any deeper implications, as though she had withdrawn into herself all the imagination and affection which could have given them life and depth. She felt in that moment an almost intolerable distaste for life, a kind of nausea. (WS., 207)

Although the earth still remains cold and frozen, the snowdrops Eleanor has discovered in the garden become associated with her and prosper as harbingers of more growth to come:

By this time there were little green buds on Eleanor's snowdrops, and one or two yellow and purple and white crocuses were coming up right in the middle of the grass in the garden.

Eleanor, because she had nothing to do, walked along the roads and through the fields [...] she stopped and looked at the grey trees or at the tangle of bare, grey twigs in a hedge, and although there was no sign in them yet of Spring, the fact that they were really preparing to burst into life, that all that life was imprisoned in them, made them seem already not so barren and dead. For this reason she picked one without thinking and carried it home, only then realising that it was of no use, she left it lying on the garden path. (WS., 215-6)

Associated throughout the novel with the spring rather than the winter season, Eleanor questions the nature of power in society in a manner that Olivia cannot. Eleanor takes steps towards realizing a female solidarity, regardless of class status. In her penultimate encounter with Premiss, aware of his imminent departure, she engages him in a final private conversation in which, when discussing his bachelor status, he reveals his expectations of a wife's role, telling her:

'I am a very disorderly man. I have left something in every corner of the house and it takes me a terrible time to pack. It is because I am a bachelor, you know. If I had a wife it would be all right.'

'But you wouldn't let your wife do your packing for you?' said Eleanor, a little shocked by this.

'Yes, I would,' he said, looking at her solemnly.



‘But you couldn’t let your wife be a slave to you, Mr Premiss!’  
‘Yes, I could,’ he said, highly amused.  
She walked on in silence.  
‘Why, Miss Eleanor,’ he said, ‘you are cross with me?’  
‘Well,’ she said, gravely raising her eyes to his, ‘if men as clever as  
you are willing to be among the oppressors of women, what can one expect of  
ordinary men?’ (WS., 196-7)

Eleanor’s language here is as telling as it is suggestive: not only is she aware of the subjugated status of women in her society, but she is beginning to realise that educated middle-class men like Premiss exploit for their own gain the subjugated social status of women.

On one occasion Olivia too feels a sense of spring, but in her case the sensation of impending hope brings with it an aura of impermanence and fragility:

She felt happy. It seemed as if a new life were beginning, as though the blue sky were the beginning of spring and not only a pause in the cold greyness of the winter. She began to walk always more quickly, scarcely thinking, but hurrying on with a sensation of happiness, inexplicable and filled with that certainty of its lasting for ever, which comes just before it begins to die again.  
(WS., 134)

The last ominous clause suggests that Olivia has allowed herself to become trapped within the demands of her society, whereas Eleanor, although inconsistent, has begun to demonstrate a potential for social change evident in her questioning of Premiss’ view of women. Like the branch that Eleanor picks up and then discards, Olivia, and all that she has come to internalize, is eventually going to be left ‘of no use’. It is as if Edwards has split the Persephone role between the two Neran sisters, with the older girl perpetually caught in a mournful winter, while the younger looks forward to spring.

I would suggest that Edwards invokes this myth not only to reinforce the winter theme of the novel, but to highlight the gendered nature of the society which she is attempting critically to delineate. In the original Greek context, Persephone’s abduction is as a result of an arrangement between her father and her uncle; her

mother is not consulted nor is she informed. The myth can be read as an allegory of patriarchal exchange, where women are objects of value to be passed from one man to another. But of course it is also a story about motherly love and the connection between mother and daughter, as

It is displacement and separation from her mother that Persephone complains of when she is carried off by Hades on his chariot to his realm in the lower world.<sup>335</sup>

For Demeter, her bond with her daughter overrides all else; it leads her to leave the kingdom of the gods and reject Zeus' offers of great powers designed to tempt her to return. She refuses to participate in the patriarchal market of exchange that has stolen her daughter. Diane Purkiss suggests that

The Demeter-Persephone story is central for feminists who valorize the Jungian archetype of the Great Goddess and its concomitant dependence on the role of the mother.<sup>336</sup>

The myth of Persephone's abduction is not only important to understanding Olivia's character, but also the mother-daughter relationship between Mrs Clark and Pauline. On her daughter's return Demeter asks whether she has eaten anything whilst in the underworld, and Persephone has to admit that Pluton forced her to eat an enchanted pomegranate seed. It is this seed within her which draws her back to the underworld. Equally, Mrs Clark's anxiety about Pauline's 'flighty' nature would appear to rise from her fear that Pauline might commit a sexual act that would result in pregnancy and tie her to one man against her will for the rest of her life. The force of her feeling can be seen when she hits Pauline and calls her a slut after seeing her return from an early-morning walk with Premiss:

‘What have you been doing out all that time with him?’ her mother said, looking at her with suspicious and anxious fury [...] ‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?’

---

<sup>335</sup> Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth*, 63.

<sup>336</sup> Diane Purkiss, ‘Women’s Rewriting of Myth’, in Carolyne Larrington, ed., *The Feminist Companion to Mythology* (London: Pandora, 1992), 451.

[...] ‘What have I done?’ shouted Pauline, beginning to sob. (WS., 128-9)

Mrs Clark’s reaction to Pauline’s interest in men and her behaviour when outside the home reflects Demeter’s first question to Persephone on her return; she is afraid that Pauline too may have partaken of the dangerous seed. The conflict between them, then, can be seen as a result of the continual risk presented to them by men.

There is much to suggest that in *Winter Sonata* Edwards was writing more directly about her life. Through her use of the Persephone myth Edwards, perhaps subconsciously, reveals her own concern with absent or missing parents (her work is characterised by the presence of children missing one or both parents). Throughout her entire oeuvre every family unit is incomplete: there are few parents in any of her stories, and those who are present tend to be inadequate or, as in the case of Mr Everett in ‘Rhapsody’, downright neglectful. Edwards’ experience of the loss of parental attention and presence no doubt stimulated her subsequent fascination with broken families or missing parents and indicates the extent to which she was affected by the loss of her father. Her scholarship and subsequent private schooling might also have had divisive effects: the cyclical nature of the boarding-school structure, whereby pupils return at regular, annually set intervals to their parental home, could be seen as reflective of Persephone’s return to her mother and the kingdom of the gods. In Edwards’ case, her removal to Howell’s School also aroused more anxieties than were involved simply in leaving home. Howell’s was a private school, attended mainly by fee-paying upper-class girls: Edwards, there by virtue of a boarder’s scholarship, and from such a heavily working-class community, would have been marked out as different. Furthermore, her father’s early training of her to be a socialist and, arguably, a feminist would in all likelihood have been thoroughly undermined by the morals inculcated at Howell’s, where young upper-class girls were trained to

become proper ladies.

Welsh-based poet Hilary Llewellyn-Williams, in her poem ‘Persephone’ (*Greenland*, 2003), has also made use of this myth to explore her own painful and very personal experience. She says:

I needed to find a way to write about an intensely personal experience that I’d kept secret for years and largely repressed in myself. So this was sensitive material for me. But it needed to be more than simply self-therapeutic. It needed to be a poem [...] After I’d decided on “Persephone” [as a title] I was able to redraft it with that myth more consciously in mind, and it seemed to bring the poem together [...] I still don’t understand everything that’s going on in that poem, but arriving at that myth as a ‘label’ (one of many possible labels), did help me to make better sense of it.<sup>337</sup>

I would suggest that Edwards, like Llewellyn-Williams, is in *Winter Sonata* using the Persephone myth, a tale of abduction and separation between parent and child, to work out her own anxieties about her parent’s death, and her own divided class position, during such a turbulent and key point in her development.

#### IV

*Winter Sonata*, then, represents a departure from *Rhapsody*: in the novel, Edwards appears to move away from several of the methods established in her short stories. The novel is narrated entirely in the third person, contrasting with such stories as ‘A Country House’ where the first-person narrative is a defining feature of the writing. Other techniques, however, are not only retained but developed. The repetition of key words or phrases, for example, occurs extensively in *Winter Sonata*, as does the use of musical references. Edwards’ use of music terms throughout the text reinforces that sense of the novel’s musical composition: Olivia, for example, finds that ‘time seemed to move for her so slowly, like a long *adagio*’ (WS., 182); while for Premiss the trees and the sky ‘had an air of restrained gaiety like a little scherzo in a minor

---

<sup>337</sup> Hilary Llewellyn Williams, interviewed by David Hart, ‘The Thread of Poetry’, *Planet*, 162 (2003/2004), 30.

key' (WS., 76); and Nettle has a dream that returns to him 'like a chord of music' (WS., 71). But the influence of music pervades the novel not only in a symbolic but structural fashion. In 'Winter Sonata: a personal estimate', Beryl Jones outlined the structure of her friend's novel:

its most obvious claim to originality is the basis of its structure in the sonata form, with four movements, marked themes, repeats, inversion, developments etc [...] There is of course no slavish following out in detail of any supposed sonata structure, but there is quite an intricate patterning both of form and content.<sup>338</sup>

As Jones indicates, the sonata technique, although present in format, is more effective in terms of content. Images or motifs – Olivia's 'large, sad eyes' (and, in fact, eyes in general), the branches of the trees, the moon, white flowers – accrue significance as they are repeated. Scenes also recur: Nettle, for example, reflects on his first meeting with Olivia several times throughout the novel. Such repetition is a key characteristic of the sonata:

The organization of the sonata is partly effected by recurrence of phrase – that is, by the employment, at a later period, of musical sentences or paragraphs which have already been presented earlier in the work, and which are recognized by the hearer on their re-appearance.<sup>339</sup>

The set pattern of Nettle's life, his daily walk to the post office, his weekly visit to his uncle's home, and the intermittent invitations to the Nerans, always accepted, serve to add a sense of ritual and rigid form to the text. The text as a whole has this sense of repetitive and cyclical temporal structure; although it encompasses a period of some months, it begins with the dawn of a new morning, and ends with the onset of night. '[I]f a tune is to leave us with any impression of coherence it must end in the same key in which it began', claims W. H. Hadow, and this, I suggest, is precisely what Edwards does in *Winter Sonata*. Like the stories in *Rhapsody*, the narrative of *Winter Sonata* lacks the climax or conclusion integral to the traditional Victorian novel: there

<sup>338</sup> Jones, 'Winter Sonata', Appendix i, 243.

<sup>339</sup> W. H. Hadow, *Sonata Form* (London: Novello & Company, n.d.), 2.

are no marriage proposals, no deaths, no revelations, to offer closure. *Winter Sonata* ends very much in the tone with which it began: the opening section focused on Nettle's arrival in the village on the last day before winter came when he was full of hope that here, unlike in town, he would manage to remain well throughout the winter. At the end of the novel again there is a sense of hope; Nettle, though he has not managed to avoid illness, is recovering well, and a new moon is shining down on him as he leaves the Nerans' house.

Such moments of optimism, however, are few and far between in *Winter Sonata*. The overwhelming impression that remains after reading the novel is that of lethargy, of hibernation, as its title suggests. Edwards' characters suffer from a sense of isolation as well as various forms of debilitating depression, like that which was increasingly coming to dominate Edwards' own life. Nettle is lonely and longing for a world from which he is excluded. Olivia suffers from lethargy and depression which she conceals from her family; Curle continually attempts to justify the worthiness of his life to himself; Pauline Clark longs for loving attention and comfort, but receives scorn and abuse instead. Even Premiss is an isolated man: he puts on a charismatic front when in company, but he dislikes being alone at night and suffers from insomnia. The various mental and emotional illnesses that the characters experience serve to slow down the novel's tempo. Nettle's illness, which occurs in the middle of the text and lasts for some time, is the most obvious example of this, but Olivia's increasing depression and Premiss' insomnia, coupled with the repetition of words such as 'tired' and 'depressed' and their derivatives which occur throughout, all serve to sustain a sense of lives subdued, as nature is subdued in winter. Fascinatingly, Edwards was apparently unaware of the isolated positions in which she placed her characters when writing. A letter to David Garnett, following a visit to him in 1931,

shows her reaction when rereading her own work:

When I got home, first of all I read *Winter Sonata* to see if anything in it justified all the kindness people had shown me, and I must confess that I could hardly read through it [...] it is so bleak and cold that I nearly got frostbite while I read, and the chief thing it portrays is an awful emptiness, very distressing to have to read about.<sup>340</sup>

*Winter Sonata*, then, signals a development in Edwards' work not only in terms of her interpretation of class and gender, but also her literary style and technique. Its appearance in 1928 signalled a pause in Edwards' fiction-publishing career; in fact, she was not to see any more of her fiction in print during her lifetime. But the issues of artistic ownership that emerge in *Winter Sonata* as a result of Nettle's and Pauline's relationship with the Neran household are developed to include connotations not only of gender and class, but of ethnicity, in a story found in Edwards' 1933 diary in the Reading archives and published in *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*. In order to appreciate the focus behind the development of Edwards' ideas in this late story, however, the circumstances of her life from the publication of *Winter Sonata* in 1928 to the composition of this tale in 1933 need to be considered.

---

<sup>340</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1931. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**FROM PEN-Y-DRE TO ENDSLEIGH STREET: DOROTHY EDWARDS IN**  
**BLOOMSBURY**

*Winter Sonata* and *Rhapsody* had gained Edwards many admirers. Literary critic Gerald Gould wrote in a review of *Rhapsody* ‘Miss Dorothy Edwards is an exciting writer’; likewise, Arnold Bennett referred to her as a writer of genius.<sup>341</sup> She appears to have been equally well-received by her creative as well as her critical contemporaries; English writer Rosamond Lehmann (1901-1990), for example, acknowledges Edwards in her short story ‘The Red-Haired Miss Daintrys’ which was included in her 1946 collection *The Gypsy’s Baby & Other Stories*:

Only the other night I re-read a volume of stories called *Rhapsody* by Dorothy Edwards and came upon these words: ‘There is something very attractive about the thought of the skeletons of red-haired people’; and I thought of the white bones of Miss Mildred picked by the currents of the Indian Ocean.<sup>342</sup>

*Rhapsody* was recommended with avidity among literary London. In this manner Edwards caught the attention of David Garnett, who recalls in his autobiography *The Familiar Faces* (1962):

In 1927, when I was still flushed with success as a writer [...] Raymond Mortimer thought I ought to read a new book *Rhapsody* by an unknown writer Dorothy Edwards. I bought a copy and read it. Raymond was right. The stories were peculiarly to my taste and, what is more, revealed an entirely original talent. I was greatly excited by them, and wrote to the authoress. (*FF*, 86)

The correspondence that Garnett mentions above has survived and is now held in the Reading collection. In this, and other early letters, he indicates his curiosity about this ‘unknown writer’ (‘Who and what are you?’ he asks Edwards) as well as lavishing

---

<sup>341</sup> Gerald Gould, quoted in an advertisement for *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata*, *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1929. L. Meredith, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 50.

<sup>342</sup> Rosamond Lehmann, ‘The Red-Haired Miss Daintrys’ in *The Gypsy’s Baby & Other Stories* (London: Collins, 1946), 89.



praise on her work in no uncertain terms.<sup>343</sup> On reading *Winter Sonata* he wrote to her:

In *Winter Sonata* you have shown that you are a great writer & an absolutely original one: your field is fairly small, but in literature & poetry, unlike architecture, size is of no account [...] you have done something absolutely new, and after reading you all living novelists have sunk in my estimation, much as though with the book you had created a new scale of values [...] *Winter Sonata* is one of the few great novels in English literature – and its [sic] amusing to think of it getting in beside the other immortal novels some of whom have been snoring, sound asleep for a century or two, others spitting in the corners of the carriage, and one or two fat ones taking up more than their share of the seats. *Winter Sonata* will be rather quiet, shy at being put in the first-class carriage, and then a good deal amused when she identifies the odd company in which she finds herself.<sup>344</sup>

With his reference to first-class carriages Garnett tellingly couches his response to Edwards' work in terms of social difference. Edwards' reply to this letter, quoted in *The Familiar Faces*, is equally suggestive:

it is not only pleasure that your letter gives me but really a kind of guarantee of succeeding. And then I will not decline a seat in the first-class carriage if it is offered to me, but I shall help you make one or two of the fat passengers move up a bit.<sup>345</sup>

Edwards here demonstrates a clear awareness of the precarious situation in which, as a young female author, she may find herself in the literary world, and the valuable nature of praise bestowed on her by someone in Garnett's position. Her response that she will 'not decline a seat in the first-class carriage [...] but [...] make one or two of the fat passengers move up a bit', subtly but surely reflects her refusal to comply with outdated hierarchical systems, as well as foreshadowing the tone that her future relationship with Garnett was to take. For the class-based ideologies of her childhood were still central to her perception of society, and as I argued in the previous chapter, a criticism of the destructive effects of such systems is arguably a central theme in

---

<sup>343</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, November 22<sup>nd</sup> [c.1928]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 6.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, n.d. [c. 1928]. Quoted in Garnett, *The Familiar Faces*, 86.

*Winter Sonata*.

On her part, Edwards had few initial anxieties over their correspondence. ‘Did I tell you that I had a wonderful letter from David Garnett? He liked *Winter Sonata* apparently very much & he seems to be an altogether charming person,’ she wrote to Beryl Jones in 1929.<sup>346</sup> Yet during the five-year friendship which followed between the Bloomsbury man of letters and the south Wales writer, the nature of those power relations which Edwards investigated in her fiction was starkly laid bare in the details of her own life. In this chapter I suggest that, in the years after the publication of *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata*, she began to move closer to an understanding of the hierarchies that dominated her world and in opposition to which she structured her way of thinking. In her relationship with Garnett, these concerns became magnified in detail. I use manuscripts held in the Reading collection, supplemented by a private collection of material now in the possession of David Garnett’s son, Richard, and *The Familiar Faces* (1962), to highlight the nature of her relationship with him and his Bloomsbury circle.<sup>347</sup> I suggest that, in her friendship with Garnett, Edwards experienced at first-hand an encounter with the type of dominant power that she also investigated in her fiction.

But firstly, given the significant role Garnett was to play in Edwards’ life during her last years, and his effect on the progress – or lack thereof – of her writing, it seems necessary at this stage to try to gain some insight into his motivations in relation to her through a brief investigation of his life.

---

<sup>346</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1929]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 12.

<sup>347</sup> Although I make extensive use of Garnett’s comments on Edwards in his autobiography, it must be kept in mind that this material was published, and in all likelihood written, some years after Edwards’ death. His view of her over time apparently became overly critical, and overshadowed perhaps by a sense of guilt in the light of the circumstances surrounding their final parting, which will be outlined in this chapter.

## I

When Edwards first encountered David Garnett, he was a well-established author and member of the Bloomsbury group, the avant-garde circle of middle- and upper-class bohemian friends and acquaintances based in and around London which included Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey. According to Carolyn Heilbrun in her study *The Garnett Family* (1961), he was not, however, typical Bloomsbury material:

David Garnett was not, in any accepted sense, born to 'Bloomsbury'. He did not attend one of the ancient public schools, or Cambridge, or even Oxford [...] His family were far from relaxing in the ease of an unearned income. When he first began to attend parties given by the children of Leslie Stephen, he went in a full evening suit, since it was the only really decent suit of clothing he possessed [...] His constant need to earn money served also to provide for him a better vantage point from which to view the privileged.<sup>348</sup>

Garnett has himself been quick to emphasise his dependent status, claiming in his autobiography that he and his wife were 'poor' in comparison to their circle of friends (*FF.*, 88). But in fact his upbringing was far from impoverished, either financially or culturally.

Born on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1892 in Brighton, David Garnett was the only child of Edward and Constance Garnett (née Black). The family's home base was The Cearne, a modest but comfortable country residence which they had built in 1895-6 in Surrey, and where they played host to many eminent writers.<sup>349</sup> Edward Garnett was an editor and book reviewer who also worked as a reader for various publishers and established a reputation for discovering literary protégées including D. H. Lawrence and Joseph Conrad. Edward's father, Richard Garnett, author and librarian, had been the keeper of printed books at the British Museum.<sup>350</sup> The literary line was equally strong on

---

<sup>348</sup> Carolyn Heilbrun, *The Garnett Family* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 198-9.

<sup>349</sup> Richard D. C. Garnett, 'Garnett, Edward William (1868-1937)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55499>>

<sup>350</sup> Frances Partridge, 'Garnett, David (1892-1981)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008,

David's mother's side. Constance's elder sister, Clementina Maria Black, was a writer as well as a political activist and suffragist; described as a 'non-revolutionary socialist', she was a friend of the Marx family, and her work saw her involved with Trade Union and Co-operative schemes.<sup>351</sup> David's mother Constance had at the age of seventeen won a scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge, where she had read classical languages and philosophy.<sup>352</sup> After her marriage, the 'enforced idleness of pregnancy' led her to learn Russian from the revolutionary exile Felix Volkhovsky, before carrying out the first translation into English of Dostoevsky; she later translated the work of other Russian writers, including Chekhov and Tolstoy, and the impact of these translations on English literature has been significant.<sup>353</sup> So strong was her grasp of Russian language and culture that she had been asked to act as Lenin's interpreter during a meeting following a Social Democratic Party conference in 1907.<sup>354</sup> When David was six months old, Constance embarked, alone, for Russia, carrying money collected in England for those affected by Russia's failed harvest and letters from her exiled Russian friends to their revolutionary compatriots in the homeland.<sup>355</sup> She returned to the country in 1904, this time taking David, now twelve years old, with her; he was later to make the same journey himself as a young man.<sup>356</sup> The fact that Garnett, as a boy, had seen the Nevsky Prospekt, and as a young man

---

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31138>>. Alan Bell, 'Garnett, Richard (1835–1906)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33334>>.

<sup>351</sup> Janet E. Grenier, 'Black, Clementina Maria (1853–1922)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37196>>.

<sup>352</sup> David Garnett, *The Golden Echo*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953) 6. Newnham College, Cambridge, was one of the earliest women's colleges in Britain. However, its students were refused full membership to the University until 1948.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid, 11. Patrick Waddington, 'Garnett, Constance Clara (1861–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33332>>. In all likelihood it was via Constance Garnett's translations that Edwards had first encountered Russian literature.

<sup>354</sup> Garnett, *The Golden Echo*, 116-117.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>356</sup> Waddington, 'Garnett, Constance Clara (1861–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, May 2007.

had travelled alone to Russia, would have served to heighten his appeal to Edwards – both were lifelong ambitions of hers.<sup>357</sup>

Nevertheless, for all their literary strength, the Garnett family were not amongst the upper ranks of the English class system. ‘My parents could not afford to send me to Cambridge’, Garnett says in his autobiography, a fact which prevented him from joining the Bloomsbury group during its earliest days, when Lytton Strachey, Leonard Woolf, Clive Bell, and Thoby Stephen met at Cambridge at the turn of the century. Instead, Garnett studied botany at the Royal College of Science in London.<sup>358</sup> During this time he fell in with various people who were associated with Bloomsbury: he met Adrian and Virginia Stephen at a party thrown by James and Marjorie Strachey; at the same gathering he first encountered his future wife, Rachel (Ray) Marshall, an illustrator and the sister of another Bloomsbury acquaintance, Frances Marshall.<sup>359</sup> Other friends and associates were on the fringes of Bloomsbury; his childhood companions the Oliviers, the four daughters of Colonial Secretary Sydney Olivier, for example, were often seen at gatherings in Gordon Square and Russell Square, while Constance Garnett had been at Cambridge with Florence Ada Brown, mother of Bloomsbury writer Maynard Keynes.<sup>360</sup>

Garnett, who soon became known by his childhood nickname ‘Bunny’, quickly established his position as a key member of this exclusive group of creative and artistic people, well before the success of his first novel *Lady into Fox* (1922) prompted him to make the move from scientist to author.<sup>361</sup> As a result of his homosexual affair with artist Duncan Grant he spent much of the First World War

---

<sup>357</sup> Garnett, *The Golden Echo*, 75.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 207. Rachel Alice Marshall (1892–1940), illustrator. Frances Marshall married Ralph Partridge, Dora Carrington’s husband, after Carrington’s suicide in 1932.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>361</sup> Garnett earned the nickname as a result of a rabbit-skin hat he wore as a child. Ibid, 26.

living with Grant and his long-term partner, Vanessa Bell, at Charleston, the country farmhouse that the pair rented and which became a central hub of Bloomsbury. This situation was to have profound repercussions for the three in later life, but by 1921 Garnett's affair with Grant was over and he married Ray Marshall. By this time, however, his liberal attitude towards monogamy and sexual experimentation was well-formed and, even after the birth of their two sons Richard and William, Garnett had various extra-marital liaisons, viewing himself as a true libertine, 'a man whose sexual life is free of the restraints imposed by religion and conventional morality.'<sup>362</sup>

Garnett says of 1920s Bloomsbury:

The ice age of Victoria and the vulgarity of the Edwardians were over and a generation was growing up which would enjoy – as many of us were enjoying – uninhibited freedom. (*FF*, xiii)

Although individual freedom may have been his aim, accounts suggest that Garnett was a difficult personality who apparently felt a strong desire to dominate others, particularly women, and set out to win their affection without offering an entirely innocent response in return. The difficult position in which he put Vanessa Bell, for example, during his affair with her partner Duncan Grant, has been well-documented in accounts of Bloomsbury. Garnett appears to have enjoyed his 'uninhibited freedom' to the full - no sexual taboo was too rigid, too extreme, for him to break. His numerous open affairs and liaisons are well-chronicled in Bloomsbury-centred narratives, as in his own autobiography. But the most extreme manifestation of his liberated sexual attitude came when, in the late 1930s, he embarked upon an affair with Angelica Bell, the daughter of Vanessa Bell and his former lover, Duncan Grant.

---

<sup>362</sup> David Garnett, *The Flowers of the Forest*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), 19. The benefits of sexual openness had been for Garnett exemplified in his parent's relationship; Edward and Constance had married in 1889, and by 1898 Edward had embarked on a long-term affair with the painter Ellen (Nellie) Heath.

Angelica Bell was born at Charleston in 1918. Garnett was present at her birth, and his comment in a letter to Lytton Strachey on this occasion, ‘I think of marrying it’, is well-documented.<sup>363</sup> In 1942, two years after Ray’s death, and much to her parents’ outrage, Garnett did marry Angelica, twenty-six years his junior, and she went on to bear him four children. Their affair had begun when Ray was undergoing treatment for the cancer from which she had suffered for nearly ten years. Garnett, however, far from attempting to hide his philandering from his wife, flaunted his budding relationship with Angelica, making a show of kissing her outside the family home, not only in Duncan’s presence, but when Ray was likely to be watching for their arrival at the window.<sup>364</sup> According to Angelica, Garnett subsequently felt substantial guilt not only at the pain that his wife was at this time suffering as a result of her illness, but at the awareness that Ray had been ‘the victim of his own egotism’.<sup>365</sup> One of Ray’s letters from this period is suggestive of the poor state of their relationship: ‘I know I am not wanted [...] then why not die’, she wrote to Garnett (*FF*, 215). Ray’s illness, however, did little to cool the fervour of Garnett’s ardour for Angelica, and by 1939 their flirtation had developed into a love affair: ‘Eventually I gave way to Bunny’s insistence and lost my virginity,’ she recalls.<sup>366</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Angelica’s parents and their siblings were deeply concerned by her relationship with their contemporary. In her 1940 diary, for example, her aunt Virginia Woolf wrote:

Nessa has just been & told us a ‘very tiresome piece of family news’ – A.’s [Angelica’s] affair with B [Bunny] [...] A most astonishing piece of news [...] Pray God she may tire of that rusty surly slow old dog with his

<sup>363</sup> Lytton Strachey mentions this comment in a letter to Clive Bell, 28/12/1918. Paul Levy, ed., *The Letters of Lytton Strachey* (London: Viking, 2005), 423.

<sup>364</sup> Angelica Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness: A Bloomsbury Childhood* (London: Chatto & Windus/The Hogarth Press, 1984), 146-7. Garnett lived at this time with Ray, and their sons Richard and William, in Hilton Hall, Cambridgeshire. Hilton Hall remains in the family’s possession.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

amorous ways & his primitive mind.<sup>367</sup>

The fact that Garnett was, as Woolf goes on to say, ‘old eno’ to be her [Angelica’s] father’, appears to have been an integral factor in their relationship.<sup>368</sup> In her autobiography, *Deceived with Kindness: A Bloomsbury Childhood* (1984), in a chapter tellingly entitled ‘Bunny’s Victory’, Angelica revealed the complex circumstances surrounding her marriage to Garnett. Until the age of seventeen, Angelica was led to believe that Clive Bell was her biological father. When the truth about her paternity was revealed to her, the ambiguity surrounding Grant’s and Bell’s roles in her life evidently affected her deeply; she writes:

My dream of the perfect father – unrealised – possessed me, and has done so for the rest of my life. My marriage was but a continuation of it, and almost engulfed me [...] my feelings for Bunny were essentially those of a daughter.<sup>369</sup>

Their relationship was of course further complicated by Garnett’s long-standing and complex association with Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Although Garnett ‘never disguised the fact that he had had many love affairs’, his homosexual relationship with her biological father was not revealed to Angelica until after her marriage.<sup>370</sup> Furthermore, Angelica claims that Garnett ‘had proposed bed to Vanessa and been rejected’.<sup>371</sup> Given the circumstances, her suggestion that Garnett’s interest in her was largely based on his relationship with her parents appears to have some substance:

his behaviour was addressed as much to Duncan and Vanessa as to myself. It was very much as though he was saying to them, ‘Stop me if you can!’ [...] Duncan, Bunny and Vanessa were too closely bound together for there to be any room for me [...] It seems clear enough now that when he carried me off

---

<sup>367</sup> Virginia Woolf, diary entry, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1940. Reprinted in Anne Olivier Bell, ed., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 5 1936-41* (London: Penguin, 1984), 282.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> A. Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness*, 135, 154.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid, 144. Garnett was not the only man to bed both father and daughter; the painter George Bergen also did so. See Levy, ed., *The Letters of Lytton Strachey*, 638-639.

<sup>371</sup> A. Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness*, 155.



to live as his wife and be a stepmother to his sons, his purpose was, at least in part, to inflict pain on Vanessa.<sup>372</sup>

Perhaps inevitably given her age and inexperience, Angelica claims that at the time she did not appreciate the ‘incestuous’ nature of her relationship with Garnett, and comments ‘I think he was actuated by selfishness, egotism and perhaps revenge [...] and [...] this led him to make a victim of an ignorant and unsuspecting girl who was unable to defend herself.’<sup>373</sup> Her relationship with Garnett, she suggests in her autobiography, was characterised by power, and she felt herself to be ‘in the grip of a personality a hundred times more powerful than my own [...] under an urbane and charming exterior, Bunny was a bull-dozer.’<sup>374</sup> Although Edwards’ friendship with Garnett had begun in 1928, some fourteen years before his marriage to Angelica, I suggest in this chapter that the urge to control he apparently manifested in his marriages was also central to his relationship with Edwards.

## II

Following their initial correspondence quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Garnett and Edwards arranged to meet in London in January 1929. Garnett, it appears, could barely contain his enthusiasm: he wrote to Edwards with the details, saying ‘[I] shall appear very agitated & excited at meeting you, so you will recognise me easily.’<sup>375</sup> They met at the Nonesuch Press office in Great James Street, and Garnett recalls in his autobiography,

There was a ring at the bell. I opened the door and there stood a girl, rather stumpy in an Italian grey-green Bersaglieri officer’s cloak, fresh-complexioned, with protruding front teeth, eager, ardent, embarrassed, shy. I think now that I ought to have kissed her: perhaps unfortunately for our subsequent relations I did not. [...] Dorothy and I sat there in the half-light

---

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 157.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>375</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 1929. Reading Collection, packet 7, item 11.

talking to each other for an hour or so and I think we were each entranced by the other. The shyness wore off and she began to talk freely about her life, her friendships, her schooldays. Her father had been a poor schoolmaster in a Welsh village, and though it was a boys' school, Dorothy had attended it and been taught by him. (*FF*, 87)

Despite his evident zeal for Edwards' writing, Garnett makes several apparently throwaway remarks in this account of their first meeting that are key to understanding their subsequent relationship. Firstly, his response to Edwards' physical appearance (he describes her as 'stumpy' and comments on her 'protruding front teeth') is indicative of the derogatory manner in which he refers to her throughout his autobiography (*FF*, 88, 94). 'The effect [of Edwards] on me was like that made by a healthy young Jersey heifer – a sweet and lean and good creature, but from a sexual point of view non-existent' (*FF*, 94), he says, and goes on to describe her as:

short and rather fat, with a buxom low-breasted figure which was not improved by her square-cut low-necked, clumsy home-made dresses and her lack of any form of corset or brassiere [...] her beauty [...] spoiled by prominent, protruding upper teeth which were not only ugly in themselves, but spoiled what might have otherwise been pretty lips. (*FF*, 94)

This portrait contrasts starkly with that given by Watkins, who describes Edwards in 1927 (just a year or two before her first meeting with Garnett) as:

Of medium height, well-proportioned figure, fine carriage, easy poise, shapely head adorned with luxuriant fair hair [...] Her eyes were set well apart, expressive at once of gaiety and thoughtfulness. Her lips were often parted owing to her projecting teeth (they were beautiful teeth) – the general effect being most attractive. I have heard men describe her as handsome, beautiful, lovely. She was all this – and more, for her natural vivacity invested her with something that is so often lacking in merely handsome faces.<sup>376</sup>

Despite his protests that Edwards was 'one of the few young women for whom [he] felt absolutely no sexual attraction' (*FF*, 94), some evidence suggests that Garnett may have made approaches to Edwards. In *Deceived with Kindness* Angelica Garnett, when writing about the effects that Garnett's past love affairs had on her, mentions

---

<sup>376</sup> Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 47.

Edwards in a manner which suggests her to be one of Garnett's former lovers:

The accounts of his amorous exploits caused me no pangs of jealousy; his experience with the novelist Dorothy Edwards and his love affair with the artist's model Betty May [...] were, for me, sealed away in a past that was long over.<sup>377</sup>

Likewise, Edwards makes some telling comments in her letters to Jones and Kelly which suggest that Garnett may not have been as repulsed by her physical appearance as he implied:

I am, as far as I can see, one of his [Garnett's] minor enthusiasms, like the new ducks he has just bought for the duckpond at Hilton, and he is trying to reconcile being a most kind & affectionate brother to me with kissing me in taxis.<sup>378</sup>

Garnett's continual comments on Edwards' appearance throughout his account of their friendship, and his emphasis on her as lacking any sexual appeal, suggests a view of women as primarily sexual objects for the male gaze devoid of any intellectual or personal value. The manner in which he acknowledges her mental capabilities is also derogatory: 'She was also, *which is rare in a woman*, both intelligent and intellectual', he remarks (*FF*, 89, my emphasis). At other times he questions her intellect, going so far as to claim that when he once took Edwards to a Wales-England rugby match 'she did not seem able to pick up enough about the game to understand what was happening, or even to tell the sides apart' (*FF*, 96). His disappointment at Edwards even led him to speculate that she had written *Rhapsody* while under a strong male influence:

[A]t Cardiff University College she had fallen under the influence of a young lecturer who may at one time have been engaged to her. But they had finally broken it off [...] It was when they were together that Dorothy had written the stories in *Rhapsody*. At moments I even wondered if he were responsible for them, for the more I saw of Dorothy the more mysterious they became. But he cannot have been a Svengali with Dorothy as his Trilby<sup>379</sup>, for *Winter Sonata*

---

<sup>377</sup> A. Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness*, 144.

<sup>378</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones. n.d. [c.1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 29 (a).

<sup>379</sup> Garnett is referring to Svengali, a character featured in George Du Maurier's 1894 novel

had been written after he had left the country. It had taken her two years to write. (*FF*, 93-4)

In the Bloomsbury circle, Garnett was surrounded by intellectual, talented and creative women, including Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, and artist Dora Carrington, and his mother's abilities have been well-documented. His insistence, then, that women were rarely 'intelligent and intellectual' was certainly disproved by his own family and circle of friends, and perhaps indicates a jealousy of the creative success of these women.

Secondly, Garnett's comment that Edwards' father had been 'a poor schoolmaster in a Welsh village' has connotations of both class and national snobbery. As I have shown in chapter one, Edward Edwards was not only a valued and distinguished member of his community, but in that community he would have been perceived as maintaining a comfortable, if not affluent, position: Garnett, however, interpreted the family's situation viewed from a very different angle. As demonstrated in the introduction to this chapter, Garnett himself considered his own cultured upbringing to be far from privileged by comparison to his Bloomsbury counterparts; if he could describe himself as 'poor', then to be raised in a Welsh coal-mining valley must have been to be plunged into the depths of poverty. He comments that

Though Ray and I did not seem rich to ourselves, and seemed poor to most of our friends, to Dorothy we represented the bourgeoisie, able to enjoy luxuries. We were also her only link with the great world of well-known people. Thus we were able to give her experiences that she could not otherwise have come by. She had always been extremely poor [...] In our company she could enjoy a glass of wine, a drive in a private car, or a seat in the pit at the theatre. (*FF*, 88)

---

*Trilby*, who transforms the eponymous tone-deaf model into a great singer by putting her under a hypnotic trance. Without his help, she is unable to perform. See also Leonée Ormond, 'Du Maurier, George Louis Palmella Busson (1834–1896)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2008. Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8194>>.

This appears to have set the tone for their relationship: Garnett saw himself as controlling and regulating Edwards' access to culture and art. He believed that her social class, financial position and, to a certain extent, her nationality, meant that she would not have access to this world. Furthermore, he exaggerated her class position to fit her into this role. The manner in which he refers to her national identity also suggests that he exaggerated her ethnic difference: his comment that Edwards was raised in a 'Welsh village' is suggestive of a simplistic and romantic rural idyll, a far cry from the heavily industrialised and largely Anglicized valley into which she was, in fact, born and raised, and where the Edwards family would have represented the middle class. The suggestion that only in the Garnetts' company was Edwards, with her university education and experience of foreign travel, able to enjoy such 'luxuries' as wine, a ride in a car, or a trip to the theatre, is as patronising as it is bizarre; in response to this suggestion Beryl Jones commented, '[t]o an old fellow student this is just laughable.'<sup>380</sup> To some extent, however, Garnett's assumptions and prejudices simply reflected the English view of the Welsh prevalent at this time. Fellow Welsh writer Rhys Davies recalls in his autobiography *Print of a Hare's Foot* (1969) the degree of disdain shown towards the Welsh in London:

I found among the English an indulgent dismissal of Wales [...] The native language was a joke.[...]the Welsh, like the Scottish and Irish, were expected to be idiosyncratic and, better still, amusing.<sup>381</sup>

Garnett's use of such an ethnically based nickname as 'Welsh Cinderella' indicates his view of Edwards as nationally 'other' in the face of his metro-centric Englishness. His first criticism of her in his autobiography is based on his perception of the lack of Welsh influence in her work. 'I was a good deal interested in the way in which she had carefully avoided giving a hint of Welsh local colour, or Welsh

---

<sup>380</sup> S. Beryl Jones, letter to Virago Press, September 1986. Reading Collection, packet 11, item 1.  
<sup>381</sup> Rhys Davies, *Print of a Hare's Foot* (1969; Bridgend: Seren, 1998), 113.

sentiment in any of her stories', he said (*FF*, 86). Here and elsewhere it is clear that Garnett expected Edwards to give a certain parochial view of her homeland, evidently holding a pre-defined idea of what a 'Welsh' writer should be. His approach to her was from the outset dictated by his preconceptions regarding gender, class, and nationality – three aspects of Edwards' character which equally dictated her view of herself, and of the world.

But Garnett saw it as his right to introduce his 'Welsh Cinderella' to literary society, his 'great world of well-known people' (*FF*, 88). From the start he took the dominant role in their relationship, styling himself her literary director who would promote her work through his various contacts, familial and otherwise. On 11<sup>th</sup> January 1929, for example, Garnett says in a letter to Edwards: 'I saw my father on Wednesday evening & he will recommend The Viking Press to publish *Winter Sonata* in U.S.'<sup>382</sup> In the same letter he also asks her to 'send [...] a story & I'll try & make Desmond McCarthy put it in his magazine & that will provide some ready money.'<sup>383</sup> The suggestion is that only through his influence can she succeed, and yet she had published extensively and successfully before she ever met Garnett: he did not 'discover' Edwards in the way that his accounts of their relationship suggest.

*Rhapsody* was recommended to Garnett by Raymond Mortimer, by which point several of his friends were already familiar with Edwards' work. Dora Carrington read *Rhapsody* on the recommendation of Lytton Strachey, and commented in a letter to her lover Gerald Brennan: '[t]he curious thing is that not a single review picked it out for praise and it was Topsy who wrote and told Lytton about it'.<sup>384</sup> Garnett later took

---

<sup>382</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1929. Reading Collection, packet 7, item 12.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Dora Carrington, letter to Gerald Brennan, Tuesday 21st June 1927. Quoted in David Garnett, ed., *Carrington: Letters and Extracts from her Diaries* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 366. Topsy was the wife of English author and critic F. L. (Peter) Lucas: both were friends of Dora

great pleasure in being the one to arrange a meeting between Carrington and her ‘favourite’, Edwards.<sup>385</sup> Letters from Garnett to Edwards, now held in the Reading collection, reveal the extent to which he attempted to engineer her introduction to London literary society; early on in their acquaintance, for example, he wrote to inform her that

On Thursday night I’ve been asked to a small party after dinner – all the people are admirers of yours I think – I was asked to bring you but said we probably wouldn’t come – if you would like new faces after a long journey we would, after all, go.<sup>386</sup>

Despite the somewhat controlling nature of their friendship it must, however, be kept in mind that such an association was likely to have had many benefits for a young writer like Edwards. Initially she received Garnett’s efforts very positively; after their first meeting, for example, she wrote to Beryl Jones saying,

He has a passion for giving advice but knows he has, & it is good advice I think. He has offered to help, even to take charge of the business-side of my writing. He thinks I ought to make a certain amount of money & says that one ought to write as little as possible & see that one gets paid enormous prices for what one does write [...] When he found out that my lack of knowledge of modern writers was because I could not easily get the books he offered to keep me supplied. He betrayed the utmost anxiety to be the person to introduce me to literary London [...] I am excited and thrilled at the thought of staying with him & at the party. I hope he doesn’t change his mind.<sup>387</sup>

Garnett remained true to his word; in London Edwards attended various Bloomsbury events – a tea-party at Vanessa Bell’s home, a party at Duncan Grant’s studio, where she was introduced to Woolf, Vanessa Bell and Lytton Strachey (*FF.*, 92).<sup>388</sup> Invitations to the Garnetts’ Cambridgeshire country home, Hilton Hall, were received thick and fast during 1929-1930, where Edwards and Garnett’s wife Ray also

---

<sup>385</sup> Carrington and the Bell family.  
<sup>385</sup> ‘And our favourite, Dorothy Edwards is there.’ Dora Carrington, letter to Gerald Brenan, 6th April 1928. Quoted in *ibid*, 390.

<sup>386</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, n.d. [c. 1929]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 5.

<sup>387</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1929]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 10.

<sup>388</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly, n.d. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 17 (b).

struck up a friendship. During a Whitsun break spent at Hilton she met John Hayward, Frank Ramsey and Alec Penrose; on another trip, this time to Hamspray House, home of Carrington and Strachey, she met Henry Lamb and Augustus John. Carrington was delighted with Edwards. In a letter to Gerald Brenan she describes Edwards as ‘our favourite’, and demonstrated her very real enthusiasm in a letter to Edwards herself:

389

I ought to thank you for coming to Ham Spray [...] Its [sic] difficult to tell you how much I loved your books. I read them more often than any book except *Wuthering Heights* – I never believed you would come here. I still find it difficult to believe anything I wanted so much, could have come true [...] I hope you will come again this summer. Please promise to tell me if you are making any journeys to London, so I can pick you up at Oxford on the way, and bring you here.<sup>390</sup>

But it is apparent from her letters to Jones and Kelly that at these events

Edwards felt uncomfortably out of place:

I went to a swell party the other night full of beautiful females in long frocks with no backs to them, & distinguished & irresponsible-looking young men, and when I wasn't gazing at David, I was shyly attempting to give the right answers when several of the beautiful females dropped onto their knees at my feet & assured me in various ways that they were passionate admirers of my work. I should have succeeded better had I not been controlling an impulse to tell them not to sit on the floor in such nice clothes.<sup>391</sup>

Perhaps her sense of displacement is hardly surprising: the exclusive and cliquy nature of Bloomsbury has been extensively chronicled, even by those within the circle. Frances Partridge, Ray Garnett's sister, for example, commented in her 1981 volume *Memories* that:

Bloomsburies called spades spades and said what they thought; they didn't keep afloat in a social atmosphere by the wing-flapping of small talk - if they were bored by the conversation they showed it. This disconcerted the

---

<sup>389</sup> D. Garnett, ed., *Carrington*, 390.

<sup>390</sup> Dora Carrington, letter to Dorothy Edwards, n.d. [c.1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 7, item 13. A photograph of Edwards and Garnett, along with Carrington's cat Tiber, can be found in Appendix ii, Fig. 6 (page 252). This photograph was in all likelihood taken during this trip, as a photograph of this description is referred to in the above letter.

<sup>391</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 29 (a).



unconfident and gave them a justified reputation for rudeness, nor do I think it any more admirable now than I found it then; but they could nearly all of them be extraordinarily kind at times, *if they liked you*.<sup>392</sup> [My emphasis]

Garnett was distinctly unimpressed with Edwards' reaction to his 'great world of well-known people' (*FF*, 88). Perhaps his own early success with his 1922 novel *Lady into Fox* had somewhat affected his self-image - Virginia Woolf, for example, wrote of Garnett in 1924: 'his fame has congested him. He is rigid with self importance.'<sup>393</sup> In *The Familiar Faces* he says:

One of the pleasures of adopting a Welsh Cinderella as one's sister is in introducing her to the world. Naturally if Cinderella is a talented writer, the pleasure is all the greater. I anticipated, therefore, a good deal of pleasure of this sort from taking Dorothy to a party at Duncan's studio at which both Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf were to be present and Dorothy on her part was overjoyed at the prospect of meeting them as she greatly admired their books.[...] I did my part with right goodwill. I introduced Dorothy to Lytton Strachey who had read *Rhapsody* and made it plain in a few murmurs that he had done so [...] Then I introduced her to Virginia Woolf who seemed vague but full of friendly astonishment [...] But presently the literary lions drifted away and there was Dorothy flushed and holding forth. We stayed till the end of the party and while walking back to Endsleigh Street I asked Dorothy how she had liked it [...] What I wanted were her impressions of Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf, but I got none [...] her impressions of Lytton and Virginia and indeed of Duncan Grant, Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Vanessa Bell were precisely nil. She had noticed nobody, had observed nothing. (*FF*, 92-93)

Garnett's need for veneration of his friends and his lifestyle had evidently gone unfulfilled by his 'Welsh Cinderella'. However, Edwards' letters to Jones and Kelly from this period are full of astute comments on the people she encountered while under Garnett's patronage, indicating that she was in fact highly observant of them. Woolf, for example, is described as 'a steel greyhound, swift enough to be gentle. I loved her';<sup>394</sup> in another letter, Vanessa Bell is represented as 'an exceedingly beautiful absent-minded lady of about 50 [...] who finding herself sitting at dinner

---

<sup>392</sup> Frances Partridge, *Memories* (London: Gollancz, 1981), 76-7.

<sup>393</sup> Virginia Woolf, letter to Marjorie Joad, July 1924. Quoted in Nigel Nicolson, ed., *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf 1923-1928* (London: Hogarth, 1977), 120.

<sup>394</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 29 (a).

next to Mr Asquith, vaguely connecting him with the subject, asked him kindly if he were interested in politics.<sup>395</sup> Lytton Strachey she describes as ‘absolutely charming [...] He gives one the impression of immense kindness & an affectionate disposition’, indicating a far more generous response to Garnett’s circle than she herself received from them.<sup>396</sup> The tenor of Edwards’ letters to Jones and Kelly from this period suggests that she was well aware of Garnett’s need for affirmation and that – disliking the way in which he pushed his friends upon her – she deliberately withheld her observations from him. The way in which she anticipates a holiday to be spent with Ray Garnett, for example, suggests this:

I have rather reluctantly accepted an invitation to stay with Ray Garnett in the village where Theodore Powys lives. She has been lent a cottage there for a week [...] *I go because it is quite clear that David is dying to know what effect Powys will have on me – & this rather rouses my curiosity.* ‘You will love him, everyone loves Theo’, they assure me – . I feel sure, on the other hand that I shall not love him, & even that it will tax my Christian spirit heavily to like him, but we shall see.<sup>397</sup> [My emphasis]

Garnett’s motivation in taking Edwards under his wing may well have been as a result of his own upbringing which, I would suggest, produced in him a desire to nurture creative activity. As Angelica Garnett points out, ‘Bunny’s parents [...] had no thought of being stars in the literary firmament, but belonged to its very core.’<sup>398</sup> Not only did Garnett become a prolific author himself, producing some eight novels by the time he met Edwards, but he also took upon himself a nurturing role for the creativity of others. His appointment to the position of editor of the *New Statesman* in 1932 was taken up with enthusiasm as ‘it gave [him] a chance to employ young and

---

<sup>395</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1932-33]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 17 (b).

<sup>396</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 29<sup>th</sup> April [c.1929]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 17 (b). Garnett claims that Lytton Strachey, for example, was ‘rather agitated [by Edwards] [...] because he felt that her appearance was so distressing’, indicating the strength of opposition that Edwards faced in the company of Garnett’s eminent friends (*FF*, 94).

<sup>397</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 4<sup>th</sup> September [c.1929]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 2.

<sup>398</sup> A. Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness*, 144.

untried talents' (*FF*, 151). His father's successful talent-spotting provides a possible motive for the intensity of Garnett's interest in Edwards, and his insistence on her success. 'When my father discovered a new writer he was in the common phrase like a cat with kittens', Garnett recalls in his autobiography, an attitude which Garnett himself demonstrated early on in his encounter with Edwards (*FF*, 101).

If Garnett required a 'Welsh Cinderella' to fulfil his parents' literary legacy, Edwards' motives for embarking on her friendship with Garnett appear to have been equally if not more complex and contradictory. Edwards was perhaps understandably overawed by Garnett's intense interest in her, and in her letters to Jones and Kelly is at once honest and objective about her feelings for Garnett, saying:

I noticed a peculiar radiance about David Garnett, and I have been painstakingly searching for it (a) in the 'English spirit' (b) in Ray & Hilton, (c) in all the literary young men he has introduced me to. But all in vain. I at last stumble on the explanation, which is that I have fallen slightly in love with David himself. Not – I thank Heaven – enough to be painful, but it is reassuring to find that a completely broken heart can still beat. I think I have been very comic, and as far as I can remember, on those occasions when we have been together in public, I have spent all the time [...] gazing at him with frankly adoring, wide-open eyes.<sup>399</sup>

Edwards, then, may have found herself somewhat infatuated with Garnett, but she was apparently quite aware of this possibility and tried to prevent it from clouding her judgement. She evidently appreciated Garnett's apparent recognition of her literary radicalism: the Bloomsbury group was considered to provide an alternative voice to the stereotypical English ruling class, and she may have felt that with them she was in a milieu critical of conventional social systems. On the other hand, the lifestyle maintained by the group was not altogether different from the middle-class English lifestyle Edwards depicted, and criticised, in her fiction. Her association with Garnett and his friends gave Edwards a first-hand view of this mode of living, which she

---

<sup>399</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 29 (a).

would not have experienced to the same extent in south Wales. Letters from this period indicate that she may have had an ulterior motive of her own in her association with Garnett and Bloomsbury: in a letter to Kelly and Jones she wrote:

I am still baffled and intimidated by the English spirit, though I now believe myself to be on its track. I have some clues which may turn out to be valuable, but so far no arrests have been made [...] I shall be very glad to come back to you when this pilgrimage is over.<sup>400</sup>

Perhaps, then, their friendship allowed her in part to act as a sort of socialist Welsh spy, gathering crucial material with which to continue to attack the ruling classes in her writing. At times in her letters to Jones and Kelly her tone becomes very antagonistic towards Garnett's class and all that it represents, suggesting that she does indeed have some such motivation:

Mother thinks that contact with these nobs sells my books – though there is no evidence of this at all [...] It seems rather awful strenuously to avoid my friends for the sake of working, & then go eagerly to stay with my hereditary enemies. However you understand why I do this, & how much of an ordeal by ice it is for me to mix with these Englishes.<sup>401</sup>

Edwards' sense of ethnic difference is conveyed powerfully here; during her venture into England she apparently became more strongly aware of her Welsh identity and of her class status in reaction to the affluent English people whom she encountered. On another occasion, she tells Jones and Kelly: 'I behaved as well as I knew how & tried to join in the conversation [...] It seemed to me highly improbable that these strange people had asked me to lunch, but there I was.'<sup>402</sup>

Edwards' experiences with Garnett and his acquaintances exacerbated not only her awareness of her lower-class status but of her national identity, and heightened her sense of displacement. After returning to Cardiff from a London visit, she tells Beryl

---

<sup>400</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly, n.d. [c.1930]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 19.

<sup>401</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 4<sup>th</sup> September [c.1929]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 2.

<sup>402</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 29<sup>th</sup> April [c.1929]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 17 (b).

Jones,

It is awfully queer to be home again. It is like cutting a hole in a beautiful coloured not very meaningful canvas and slipping behind it to a dull dingy sordid existence full, comparatively, of struggle & hatred, in which however one is conscious of a great depth of feeling. I am trying to see Wales & Welshies with new eyes and I see lots of queer things I hadn't noticed before. [...] It is awfully hard for me to believe that all the nice Englishes I have met are now saying malicious things about me to enquirers but so it must be since they do it to each other.<sup>403</sup>

Her awareness of her national difference in the face of English identity was perhaps the motivation behind her increasing interest in Welsh nationalism, and in 1932 she wrote to Garnett:

I no longer blanch when someone says I ought to write in Welsh, I no longer smirk when someone says what fine people we are and in a month or two I expect to be able to give anyone who says anything really disagreeable about Wales a sock on the jaw.<sup>404</sup>

Perhaps Garnett should have been able to detect Edwards' frustration with pre-conceived notions of Welshness in this letter.

During her association with Garnett, her letters to Jones and Kelly regarding him became increasingly peppered with national references. On one occasion a visit to Welsh artist Augustus John provides relief:

to my unspeakable delight [...] Augustus John himself had asked us to dinner [...] he and his wife & probably the rest of the family had all read me. He drank an awful lot & made me drink rather a lot & we had a stirring conversation about Wales. He assured me that there was so Welsh a flavour in my books that he had been sure before he actually learnt that I was Welsh. O Duw, there's nice he was! I realised what a strain Englishes are, when I was there.<sup>405</sup>

But compatriots were few and far between in Garnett's circle, and increased experience of the Bloomsbury set did not leave her feeling more at home with them.

She found herself alienated, partly as a result of her lack of funds and her sense of

---

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1932. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

<sup>405</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 29<sup>th</sup> April [c.1929]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 17 (b).

ethnic difference, but also because of her difficulty in reading their social conventions:

I behave very badly at parties. I speak to people I don't know & get snubbed; then I in all simplicity snub the next kind soul who speaks to me, because I think that is what they like. It is partly because I know I am badly dressed & I am too vain to hide behind anyone if David [Garnett] isn't there. And it is partly nationalism – that divider of human beings – or rather that reasonable acceptor of division that could be bridged.<sup>406</sup>

In this letter, Edwards is working out her ideas concerning nationalism quite literally on the page: firstly it is a 'divider of human beings', then clarified as a 'division' that can be 'bridged', evoking nationalism in terms of a patriotic pride rather than aggressive nation-building, and is indicative of her move towards a more patriotic form of socialism. Such increasing awareness of national difference was also experienced by Rhys Davies who, in a 1950 interview with Glyn Jones, commented on his own experience of living 'in exile' in London:

Alien people and surroundings seem to sharpen and contract, to crystallize one's memories and emotions [...] this flight is not selfishness or frivolity, but comes from a sense of ...well, primary dedication.<sup>407</sup>

Perhaps in order to defend himself against the accusation that he has deserted Wales, and betrayed it through writing of it for an English audience, Davies claims that his desire to write from London does not signal a rejection of his native country, but rather his commitment to his art.<sup>408</sup> His vision of Wales will, he knows, be sharpened by his distance from it. I suggest that Edwards' fascination with Garnett and his circle may have been in part similarly motivated. Ben Knights makes a similar observation in relation to female adoption of a male narrative voice, suggesting that '[t]he

---

<sup>406</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1932-33]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 17 (b).

<sup>407</sup> Rhys Davies, in a BBC interview with Glyn Jones, 1950.

<sup>408</sup> In a 1947 article Davies commented that '[Welsh people's lives] are rounded and complete, bound by their miniature nationality [...] But let a writer go beyond the border and try to shape them into English print and they begin to scowl [...] The life of this fairyland must not be told outside or to foreigners like the English. Alas, that there should be traitors such as myself' Rhys Davies, 'Writing about the Welsh', *Literary Digest*, 2/2 (1947), 18-19.

resulting narrator is a sort of anthropologist who [...] enters an alien culture the better to understand her own.<sup>409</sup> At any rate, as her friendship with Garnett developed, Edwards' sense of national identity became increasingly a bone of contention on both sides.

### III

The relationship between Garnett and Edwards was unstable and at times fiery. They often argued; one letter from Garnett to Edwards reads: 'there will be plenty for us to fight about when you come. We will kiss when we meet & then we will start fighting & biting & throwing things at one another.'<sup>410</sup> Around 1930, two years after their first meeting, contact lapsed between the two. Then in January 1931, Garnett wrote to Edwards lamenting the loss of her friendship:

It is many months and years since I wrote to you, but I think of you continually & don't know why I don't write [...] I long to see you. I long to hear from you; please let it be good news that you have written something & approve of it [...] the New Year is here & it will be a better year than the last. Please let it show its goodness by bringing us together.

Will you let it?<sup>411</sup>

Garnett is, of course, exaggerating the length of the silence between them (this letter is dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 1931). But in order to prevent such a lapse of contact between them again, he proposes that he and Edwards adopt one another as brother and sister. '[H]owever much we neglected each other & quarrelled we should always be tied by something which could not be got rid of,' he explained to her.<sup>412</sup> In his autobiography, however, his reasoning is quite different: 'I was excited by her writing, fond of her, but anxious not to embark on a love affair with her [...] I hoped that if we adopted

---

<sup>409</sup> Knights, *Writing Masculinities*, 153.

<sup>410</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 4th December 1932. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 2.

<sup>411</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 14th January 1931. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 7.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

each other in this way we should be able to avoid a sex entanglement' (*FF*, 88).

Garnett bases this seemingly touching gesture (both he and Edwards were only children and had therefore never experienced a sibling relationship) on his sense of being sexually repulsed by Edwards.

Despite Edwards' ready acceptance of Garnett as her 'brother', their friendship did not continue with the vigour of its early years. Correspondence between the two was apparently sporadic in 1931 and 1932, and there is little evidence that Edwards visited Garnett as much as she had in the 1920s, if in fact at all. At this time, Edwards' home situation in Cardiff was particularly difficult. By this point Vida was largely incapacitated and Edwards was constantly struggling to look after her mother as well as keep her own depression under control and earn enough money to keep them afloat. In a letter to Jones and Kelly, for example, she wrote:

I have been having an awful time – impossible to work here & I am thinking of clearing out for good – or at least for long enough to write something [...] Mother is just about the same except that her temper is getting perfectly unendurable & mine isn't wearing very well.<sup>413</sup>

Garnett was also privy to Edwards' concerns but, far from sympathizing with her, he claims that

About that time [1933] Dorothy, whom I had not seen for some considerable time, wrote me a rather desperate letter. She said she could not endure living any longer with her mother, and that she would never write again unless she got away from her. (*FF*, 96)

Garnett makes Edwards sound like a petulant child. However, this was no idle threat meant to antagonise her 'mentor', but a true statement of events at home, as letters to Jones and Kelly, written in a similar vein, suggest. Perhaps eager to once again demonstrate his benevolence to his 'Welsh Cinderella', Garnett came up with a solution which would allow Edwards a haven in which to begin writing again. In his

---

<sup>413</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 13<sup>th</sup> December [c. 1931-3]. Reading Collection, packet 9, item 13.



autobiography he explains that

Early in 1933, after I had become the Literary Editor of the *New Statesman*, Ray and I went to live in the upper half of a house in Endsleigh Street during the week, going down to Hilton at the weekends [...] Ray suggested that we should invite Dorothy to live with us and that we should install her in the attic above our flat, providing her with board and lodging. The plan suited us in many ways: for one thing it enabled us to go out together in the evening and leave William, who was then subject to night fears, in the charge of Dorothy. (*FF*, 96)<sup>414</sup>

Desperate to escape from the tension at home, and frustrated over the lack of progress in her writing, Edwards' excitement and relief at Garnett's offer are evident in a letter to Jones and Kelly:

[W]hen things had got so bad here that I had really given up hope of ever writing anything again because I have become so nauseatingly bored with everything here although I am so fond of Wales, when I had began to look and worse still to dress like a poor companion, and to read books of travel with a wistful & hopeless expression of envy on my countenance, suddenly David Garnett presents me with an attic to starve in in London & Mother says she will have a companion to look after her & I can go next month. I shall have to keep myself & pay the companion's wages otherwise I shall be free. Garnett says, & means that he will throw me out if I don't write something good immediately [...] this adventure [...] may not turn out to be nice. But if you could only imagine how awful this year has been!<sup>415</sup>

Edwards indicates that Vida, perhaps surprisingly, apparently readily gave her consent for her daughter's departure and was happy to be cared for by someone else:

She [Vida] is really very ill by now & needs incessant attention which even on the days when I have the best will in the world, I absolutely forget to give her. So I think she is glad secretly that she is to have someone to look after her at last properly.<sup>416</sup>

The move to London appeared to mark a new positive chapter in Edwards' life; she was in a lively city with a flourishing literary atmosphere and among friends who understood and empathized with the problems that a writer faced. Her excitement

---

<sup>414</sup> Richard Garnett, the elder son, was in boarding school, but William Garnett, the younger boy, was in a local day school. Richard Garnett recalls that Edwards and his younger brother William spent much time together, but Richard himself had only a few brief meetings with Edwards. I am indebted to Richard Garnett for this information.

<sup>415</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 18 (a).

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

at her new venture, coupled with a sense of relief at making a break from home, is evident in several letters from this period:

I will hardly know what has happened when I get peace to work & to read. I am going to live on cold water & salad & type all day [...] I must plunge into work first. My novel, God be thanked has re-emerged.<sup>417</sup>

But at the same time she makes a hauntingly prophetic comment: ‘If my attic proves to have been a vain dream & I have to stay at home instead I shall put my head in the gas oven & turn on the tap,’ she wrote to Jones and Kelly.<sup>418</sup>

Unlike previous visits that Edwards had made to Garnett and his family, when she was largely treated as a guest, this 1933 arrangement had a far more practical purpose, with Edwards acting in effect as a live-in babysitter in exchange for board and lodge, and spanned a far longer period. As it was, Edwards spent almost a year living at Endsleigh Street. Letters held in Reading suggest that Edwards moved to London in January 1933, and an entry in Garnett’s pocket diary dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 1933 reads ‘Dorothy arrives’.<sup>419</sup> The plan at first seemed successful to all, and Edwards, in her faithful and continued correspondence with Jones and Kelly, wrote from Endsleigh Street: ‘I am very happy here, my attic continues to be nice & I would love to be having you to tea this afternoon.’<sup>420</sup> Despite her dislike of the city, which she made clear from the outset (‘I don’t like London much for its own sweet self – it is too smutty & too big [...] This isn’t the place I would live in from choice’, she wrote to Jones and Kelly),<sup>421</sup> her tone in letters from this period is uncharacteristically optimistic, and yet in these same letters she hints that, from very early on, the nuances of her employee status were being felt:

---

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> David Garnett, diary entry, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1933. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

<sup>420</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 15.

<sup>421</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 14<sup>th</sup> February [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 18 (b).

My room is warm & I have a roof over my head a roof indeed which slopes down to my head so that I often knock against it. Otherwise I am trying to live on apples & hopes of immortality [...] Ray Garnett asks me to lunch occasionally so then I eat like a Christian.<sup>422</sup>

Significantly it is Ray Garnett, not her husband, who takes Edwards to lunch, indicating the gulf that rapidly emerged between Edwards and Garnett. She evidently felt obligated to produce some work of outstanding merit that would justify his patronage of her, and elevate him as a literary mogul in the eyes of his Bloomsbury friends. 'I am a little scared at having now come to the point where I actually have to earn money at the writing I have swanked so much about', she says in one letter to Jones and Kelly.<sup>423</sup> In another she says, 'I don't see David much but he is always there to discuss something important'.<sup>424</sup>

Secondly, her comment that at lunch with Ray she 'eats like a Christian' skims over a far more sinister problem. At this time Edwards' Cardiff friends were becoming very concerned for her welfare in London. Harold Watkins recalls:

[E]ven with the housing problem solved the poor girl was having a very thin time. A friend of mine who took her out to dinner occasionally when he was in London gave me the impression that she was not even having enough to eat [...] she had lost much of her natural vivacity.<sup>425</sup>

Her letters to Jones and Kelly substantiate Watkin's suspicions: 'I am in disgrace & rags. You will not recognise me. I have not finished my novel & I have no clothes [...] I hate hate hate London', she says.<sup>426</sup> At one point she ran out of money completely, writing a frantic plea to Jones and Kelly to 'send [...] 10/- as soon as possible'.<sup>427</sup>

---

422 Ibid.

423 Ibid.

424 Ibid.

425 Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 49.

426 Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1933]. Reading Collection, packet 5, item 23.

427 Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 16.

Back home in Pen-y-dre the new arrangement was not running as smoothly as Edwards may have hoped, and during her stay in London Vida changed companions no less than three times. Edwards' guilt on leaving her mother is evident: 'it isn't easy for her to have to make a big change like this now', she writes defensively.<sup>428</sup> In another letter she says:

Mother has just secured her third companion since I left. I hope this will be a permanent one. It's partly my fault since I trained her into habits that no companion could possibly fit into.<sup>429</sup>

Overall it seems that Edwards' London escape was far from ideal; the following quotation speaks for itself:

Life here instead of being all beer & skittles as I was expecting has been rather difficult & drab after all.

I find London too big & dirty, I couldn't get to work at all first & now though I am working & have turned out a few decent things, I have rather a guilty conscience & Garnett spends a lot of his spare time manufacturing excuses for me.

[...] I live like a hermit & wrestle with my muse. I have awfully little money (but I don't want to borrow any.) I want to see what it is like to feel that one has none [...] I have given up theatres & operas because I haven't any money [...] I have earned practically nothing so I am still not my own master.<sup>430</sup>

The living arrangement left Edwards feeling ill, isolated and confused, and evidently began to have serious implications for her health:

Apparently a nervous strain reacts on one physically, because I get appalling attacks of quite helpless tiredness which I never felt before in my life [...] I nearly fainted in Oxford Street last week.<sup>431</sup>

It was inevitable that Edwards would find it difficult to live as a quasi-equal alongside the Bloomsbury set, with their financially independent lifestyle. Rhys

Davies commented on his experiences of the London literati during the same period:

---

<sup>428</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 14<sup>th</sup> February [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 18 (b).

<sup>429</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 15.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1929-1932]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 29 (a).

I couldn't really afford the Bloomsbury life. Most of the people I associated with there were established in earning capacity or had private means derived from the middle-class security which still was the backbone of this England.<sup>432</sup>

But given Garnett's upbringing and his own awareness of financial difficulty, it is difficult to understand why he was not more sympathetic and understanding of Edwards' situation. 'I had always less money than any of my friends', he wrote in his autobiography *The Golden Echo* when recounting a difficult situation that arose, as a result of his finances, when a young man on a camping expedition with friends.<sup>433</sup>

Politically, too, his early years saw his views more in line with Edwards' than those of his bourgeois friends, as Quentin Bell comments:

He had been brought up in an atmosphere of enthusiasm not only for Russia but for the coming Revolution [...] he had rejoiced at the success of the Revolution in its early stages.<sup>434</sup>

In fact, according to Virginia Woolf, Garnett's views veered so far left that he had considered it his right to live off Vanessa Bell's independent income when a conscientious objector during the First World War:

Bunny [Garnett] thus defines his position: all capitalists are wrong; therefore for him to live upon Vanessa is good, inasmuch as she enjoys money that she has no right to, & could not possibly spend her interest better than by maintaining him [...] His brain must be a tangle of sentiments & half-realised socialism.<sup>435</sup>

But in the face of Edwards' socialism, Garnett's views appeared in an increasingly conservative light. 'In spite of her quite brilliant intelligence, her political views were emotional and were divorced from reality. Thus she was always expecting the Revolution,' he says, claiming that Edwards' ideologies were maintained solely in honour of the memory of her father (*FF*, 91).

In self-defence Garnett claimed that he did all he could to help Edwards. 'I

---

<sup>432</sup> Davies, *Print of a Hare's Foot*, 154-5.

<sup>433</sup> D. Garnett, *The Golden Echo*, 168.

<sup>434</sup> Quentin Bell, *Bloomsbury Recalled* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 78.

<sup>435</sup> Virginia Woolf, diary entry, Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1918. Quoted in Bell, Anne Olivier, ed., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 1 1915-1919* (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), 183.

tried to help her to earn a little money by giving her books to review – which she was completely unable to do,’ he claimed – a curious comment in the light of Edwards’ sustained and successful reviewing for the *Western Mail and South Wales News* (*FF*, 96). Edwards began to struggle under the constant pressure of having to please her benefactor and become once again the talented but dependent Welsh Cinderella: ‘I have just begun my novel – no more. I must get it finished before I get home [...] I dare not look Garnett in the face if I don’t get my novel written before I leave here,’ she wrote to Jones and Kelly.<sup>436</sup> Garnett too admits his pressuring of her: ‘I lectured her on the need to work’, he says (*FF*, 96).

In the face of such anxiety, and perhaps as a result of her isolation in London, in August 1933 Edwards began to keep a diary addressed directly to a friend of her father, the American socialist Jackson Stitt Wilson. Wilson was of her father’s generation, married, and living in America and, although the two did correspond during the 1930s, there is no evidence to suggest that Wilson felt anything more than a sense of paternal affection for the daughter of his old friend. In this diary Edwards’ depressed mental state is evident. ‘It seems as though everything in me has by now died once,’ she writes in an entry for 10<sup>th</sup> August 1933, adding a few days later, ‘I am not afraid now of death, of sin, if it does indeed exist, or of poverty.’<sup>437</sup> But equally, in this diary there is a suggestion of renewed hope: Edwards begins to be excited by her writing again. She also writes, initially with hope and fervour, of her developing affection for Ronald Harding, a Welsh musician based in London:

I love Ronald Harding [...] His is a bright courageous soul [...] he is Welsh and so he gives me something to be proud of Wales for; but I love him besides, for himself [...] He has been very good to me in these few weeks that I have known him. He has given me back a feeling of my own right to exist

---

<sup>436</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 15.

<sup>437</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1933; 15<sup>th</sup> August 1933. Reading Collection, packet 6.

[...] And now for the first time death does not seem to me desirable.<sup>438</sup>

Jones and Kelly were also informed of Edwards' new attachment: 'I met Ronald Harding the young cellist who plays in the quartet here at the Museum. He is adorably Welsh & as you would expect, I have fallen in love with him', she wrote to them in 1933.<sup>439</sup> The potential of a close and genuine contact with another person, of a partner of her own, evidently gave Edwards a renewed vigour for life. But as always in Edwards' case, she soon found herself once again on the outskirts of a trio: Harding was married, and the short-lived affair was called off. In a later letter she tells Jones and Kelly:

I really fell in love with Harding. I just began to tell you about him in my last letter. He is a darling. We decided to join forces & went gaily on, I planning the kind of ménage we should have, & he planning the details of separating from his wife, & then suddenly we found ourselves up against the rotten Puritanism of our benighted country. For he would, it seems, most certainly be thrown out of the orchestra, though he is the best person in it, if we lived in sin in the sight of all Cardiff. And since neither of us feel like meeting in a back street, and neither of us are sure enough of our careers at this moment to throw everything over and risk it, we parted sorrowfully.<sup>440</sup>

By the time the split with Harding came, relations between Edwards and Garnett had broken down completely. He was unimpressed with her new writing:

She brought me her stories – there were three of them, all somehow on the same model, breathing the same breath [...] Each one was unmistakably the work of Dorothy Edwards – but each was unsatisfactory, incompletely realised, inferior [...] The author was never there when we met to discuss them. (*FF*, 97)

In this passage, Garnett indulges in the derogatory comments on Edwards as a writer that perhaps he felt vindicated him of any part in the mental and emotional strain that may have contributed in part to her suicide. His suggestion that Edwards lacked

---

<sup>438</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1933; 21<sup>st</sup> September 1933. Reading Collection, packet 6. The irony of her final sentence in this extract, written not quite four months before she took her own life, is striking.

<sup>439</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 1<sup>st</sup> September [c.1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 22.

<sup>440</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 27.

authorial presence is as puzzling as it is offensive, and is reminiscent of Garnett's earlier comment that he originally felt that Edwards could not have been solely responsible for producing the stories in *Rhapsody*. Furthermore, far from being 'inferior', these late stories are of particular interest, both as a continuation of Edwards' literary style and a development of her subject matter, as I argue in the following chapter.

Her London adventure over, Edwards had clearly failed to live up to the 'Welsh Cinderella' role that Garnett had assigned to her. Moreover, towards the end of their friendship Garnett became increasingly aware of her censure of the lifestyle maintained by him and his friends, a censure grounded in the socialist beliefs which she still held. He says:

[Dorothy] disapproved of Ray and me increasingly and showed that she did. Her disapproval was political and social – we were well-fed, we were not working for the Revolution, we ate meat. (*FF*, 96)

He found himself increasingly irritated by Edwards' presence:

As the summer drew to a close and the days shortened to winter, I began to find the proximity of my sister almost intolerable [...] I began consciously to avoid Dorothy [...] If I avoided her, she must have taken far more pains to avoid me. (*FF*, 96-7)

But Garnett had been disappointed by Edwards from the start; far from being an unsophisticated and parochial raw talent, she was an Anglicized, intelligent and independent young woman, who had already by the point of their meeting published her best work. Beryl Jones attributes his comments, and indeed the collapse of their friendship, to 'his annoyance at Dorothy's failure to be overawed by his distinguished guests'.<sup>441</sup> Jones says:

At one stage in their relation[ship] David seemed to regard himself as slumming in his patronage of Dorothy [...] he indulged in comments on her appearance and behaviour which are misleading as they are unforgivable,

---

<sup>441</sup> S. Beryl Jones, letter to Virago Press, September 1986. Reading Collection, packet 11, item 1.



especially his attribution to her of the social snobbery which he himself was more likely to be prone to.<sup>442</sup>

Jones certainly has a point. Edwards would not allow herself to be cast as the exotic, poverty-stricken genius that Garnett longed to parade in front of his Bloomsbury friends, her 'hereditary enemies'. As I have indicated, Edwards was not the last woman that Garnett tried to manipulate according to his desires. His second wife, Angelica, said: 'I was putty in his hands, and many of his acts had a symbolic quality, as though he wanted to mould me into the sort of woman he needed [...] Bunny longed to be loved, and to take possession of the loved one', offering perhaps some explanation for the intensity of his attentions towards Edwards.<sup>443</sup> Tellingly, in one of the last letters that Edwards wrote to Jones and Kelly, Edwards said: 'I don't sing now. Me [sic] music is stilled.'<sup>444</sup> Finally, Edwards made the decision to go home. According to various newspapers she returned to Cardiff with the intention of writing her new collection of short stories in 'a bungalow in Marshfield'.<sup>445</sup> Despite their close proximity in the months before her death, Garnett and his wife learned of Edwards' suicide in *The Times* (FF, 97).

Although evidently isolated, poverty stricken, and deeply miserable in London, Edwards had started writing again, something that she found she could not do in Cardiff. Contrary to the impression that Garnett gives above, Edwards was working and describes herself to her friends Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly as 'partially revived',<sup>446</sup> and said:

I am writing a story about golf & one about a mad girl & I may write one about bats. In short my Muse has awakened but I don't know if I can keep up

---

<sup>442</sup> Jones, 'Dorothy Edwards: A Personal Estimate', Appendix i, 241.

<sup>443</sup> A. Garnett, *Deceived with Kindness*, 147, 155.

<sup>444</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 14.

<sup>445</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934.

<sup>446</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, 14<sup>th</sup> February [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 18 (b).

with him. Wishart want another volume of short stories from me since they've seen 'Mutiny'.<sup>447</sup>

Edwards' claim here about Wishart's interest in her new work is substantiated by material held in the Reading collection; shortly before her departure from London Wishart had offered her an advance on a new collection of short stories. The existence of this contract also gives an indication of the quality of the work that she was producing at this time.<sup>448</sup> The vantage point that Edwards had gained as a Welsh woman living in the English capital added new concern to her fiction, ideas which she had held, in theory, for some time. The stories that she wrote while in London, particularly 'Mutiny' and the until recently unpublished 'Mitter', show Edwards taking a step closer to understanding the complex nature of the gendered, class-based, and imperialist nature of the power structures that dominated her society, that she had first invoked in her story 'The Conquered' in 1926. In these stories, Edwards demonstrates an intense awareness of the historical subjugation of her country and its parallel with other oppressed nations, and as such, I suggest, her work constitutes a specifically Welsh form of postcolonial writing. In the following chapter, I argue that the idea of a pervasive and mentally colonising cultural imperialism is key to the development of Edwards' fiction, and I demonstrate that the subversive and multi-faceted nature of her writing means that an analysis of her work in the context of today's theoretical paradigms proves highly productive.

---

<sup>447</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 16.

<sup>448</sup> Letter from E.E. Wishart to Dorothy Edwards, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1933. Reading Collection, packet 2, item 24.

## CHAPTER SIX

### POWER DYNAMICS AND CULTURAL COLONIALISM IN 'THE CONQUERED', 'MITTER' AND 'MUTINY'

Edwards' association with Bloomsbury was considered by some of her Welsh contemporaries to be, in effect, her final rejection of Wales; today's literary critics, however, are far more ready to acknowledge the complexity of Edwards' situation. Stephen Knight, for example, goes as far to argue that Garnett's introduction of Edwards to London literary society was in itself a colonial act. '[T]he self-indulgent promoting by David Garnett of the brilliant and tragic Dorothy Edwards in the inherently hostile Bloomsbury group' is, he says, 'characteristic [...] of the encounter between colonizing power and colonized writers.'<sup>449</sup> As I have shown in the previous chapter, Edwards' venture into London literary life ended dismally. However, while in the English capital Edwards had begun to write again, and her 'Welsh novel', it appears, had begun to take shape not only in her mind, but on paper. In David Garnett's country home, Hilton Hall, (now occupied by his eldest son Richard) is a red exercise book that once belonged to Edwards. In it, she outlines a plot for a novel, set in Cardiff the 1920s and focusing on the life of a college lecturer during a five-year period including the Depression. This outline is followed by 23 pages of the story, until the writing breaks off abruptly. With this notebook is a letter to Garnett dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 1928, in which Edwards demonstrates an acute awareness of the burden of literary obligation she feels Wales casts upon its writers. She says:

You must know that every Welshman who has learnt to hold a pen believes himself to be a future novelist that my country has been some what dubiously expecting for a century. So I too believe this.<sup>450</sup>

<sup>449</sup> Stephen Knight, 'Welsh Fiction in English as Postcolonial Literature', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 159.

<sup>450</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1928. Dorothy Edwards Papers,

In this chapter I argue that, rather than ignoring Welsh issues, Edwards' attention in her writing is in fact focussed on questions of power imbalance and cultural imperialism which she sees as pervasive in society, as they have been and are in previously conquered or colonised nations, long after the passing of any formal manifestation of legislative colonisation. Central to my argument in this chapter is biographical material pertaining to Edwards held in the Reading collection, and in particular her 1933 diary, where she gives an explicit indication of her political outlook at this time as well as recording some particularly important incidents from her childhood. In one entry, for example, she states:

I see that now at this moment here [...] the general formulae of socialism would work even in the hands of knaves & fools to the benefit of people in general. I feel quite passionately on the subject of education allowances for children and I admire the way Russia treats her racial minorities. And I hate Winston Churchill & the British Empire, & I like anyone who is really suffering from any injustice, political or social.<sup>451</sup>

In a further entry in her diary for 1933, written during the period outlined in the previous chapter when she was living in London with the Garnett family, she recalls in some detail her father's behaviour during the early years of her life. Her relationship with her father influenced her outlook extensively, I suggest. Each year as the summer vacation approached, Edwards would notice a 'subtle change' in her father as he prepared for their family holiday, during which he carried out rather unconventional experiments:

No sooner had we crossed the border into England on our way to some south coast resort than there was no longer any doubt about it, he had turned into a Frenchman. And in a broken English that contained every odd pun or quaintness made by any Frenchman up to that date, throughout the holiday he would seek encounters with the native English and so continue his investigations into the [deleted – little hindrances] lesser misunderstandings that arrive when one nationality tries to unite with another. Not only did he leap the channel in this manner, but on other occasions he took imaginative

---

<sup>451</sup> David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett. Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

flights into the upper reaches of society. He would buy himself a white peaked cap & a white suit and walk briskly up and down the promenade until he believed that he was the millionaire owner of a yacht, and the glances of the passers by in which he read envy and admiration enabled him to sense the joys of power and affluence and the [deleted – difficulty of] temptation of never relinquishing them [...] Most daring of all, he bought a pair of white spats, an article of wear regarded with much loathing on I.L.P. platforms of that date, & he wore them during a whole summer watching anxiously, I feel sure, to see if his revolutionary [deleted – sentiments] ideals were becoming [deleted – tainted] damaged thereby [...] Moreover when he was a foreigner it was not always a Frenchman. Sometimes he was a Russian, & sometimes a Welshman from the country, with a little English & a great fund of astonishment at the absurdities of the English temperament. But it is as a Frenchman I remember him best, for once in Penzance where he had made the acquaintance of an English admiral who fortunately knew no French, I came upon this admiral striding down the esplanade in a terrible rage, while my father following, all volubility and gesticulation, tried to convince him that the French had won the battle of Trafalgar.<sup>452</sup>

Edward Edwards, obviously intrigued by the complexities of class and ethnic difference, proceeded to test the extent to which he could adopt and discard not only a different class identity, but a different national identity, judging the varying ways in which people reacted to him depending on the characteristics that he presented to them. His choice of historical event to reinterpret on the occasion described above is also indicative of a subversive intent: to question Admiral Lord Nelson's status as a patriotic hero and the significance of his success in defending Britain from French invasion by Napoleon's navy indicates an awareness of national pride in military conflicts and an understanding of the role of imperialism in nationalist discourse. The English admiral's reaction to this affront against his national cultural consciousness is, perhaps, unsurprising.

Such cross-cultural and cross-class mimicry as that practised by Edward Edwards is much discussed in contemporary postcolonial studies. In his seminal volume *The Location of Culture* (1994) postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha analyses the effect that such a technique can have:

---

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

[M]imicry [...] is at once resemblance and menace [...] It problematizes the signs of racial and cultural priority, so the ‘national’ is no longer naturalizable. What emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a *writing*, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable [...] [the] observer becomes the observed and ‘partial’ representation rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence.<sup>453</sup>  
 [Original emphasis]

Here, Bhabha is commenting on the writings of India under the Raj, but such theories have significance for any colonised nation. In the above extract from her diary, Edwards indicates that her father was aware of his actions – his mimicry is deliberate – but his manner of appropriating the material symbols of class status, such as the white spats, bears a striking resemblance to the actions of black seamen in Cardiff recounted in a recent essay on ethnic minorities in Wales by Glenn Jordan:

For generations, before the redevelopment of the 1960s, immaculately dressed colonial seamen could be seen strolling up and down Bute Street [Cardiff docks] in suits and hats and, sometimes, with spats and walking sticks as well [...] wherever possible, Wales’s colonial seamen, presumably like their brothers elsewhere, sought to look smart – not by wearing ‘their native costumes’ but by mimicking the colonizer at his best. In Bute Street, the gentlemen dandy wore a brown face: the colonized, through great effort, came to resemble the well-presented colonizer, but not quite.<sup>454</sup>

Edwards’ 1933 diary reveals that, in her childhood, she was led by her father’s example to question the construction of national identity as much as that of class or gender. Her account allows an insight into the way in which her upbringing informed her increasingly complex views of society. For Edward Edwards, issues of class and national identity were clearly inextricably linked, as his experiments show.<sup>455</sup> In chapters two and three I discussed how Edwards uses the male narrative voice to criticize patriarchal social power and the manner in which this is used to silence and

<sup>453</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; London: Routledge, 2003), 86-9.

<sup>454</sup> Glenn Jordan, “‘We Never Really Noticed You Were Coloured’”: Postcolonialist Reflections on Immigrants and Minorities in Wales’, in Aaron and Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales*, 62.

<sup>455</sup> Edward Edwards apparently applied his awareness of a Welsh national identity separate to that of a British (or English) identity in his teaching: a school inspector commented ‘Welsh & English history have been treated as things apart instead of being correlated.’ H.M.I. Mr W. Edwards, 1910 report, in Tynewydd Schools Logbook, n.d. [1910], 54-5.

suppress women in society. In this chapter I would like to go a step further and suggest that it is not just *male* power, but ruling class and imperialist power that Edwards turns her attention to in her later fiction. Recognising her critique of a pervasive and mentally colonising cultural imperialism is key to understanding Edwards' work, and I will use current postcolonial theory to offer a new reading of her writing. By means of an analysis of her 1927 short story 'The Conquered', along with 'Mutiny' and 'Mitter', both written in the last year of her life, I argue that Edwards replicated and deconstructed the power struggles inherent in her society. Just as Edward Edwards adopted and discarded class and national identities during family holidays to test the mettle of his beliefs and the attitudes of his audience, she too takes on the tones and perspectives of social groups other than her own in her fiction in order to deconstruct them. Firstly, however, I will briefly outline contemporary arguments concerning Welsh postcolonial theory in order to set the tone for my analysis of these stories.

## I

In recent years postcolonial theory has gained increasing credibility as a viable tool with which to analyse the writings of Wales in both its languages, and the number of publications on the topic reflect the increasing adoption by critics and theorists in Wales of a postcolonial stance. Stephen Knight's *A Hundred Years of Fiction* and Kirsti Bohata's *Postcolonialism Revisited*, both published in 2004, explicitly analyse Welsh writing in English in the light of postcolonial theory. While *A Hundred Years of Fiction* features a broad history of Anglophone Welsh literature written from a postcolonial perspective, *Postcolonialism Revisited* is perhaps the more thoroughgoing theoretical publication, offering as it does a persuasive argument for considering Welsh writing in English as postcolonial writing by outlining and

analysing international theory and its relevance to English-language Welsh fiction. *Postcolonial Wales* (2005) edited by Jane Aaron and Chris Williams considers the implications of postcolonial theory for Welsh history, politics, education, language and culture, along with such (historically) marginalised groups as women and ethnic minorities in Wales. However, the suggestion that Wales was once a colony of England and can therefore be read as postcolonial, much like India or Hong Kong, is not a twenty-first century phenomenon: a closer look at Welsh cultural and historical criticism reveals an earlier concern with colonial theory. In the 1970s the historian R. R. Davies influentially argued that Wales exhibited features of a colonial society as far back as the thirteenth century, and in the same decade Michael Hechter published his fascinating but contentious study *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (1975).<sup>456</sup>

Such application of postcolonial theory to Wales has, however, been highly contentious. The contrast between the arguments put forward by Knight in *A Hundred Years of Fiction* and Chris Williams in his essay 'Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality' in *Postcolonial Wales* highlight two extremes of the postcolonial scale.<sup>457</sup> Knight argues consistently that Wales was actively colonised by England, claiming that Wales is a prime example of English imperial activity, and its industrial areas in particular 'had undergone one of the most extreme [...] sequences of events in the history of imperialist exploitation.'<sup>458</sup> For Knight, Wales is the 'closest, oldest, and [...] least understood colony of England,'<sup>459</sup> as Wales' legacy of exploitation for its mineral resources, he suggests, stands

---

<sup>456</sup> R. R. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', *Past and Present*, 65 (1974), 3-23. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (1975; London: Routledge, 1978).

<sup>457</sup> Chris Williams, 'Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality', Aaron and Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales*, 3-22.

<sup>458</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, 61.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.



testament:

Industries based on natural substances mined from Welsh soil and exploited on a colonial basis have a long history. The Romans found gold, silver and lead in mid Wales; the coastal strip around Swansea was busy from the seventeenth century with metallurgy, mostly funded from England for profitable export; from the eighteenth century on, mines for coal and ironstone served the growing industrial culture in England and also international export, both from the Flintshire area and especially from the booming region around Merthyr Tydfil; the slate deposits of mountainous north-west Wales were developed to roof the houses of an empire, especially by the Pennant family as a follow-up to their lucrative slave-trading out of Liverpool.<sup>460</sup>

According to Knight, then, Wales has essentially been exploited by England in order to support attempts to oppress and colonise other countries, as such evocative terms as ‘empire’ and ‘slave-trading’ suggest. But in the above passage, Knight also draws attention to a key argument presented against Welsh claims to a postcolonial status: Welsh involvement in British imperialism. Richard Pennant, who used the family fortune gained from slave-trading to establish a slate quarrying empire in north Wales, was, as his name suggests, of Welsh parentage. In his contribution to *Postcolonial Wales* Glenn Jordan draws attention to the potential conflict caused by this: ‘Wales did not remain outside projects of Western imperialism and colonial domination: on the contrary, Wales and Welsh coal were often integral to them,’ he says.<sup>461</sup> However, whilst Jordan is justified in highlighting the complex role played by Wales in the British Empire, the suggestion that Wales is implicated in imperial efforts by virtue of its own legacy of exploitation is, I think, problematic. Postcolonial critics have responded to this accusation. Kirsti Bohata, for example, states in her article “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’, a ‘reliance on simple binaries which place Wales on the side of the colonisers, thereby ignoring the possibility of complex and unequal dynamics of power within the British Isles, is simply inadequate.’<sup>462</sup>

---

<sup>460</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>461</sup> Jordan, “‘We Never Really Noticed You Were Coloured’”, 58.

<sup>462</sup> Kirsti Bohata, “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited’, *New Welsh Review*, 69 (2005), 34-5.

In contrast to Knight, Chris Williams in his *Postcolonial Wales* chapter argues that while such paradigms may be a useful tool in understanding the Welsh position, it is unreasonable to view contemporary Wales as postcolonial. Like Knight's argument, Williams' rejection of a postcolonial status for Wales is at once persuasive and problematic. He argues that the 1536 and 1543 Acts of Union were pieces of legislation to ensure, for the Welsh people, equality with the English, stating: 'for all intents and purposes the Acts of Union abolished the distinctions between Wales and England: Wales was no longer a colony, but part of an expanded England or Greater Britain.'<sup>463</sup> In this statement, however, Williams reveals precisely the inherently imperial nature of the Acts, which required the Welsh people to renounce their distinctive culture and language and adopt a (culturally 'superior') English identity: no respect was shown for non-English national or, for that matter, regional identities.

Resistance to the cultural colonisation of Wales by England has manifested itself throughout Welsh history. The Cymru Fydd movement (literally translating as 'the Wales of the future'), formed in London in 1886, voiced the desire not only for Welsh Home Rule, but for the disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales and for full male and female enfranchisement, as well as the protection of the Welsh language, linking issues of colonialism, class and gender under a specifically Welsh banner. According to Kenneth Morgan, the Home Rule movement began to gather momentum in Wales following new educational legislation such as the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889.<sup>464</sup> The establishment of the University of Wales in 1893 and a National Library and Museum for Wales in 1907 indicate a clear sense of popularly perceived national difference from the rest of Britain, and Morgan argues that 'the intense awareness of nationality shown by the early students at the

---

<sup>463</sup> Williams, 'Problematizing Wales', 5.

<sup>464</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922* (1963; Cardiff: University of Wales Press 1970), 104.

University College of Wales at Aberystwyth and their contemporaries' played an important role in the formation of Cymru Fydd.<sup>465</sup> The fact that national consciousness or resistance in Wales at this time was in part stimulated by, and in part manifested in, its cultural institutions is particularly significant. Welsh desire for independence has, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in particular, been mobilised in a cultural as well as political form. Although Cymru Fydd disbanded just ten years after its formation, its very existence demonstrates that national feeling in Wales was present long before the establishment of the Welsh nationalist political party in 1925.<sup>466</sup> Given the historically sustained political and cultural campaign to dissipate any sense of Welsh identity and integrate Wales into England, the beginning of which is signified by the Acts of Union, the fact that any sense of national consciousness was present in nineteenth-century Wales can be read as a sign of resistance to the dominant culture – in this case, England.

The issue of Home Rule for Wales did not disappear with the collapse of the Cymru Fydd movement. In fact, the manner in which it was subsequently adopted by various political parties in Wales at this time indicates the extent to which politicians were aware that the issue of self government was important to at least some parts of Welsh society. In her 2001 history of Plaid Cymru, Laura McAllister points out that the Liberal Party, for much of the period in question the dominant party in Wales, 'had close associations with the demand for more political autonomy for Wales', and Welsh Liberal MPs were the first founding members of Cymru Fydd.<sup>467</sup> David Lloyd George, for example, was at one point the leader of the movement but found that the 'Welsh questions which had been the overriding passion on his early youth dwindled

---

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Stephens, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, 137.

<sup>467</sup> Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party* (Bridgend: Seren, 2001), 22.

in significance' as he became increasingly involved in British-wide politics.<sup>468</sup>

Likewise, Welsh Home Rule also found its way into labour-orientated politics: in his study of Keir Hardie, Kenneth Morgan states that '[Hardie] claimed that the ILP were the true Welsh nationalists, since they alone wanted the land and the natural resources of Wales to belong to its people.'<sup>469</sup> Considering her political upbringing and her childhood associations with Hardie, it is likely that Edwards would have been well aware of the debate surrounding Home Rule for Wales.

But the formation of the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (now Plaid Cymru) in 1925 saw a return to the tradition of grounding Welsh nationalist feeling in a specifically cultural context. McAllister points out that Plaid 'was set up as much as an agency to protect Welsh culture [...] as a party to fight elections and to elaborate policies.'<sup>470</sup> The establishment of Plaid Cymru can be seen as a reaction against imperial and colonial tendencies, rather than any attempt to subjugate non-Welsh identities for Wales' own gain: it was in effect a protective and liberationist, rather than aggressive, form of nationalism. The arson attack against the proposed RAF bombing school at Penyberth, near Pwllheli, in 1936 by three of the party's leaders was a protest against using Welsh territory as a stage for training military force, as well as the English government's blatant disregard of the protests of the Welsh at the commandeering of a place of significant cultural value: the farmhouse building itself, which was destroyed to make way for the school, had been a home to generations of Welsh cultural patrons and leaders.<sup>471</sup> Plaid's stance during the Second World War indicates the extent to which the party rejected aggressive nation-building:

---

<sup>468</sup> Morgan, *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922*, 232.

<sup>469</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (1975; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984), 118.

<sup>470</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, 23.

<sup>471</sup> Stephens, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, 581.

The Plaid leadership took a neutral line on the conflict and was strongly opposed to conscription. It also actively encouraged conscientious objection to individual involvement in the war. Charges of disloyalty and fascism were regularly levelled at Plaid during the war.<sup>472</sup>

By the late 1920s Edwards was well aware of the increasing momentum of the nationalist movement in Wales; in particular she admired its leader, Saunders Lewis.

‘[I]t was obvious that he was one of her heroes. She told me she thought he was a ‘great’ man’, recalls Harold Watkins.<sup>473</sup> In a 1930 letter to Lewis, held at the National Library of Wales, Edwards indicates her growing passion for Plaid Cymru’s aims:

May I repeat my congratulations on your speech last night. I was brought up on the Red Flag in the days when it was very red, and I never permit myself to be carried away at a political meeting by anything less than a promise of the kingdom of heaven on earth, so I am saying something that I mean very deeply when I say that I was completely carried away by the sincerity the genuine imaginative depth and the courageous and firm grasp of the exact, present state of life in Wales in its very fullest sense, which you showed last night. Whether you get in or not – and I hope from my heart that you do – you have already shown the point from which action and enthusiasm must take off, and from this something is bound to come.<sup>474</sup>

Edwards’ letter is indicative of a central conflict between theories of social and national consciousness: political theorists have long argued that socialism and nationalism are at the opposite ends of the political scale, nationalism being far right and socialism far left. Welsh language writer Kate Roberts, for example, felt initially that she could not join Plaid Cymru as her first commitment was to her socialism.

After reading *Y Ddraig Goch*, a Welsh-language political journal with a nationalist outlook, she commented in an undated letter to H. R. Jones<sup>475</sup>:

I really cannot see myself any nearer to joining the Plaid after reading it. I can see Mr Saunders Lewis’s point of view as I love literature, but as I am a socialist I really cannot reconcile myself with his ideas. Personally I see no

---

<sup>472</sup> McAllister, *Plaid Cymru*, 29.

<sup>473</sup> Watkins, ‘Dorothy Edwards’, 45.

<sup>474</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Saunders Lewis, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1931. Quoted in Gramich, ‘Gorchfygwyr a Chwiorydd’, 81.

<sup>475</sup> An entry for *Y Ddraig Goch* in Meic Stephens’ *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* cites Hugh Robert Jones as the ‘true founder’ of the journal, as well as being named as the publisher of the first number. See Stephens, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, 171.

difference between doffing one's cap to an old English merchant and doffing one's cap to our old Welsh princes.<sup>476</sup>

In her 1936 novel *Traed Mewn Cyffion* (translated and published as *Feet in Chains*) Kate Roberts suggests that socialism is in a sense the natural Welsh way of organising the workplace. When William, quarryman and elder son of Jane and Ifan Gruffydd, the central couple of the novel, becomes increasingly interested in socialist and communist theories, the narrator points out that:

[W]hile he was wrestling with these problems nobody bothered to tell him that the very quarry in which he was working had, in the beginning, been worked by the quarrymen themselves, sharing the profits.<sup>477</sup>

Equally, though, socialism has at times been seen by some as a foreign ideology, and not indigenous to Wales: in *Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (1991), David Adamson, for example, claims that socialism and its related theories have at times been regarded as 'unWelsh'.<sup>478</sup> In Welsh writing of the 1930s the text most representative of this type of attitude, Richard Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley* (1939), was, however, written by an author whose experience of industrial south Wales was extremely limited at best. Llewellyn's criticism via the narrator Huw Morgan of the popularity of socialist and communist theorists such as Marx and Hegel contrasts starkly with the positive representation of the political self-education of characters in the work of writers like the 1930s novelist Lewis Jones. Other Welsh writers in both languages, like Glyn Jones and T. E. Nicholas, have been sympathetic to both Welsh liberationist and working-class politics, suggesting that, in Wales at least, socialism and nationalism have at times gone hand in hand. Shortly after writing the letter quoted above, Kate Roberts was

---

<sup>476</sup> Kate Roberts, letter to H. R. Jones, undated. Quoted and translated from the Welsh original in D. Hywel Davies, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945: A Call to Nationhood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), 124.

<sup>477</sup> Kate Roberts, *Feet in Chains*, trans. John Idris Jones (1936; Bridgend: Seren, 2002), 82-3.

<sup>478</sup> David L. Adamson, *Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 118.

able to reconcile her socialist and nationalist views and join Plaid Cymru, remaining an active member until her death in 1985.

Socialism and nationalism, then, were not mutually exclusive identities: a reductivist counter-positioning of the two is invalid in the case of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Wales. Whilst acknowledging such a position, Adamson claims that '[i]t has been impossible to place nationalism on any political spectrum of left and right',<sup>479</sup> arguing that:

Nationalism is a class-neutral ideology, appropriated by classes in hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles [...] The particular form of expression nationalism assumes is dependent on the unique features of the specific social formation in which it is expressed.<sup>480</sup>

Adamson demonstrates that via its appropriation by various movements, nationalist feeling in Wales has historically been associated with class struggles, suggesting that socialist and nationalist identities are, in fact, compatible, at least in the context of Wales: 'nationalism [...] had been a crucial dimension of the class struggles of the second half of the nineteenth century', he states.<sup>481</sup> In the case of Wales, the hegemonic threat to its identity for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has come about as a result of English dominance, both cultural and economic. In this sense, any counter-hegemonic position may inevitably take on a national aspect in the articulation of that particular class-based struggle, i.e. as a resistance against Anglicization and capitalism. The combination of an imposed social order coupled with a national difference makes Wales unlike any other working-class social grouping in Britain. Richard Wyn Jones suggests this in his contribution to *Postcolonial Wales*, 'In the Shadow of the First-born: The Colonial Legacy in Welsh Politics', where he states:

---

<sup>479</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid, 139, 179.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid, 123.

Social elites, be they aristocratic or bourgeois in character, have frequently tended to adopt the dominant state identity, leaving the identity of the subordinate nation in question to the subordinate orders. This has clearly held true in Wales.<sup>482</sup>

In *Internal Colonialism* Hechter argues that the colonial nature of industry and labour in south Wales intensified class awareness:

[C]olonial development produces a cultural division of labour: a system of stratification where objective cultural distinctions are superimposed upon class lines. High status occupations tend to be reserved for those of the metropolitan culture; while those of indigenous culture cluster at the bottom of the stratification system [...] One of the foundations upon which [...] [counter-hegemonic] organization might rest is, of course, cultural similarity, or the perception of a distinctive *ethnic identity* in the peripheral group [...] Further, by linking economic and occupational differences between groups to their cultural differences, this model has an additional advantage in that it suggests an explanation for the resiliency of peripheral culture.<sup>483</sup>

The arguments concerning the validity of a postcolonial identity for Wales, then, are tied up with the complex relationship between England and Wales, class conflict based on labour lines, and the vast changes and fluctuations in the national, social, cultural and linguistic character of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Wales. I do not intend to argue here for or against a postcolonial Wales (indeed, in Knight's *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, Bohata's *Postcolonialism Revisited* and Aaron and Williams' *Postcolonial Wales* this issue has been debated in a far more complex, sophisticated and in-depth manner than the scope of this thesis would allow), but I would like to take up the stance iterated by Kirsti Bohata in her *New Welsh Review* contribution to the debate on postcolonialism in Wales. That is:

the validity of a postcolonial discussion of Welsh writing in English is not dependent on showing that Wales was once a colony or is now post-colonial, still less that Welsh history conforms to a linear model of conquest, colonialism and post-colonialism.[...] The relevance of postcolonial criticism in Wales [...] is to be found in specific and detailed engagement with the array of postcolonial ideas in the context of Welsh literary and cultural

---

<sup>482</sup> Richard Wyn Jones, 'In the Shadow of the First-born: The Colonial Legacy in Welsh Politics', in Aaron and Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales*, 35.

<sup>483</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 30, 34.



specificities.’<sup>484</sup>

For the purpose of this thesis, then, I maintain that Wales is postcolonial; underpinning my acceptance of this argument are the two ‘colonial indicators’ put forward by Richard Wyn Jones:

(1) Colonialism is more than simply a set of political-constitutional relationships, but is rather a complex web of interlinked constitutional, political, economic, social and cultural ties, all of which are suffused with relations of power and domination.

(2) Even when the constitutional manifestation of a colonial relationship is brought to an end, many of those other links remain in place and can still usefully be regarded as ‘colonial’ in character. Moreover, these links are not merely passive legacies in the past tense. Rather the power relationships of the colonial age ‘proper’ – that is, colonialism as a particular political-constitutional relationship – continue to be produced and reproduced in the ‘post-colonial’ age.<sup>485</sup>

In the following section of this chapter, through analyzing some of her stories, particularly her later works, I argue that Edwards, informed by her father’s early training and her own awareness of power dynamics, deconstructed the colonial situation of Wales and drew comparisons with other British colonies long before the ideas and theories outlined in this section had emerged.

## II

Given Edwards’ awareness of the power dynamics of her culture, perhaps it is hardly surprising that the first story of hers to feature any explicit reference to Wales is called ‘The Conquered’.<sup>486</sup> Paradoxically, the only Welsh character in the story, Gwyneth, is explicitly associated with conquering forces, suggesting that Edwards’ concern is not solely with national difference, but also with class and gender inequalities, and the

---

<sup>484</sup> Bohata, “‘Psycho-colonialism’ Revisited”, 34, 39.

<sup>485</sup> Jones, ‘In the Shadow of the First-born’, 23.

<sup>486</sup> Probably as a result of its Welsh border setting, ‘The Conquered’ is the most frequently anthologised story of Edwards’. As well as being included in Jane Aaron’s edited volume of female-authored short stories *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c. 1850 - 1950* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 1999), ‘The Conquered’ has been placed contemporaneously in a Welsh context as a result of its republication in *Welsh Short Stories: An Anthology* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937).

inextricable relation of these issues to one another.

The tension between subjugated and subjugator, immediately indicated in the title 'The Conquered', is explicit throughout Edwards' story. Wales is introduced in the very first sentence, significantly, given that Edwards rarely specifies national locations. The story is narrated from the perspective of a young man, Frederick Trenier, who visits his aunt's home 'on the borders of Wales', where as a child he spent many happy summer holidays with his cousins, Ruth and Jessica (*R.*, 45). As I commented in chapter three, Frederick considers himself to be an experienced and accomplished young man; as such, he is condescending towards his family and expects to find their company dull and restrictive. But, much to his surprise, Frederick begins to enjoy his stay after meeting Gwyneth, a Welsh neighbour and friend of his cousins. Frederick first meets Gwyneth at his aunt's house where he is very busy 'reading Tourguéniev with a dictionary and about three grammars' (*R.*, 47), but Gwyneth's 'beautiful voice' captures his attention, and he is taken aback to find that she lives up to Ruth and Jessica's descriptions. '[T]hey do not meet many people down there, and I thought they would be impressed with the sort of person I would be quite used to,' he says, demonstrating the social snobbery typical of Edwards' male narrators (*R.*, 47).

Gwyneth is not only the sole Welsh character in this story, but in all of Edwards' published work. Frederick and his family, it is implied, are all of English ethnicity, and Gwyneth's nationality is indicated by virtue of her difference (Frederick describes her as a 'Welsh lady', *R.*, 46). Yet her profound empathy with imperialists and colonisers is stressed throughout the tale. Her home is surrounded by Roman roads and scenes of old imperialist battles, and during a walk near her home she says to Frederick, "Just think of all the charming Romans who must have walked here! [...]"

Does it shock you to know that I like the Romans better than the Greeks?''', aligning herself with the dominant power (*R.*, 52). Knight, commenting on late nineteenth-century Wales, points out the role of such roads in Wales' history of colonisation:

Roman and Norman roads, which the English still used to reach Ireland and the strategically important western Wales, ran to the north and south of the region through Brecon and Bridgend.<sup>487</sup>

In physical appearance, too, Gwyneth has more in common with the stereotypical image of the Romans than the Celts or Ancient Britons: she is 'very tall' with 'very fair hair', and a regal appearance with a 'really perfect nose' and 'finely carved features, which gave to her face the coolness of stone and a certain appearance of immobility' (*R.*, 48, 47). She lives in a large house built by her grandfather, and its French doors and Japanese prints are suggestive of a complex hybrid of international influences.

Gwyneth is clearly very proud of her family heritage: 'when she spoke to me it was nearly always to tell me about her grandfather, and the interesting people who used to come and visit him,' says Frederick, who is apparently rather pleased to discover that the Prince Consort, a particular friend of Gwyneth's grandfather, had spent a night in the house (*R.*, 49, 46). Attracted perhaps by his sense of her as a social and cultural equal, Frederick is increasingly drawn to Gwyneth. But in his relations with her it slowly becomes clear that, cultured and refined though she is, there is no real depth to Gwyneth's character. During their walk together along the Roman road, in the shadow of a hill 'where the ancient Britons made a stand against the Romans, and were defeated', Frederick is clearly in a romantic mood; Gwyneth responds to his pleasantries, however, with another comment about her cultural associations: "'[d]id you know that Jenny Lind came here once?'" she says (*R.*, 52).<sup>488</sup>

---

<sup>487</sup> Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, 52.

<sup>488</sup> Jenny Lind (1820-1887) was a celebrated opera singer, known as the 'Swedish Nightingale'.

Frederick's initial infatuation with Gwyneth fades as she is increasingly associated in his mind with conquering forces. His disillusionment with her, connected with his preconceived ideas about the Welsh and about women, begins when Gwyneth sings a Welsh song for the family one evening:

When we got there, right at the beginning of the evening Gwyneth sang a little Welsh song. And I felt suddenly disappointed. I always thought that the Welsh were melancholy in their music, but if she sang it sadly at all it was with the gossipy sadness of the tea after a funeral. (*R.*, 54)

We are not told which 'little Welsh song' Gwyneth chose to sing (presumably as the narrator is unfamiliar with Welsh culture he is unable to identify it); he sees the Welsh as mysterious others, with a particular mode of music, and when Gwyneth does not meet these ideas he is disappointed. He apparently expects Gwyneth, as Welsh, and a woman, to associate herself with the conquered. When he realizes that she does not he is at first surprised and then angry.

Gwyneth continues to disappoint Frederick when she refuses to sing Chopin's 'Polens Grabgesang', a song which has great significance for him as it had in the past initiated an evening of political discussion amongst him and his friends. He says:

I was so much excited about the song, because I shall never forget the occasion on which I first heard it. I have a great friend, a very wonderful man, a perfect genius, in fact, and a very strong personality, and we have evenings at his house, and we talk about nearly everything, and have music too, sometimes. Often, when I used to go, there was a woman there, who never spoke much but always sat near my friend. She was not particularly beautiful and had a rather unhappy face, but one evening my friend turned to her suddenly and put his hand on her shoulder and said, 'Sing for us.'

She obeyed without a word. Everybody obeys him at once. And she sang this song. I shall never forget all the sorrow and pity for the sorrows of Poland that she put into it. And the song, too, is wonderful. I do not think I have heard in my life anything so terribly moving as the part, 'O Polen, Mein Polen,' which is repeated several times. Everyone in the room was stirred,

---

Her popularity is indicated by the proliferation of merchandise related to her person: 'Her portrait was on snuff-boxes, matchboxes, and pocket handkerchiefs; there was Jenny Lind soap, Jenny Lind scent, and Jenny Lind candle snuffers in the shape of the singer's body topped with the head of a nightingale.' Carole Rosen, 'Lind, Jenny (1820-1887)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16671>>.

and, after she had sung it, we talked about nothing but politics and the Revolution for the whole evening. I do not think she was Polish either. (*R.*, 55-6)

The song is an anti-conqueror's lament: written in the 1830s and 1840s, it was inspired by the fiercely patriotic Chopin's grief for his country when an uprising in 1830 by Polish nationalists against Russian control failed. In his 1903 study *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, James Huneker suggests that Chopin's national views had a profound effect on his compositions:

A thousand times he thought of renouncing his artistic ambitions and rushing to Poland to fight for his country [...] Chopin put his patriotism, his wrath and his heroism into his Polonaises.<sup>489</sup>

In his study *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* Hugh Seton-Watson compares the imperial ventures of Russia and Britain:

Russian colonial rule was essentially similar to colonial rule by other European Powers. Its exponents had the same combination of arrogance and benevolence, the same well-meaning but complacent belief that they were bringing order and progress to barbarians. Russian administrators shared the mentality of their British or French colleagues: the mentality of 'taking up the White Man's Burden', or of the *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>490</sup>

Similarly, Huneker draws a parallel between the Polish and Celtic nations:

'[p]olitically the Poles and Celts rub shoulders', he says.<sup>491</sup> In the light of these parallels, then, Edwards' choice of Polish song seems particularly fitting. But Gwyneth's refusal to sing Chopin's song on the grounds that she cannot sympathise with its patriotic sorrow forces Frederick to realise her imperial associations, and this has the effect of making her appear less attractive to him:

[W]hen I looked at Gwyneth again it seemed to me that some of her beauty had gone, and I thought to myself quite angrily, 'No, of course she could not sing that song. She would have been on the side of the conquerors!' (*R.*, 56)

At the same time, Frederick's own position with regard to 'the conquered' is

---

<sup>489</sup> Huneker, *Chopin*, 28.

<sup>490</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 737.

<sup>491</sup> Huneker, *Chopin*, 322-323.

curiously angled, and indicative of the superior status that he endows upon himself throughout the story. He claims, as a civilised man, to be aware of the subjugated status of nineteenth-century Poland, but insists that the attendant lament and sorrow for such a condition be expressed on his behalf by women. He wishes to experience vicariously the deep thrill of profound patriotic sorrow, without feeling the need personally to do anything to remedy existing power relations. He expects Gwyneth to evoke a quaint, mysterious (but non-threatening) otherland during her performance of her ‘little Welsh song’. Instead, it becomes clear that Gwyneth is a shell, emptied out by colonial mimicry: she prefers the spirit and values of his own imperial culture, and has sought to embody them.

The expectation that women in particular will remain true to their ethnic group and its values, even when they are subordinated, is prevalent in national discourses. In Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davies’ edited essay collection *Woman, Nation, State* (1989) contributors discuss the construction of woman as the mourning martyr, lamenting the cultural destruction of the nation that they have so long reproduced and nurtured.<sup>492</sup> In the context of Wales, Charlotte Aull Davies in her essay ‘Women, nationalism and feminism’ (1994), suggests that, in nationalist movements, women have been historically seen as ‘nurturers of the nation’:

[Women] have [...] been seen as crucial for the reproduction of the nation, both materially, by giving birth to the next generation on nationalists, and ideologically, by transmitting to them those cultural understandings central to the maintenance of their national identity.<sup>493</sup>

This is in line with the type of loyalty that Frederick expects of women. But by complying with the intent of the Acts of Union and becoming ‘English’ to all intents and purposes, rather than mourning the loss of the cultural identity of her nation,

---

<sup>492</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Woman, Nation, State* (London: Macmillan, 1989).  
<sup>493</sup> Charlotte Aull Davies, ‘Women, nationalism and feminism’ in Aaron, Jane, Teresa Rees, Sandra Betts and Moira Vincentelli, eds., *Our Sisters’ Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), 242.

Gwyneth has sorely disappointed her admirer.

Frederick's expectation of Gwyneth to 'perform' otherness for him, much in the way that other male characters in *Rhapsody* demand that women interpret male creativity through their musical performance, has its roots in power politics. One evening during his stay, Frederick waits in the nearby wood to listen for a nightingale's call:

I felt that there was nothing I wanted so much as to hear her sad notes. I remember thinking how Nietzsche said that Brahms' melancholy was the melancholy of impotence, not of power, and I remember feeling that there was much truth in it when I thought of his *Nachtigall* and then of Keats. (*R.*, 57)

Frederick wants Gwyneth, like the nightingale, to perform for him the 'melancholy of impotence' for both her gender and her ethnic position. Frederick relates to Welsh culture as a 'foreigner'; curious, even sympathetic, but unwilling to own or act upon his own involvement in creating its condition. In this light, then, Gwyneth's refusal to be melancholy in her performance of her 'little Welsh song', or to sing Chopin's 'Polens Grabgensang', could be read as an act of colonial resistance, on both an ethnic and a gendered level. Through both Frederick and Gwyneth, Edwards demonstrates an awareness of the significance of culture in the colonisation of the mind: with Gwyneth in particular, she deconstructs the complexities discussed earlier in this chapter in terms of Wales' complicity in British imperialism. As suggested, the argument that Wales was somehow an accessory to England's imperial ventures ignores not only the fact of Wales' long and arduous experience of cultural, linguistic and economic colonisation, but the way in which this has been demonstrated in Welsh-language writing. According to Jane Aaron, Welsh-language literature has long shown an awareness of Wales' colonised situation:

from its beginnings [...] Welsh [language] literature reflected the experience of conquest and the resultant cultural, social and psychological disarray [...] The notion that nineteenth-century Welsh people happily profited from the

British Empire without ever critically assessing imperialism in the light of their own history of colonization is a misconception based on too little knowledge of Welsh-language culture.<sup>494</sup>

Fascinatingly, just a year after the publication of *Rhapsody*, Edwards herself experienced a similar reaction to her own cultural status in her early interactions and subsequent friendship with David Garnett, discussed in the previous chapter. In his autobiography Garnett claims that Edwards' first letter to him 'seems almost intended to give the impression that its writer was a Welsh speaker who thought in that language [...] Later I learned that she knew French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek – but hardly any Welsh' (*FF*, 86). The particular linguistic history and make-up of the industrial area where Edwards was born and raised meant that the 'English' spoken in these areas at this time would have been strongly marked by Welsh, in terms of accent and grammatical features as well as certain Welsh-language terms. Garnett demonstrates the view that the Welsh language is the only thing that makes Wales Welsh and, to all intents and purposes, Edwards, stripped of her 'native' language, is essentially English. The comment made by Edwards that so 'mised' Garnett, which I quoted in chapter two, was:

It seems to me that I am still wrestling with the possibility – or indeed it may be the ultimate impossibility – of finding a way of expressing in the English language something that seems quite alien to everything that language has been created and moulded to express.<sup>495</sup>

Far from desiring to give a false impression regarding her linguistic abilities, however, I would suggest that Edwards' comment, and the effect that it had on Garnett demonstrates, for those familiar with the colonial nature of language in Wales at least, an awareness of the complexity of language politics. His disappointment at Edwards' lack of parochialism, expected of her as a result of her nationality, ignores

---

<sup>494</sup> Jane Aaron, 'Bardic Anti-Colonialism', in Aaron and Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales*, 138, 150.

<sup>495</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, n.d. [c. 1928-9]. Quoted in Garnett, *The Familiar Faces*, 86.



the difficulties experienced by a society that faces the task of interpreting the cultural, social and historical nuances of their heritage in a language other than their own, first-language or not.

Such ambivalence towards the coloniser's language, as exhibited in the above quotation from Edwards, is characteristic of postcolonial nations, as Knight suggests:

The language that has been colonially imposed is adopted as a voice, or voices, but they are ironic, an exploration, even a weapon, but not an expression of settled identity.<sup>496</sup>

Garnett, in his friendship with Edwards, demonstrates that he sees Wales as a land of the other, and requests that Edwards provide him with 'sketch of narrow Welsh valleys',<sup>497</sup> suggesting a first-contact colonial writing. Edwards made her response to such an attitude clear in a 1929 book review: 'I think there is nothing so nauseating in the English language as the numerous travel books which have never escaped from that terrible dichotomy "Englishmen and foreigners"', she writes.<sup>498</sup>

Whilst ostensibly it may have appeared to others that Edwards was 'English' as a result of her failure to write about Wales, her writing does in fact demonstrate an awareness of issues of colonisation pervasive in Welsh society, and the conflict faced by the colonised when forced to choose between their own cultural heritage and that so unremittingly imposed on them by the coloniser. As Miroslav Hroch has pointed out in his study of national revivals,

the members of the oppressed nationalities were bombarded by at least two national ideologies. Some of these people were able to improve their social position or gain an education, and arrived at a point where they were compelled to decide between two different available national alternatives. They had to adopt the standpoint of one particular current of opinion; they had

---

<sup>496</sup> Stephen Knight, 'The Voices of Glamorgan: Gwyn Thomas's Colonial Fiction', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 7 (2001-2), 20.

<sup>497</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1932. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 1.

<sup>498</sup> Dorothy Edwards, 'The Balkans: primitive ways and motoring days', (review of M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs in the Balkans*; P. T. Etherton and A. Duncombe, *Through Europe and the Balkans*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1929.

to take on the consciousness of one nationality or the other. The individual concerned had to undergo a differentiation of personal attitudes, whereby he identified himself either with the ruling nation or the oppressed one.<sup>499</sup>

Gwyneth, evidently, has identified herself with the ruling nation. By placing her on the side of the conquerors to highlight precisely how she has become the conquered, Edwards participates in a Welsh literary tradition of colonial resistance.

### III

‘The Conquered’ is one of the earliest of Edwards’ stories: it appeared in *The Calendar of Modern Letters* in 1926 shortly before the publication of *Rhapsody*. The fact that a criticism of colonialism is present so early on in her writing shows how central such ideas were to her thinking. But by 1933, while living in the attic room of Garnett’s London flat, Edwards was writing explicitly about a people whose colonial status, unlike that of Wales, is uncontested. In an untitled story found in her 1933 diary in the Reading collection, she describes a young Indian man’s awareness of his colonial burden.<sup>500</sup>

The role of the colonised in their own subjugation is central to this story, in which an Indian student, Sukhashean Mitter, visits the home of an English woman, Mrs Fornwood, in order to investigate the possibility of purchasing, on behalf of his uncle, an extensive art collection compiled by her late husband. Mrs Fornwood, then, is literally the owner of cultural artefacts, which Mitter’s Indian uncle wishes to acquire in order to aid him in his pursuit of attaining the coloniser’s lifestyle, thus becoming ‘English’ in manners and taste. Mitter explains to Mrs Fornwood:

---

<sup>499</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (1985; New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 12.

<sup>500</sup> The original manuscript version of this untitled story by Dorothy Edwards appears in her 1933 diary, Reading Collection, packet 6. However I shall refer to the recently published version of this story in order to avoid confusion. See ‘Mitter’ reprinted in Lucy Stevenson, ‘Two Drafts of an Unpublished Story by Dorothy Edwards’, *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 10 (2005), 174-183.

‘My uncle has become rich [...] He wished [sic] to live now in the English style. He was asked to visit an Englishman who had many splendid pictures, so he decided “Now I too will have many splendid English pictures.” He has entrusted me with the labour of buying them for him, though I do not believe in imitating English manners too much.’<sup>501</sup>

Mitter’s uncle, as a member of a colonised nation, considers the literal ownership of art to be an essential element of the ruling-class lifestyle and wishes to make use of his newly-found economic power (he is a successful tea exporter) in emulating the coloniser. Through him Edwards demonstrates an awareness of the significance of culture in the colonisation of the mind, and the role this process can play in the construction of a set of people who long to become like their coloniser. In her study of the 1847 *Report on Education in Wales, The Language of the Blue Books: The Perfect Instrument of Empire* (1998), Gwyneth Tyson Roberts points out that, like the deliberate attempt to annihilate the Welsh language in Wales in order to reinforce official English rule, the English government also exercised a particular form of linguistic colonisation in India with the precise aim of creating, in the words of one British administrator in India, Lord Macaulay, ‘a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect’.<sup>502</sup> These people would ‘absorb English values and attitudes along with the language’, allowing the colonisers to reach, and manipulate, peoples they may not otherwise have been able to influence.<sup>503</sup> This class of people, made up by those like Mitter’s uncle, would become an important operating part of the colonising machine. Roberts argues:

The successful implementation of this policy would mean that an Indian ‘class [of] interpreters’ would conscientiously devote their working lives to serving the purposes of the power which had colonized them.<sup>504</sup>

---

<sup>501</sup> Ibid, 177. In the first line of this quotation the manuscript version reads ‘wishes’ rather than ‘wished’. See Dorothy Edwards, untitled short story [‘Mitter’], diary for 1933. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>502</sup> T. B. Macaulay, quoted in Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 55.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

In the 1940s Welsh poet Alun Lewis recorded witnessing first-hand this complex practice of colonial mimicry while serving as a British soldier in India during the Second World War. Lewis says:

I strolled with my sweaty hands in my pockets for three or four miles as far as the little Catholic mission school in the village where the natives wear English frocks and handbags and parasols and worship God and speak bookish English.<sup>505</sup>

Lewis' experience of the cultural domination exercised in India by the English establishment while 'in exile' from his native country seems to have made him more aware of the complex position of the Welsh within the structure of the British Empire. He says in one letter in 1943: 'I regret my lack of Welsh very deeply [...] I know more Urdu than Welsh: it's very sad'.<sup>506</sup>

In 'Mitter', Edwards' awareness of the importance of material possessions in colonial mimicry, i.e. the paintings, much like Lewis' experience of the Indians' use of 'English' parasols, handbags, and frocks, anticipates a similar theme central to Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand's 1935 novel *Untouchable*.<sup>507</sup> Anand describes a young man, Bakha who, as a member of the lowest caste in India, is a road sweeper and public latrine cleaner. Bakha longs to be an English *sahib*: he discards his native dress in favour of trousers, breeches and coat made from the heavy rich wool worn by Englishmen and the Indian soldiers, and suffers the wearing of them in the stifling heat while performing his physically gruelling daily duties. Bakha's fascination with colonial dress, developed during a period spent living at the British regimental barracks with his uncle is, like Mitter's uncle's desire for English paintings, based upon the fact that the English, or British, way of life is presented as superior to his

---

<sup>505</sup> Alun Lewis, *In the Green Tree: The Letters & Short Stories of Alun Lewis* (1948; Cardigan: Parthian, 2006), 35.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>507</sup> Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (1935; London: Penguin, 1940).

own:

[Bakha] became possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life. He had been told they were sahibs, superior people. He had felt that to put on their clothes made one a sahib too. So he tried to copy them in everything, to copy them as well as he could in the exigencies of his peculiarly Indian circumstances.<sup>508</sup>

As a result his own culture, which he once valued, is now rejected in his pursuit of

Englishness:

As a child, Bakha had often expressed a desire to wear rings on his fingers, and liked to look at his mother adorned with silver ornaments. Now that he had been to the British barracks and known that the English didn't like jewellery, he was full of disgust for the florid, minutely studded designs of the native ornaments.<sup>509</sup>

In Edwards' story, Mitter, however, is more politically conscious of his country's conquered status and has reached a point of opposition to it: he is willing to carry out this act for his uncle, but he does "not believe in imitating English manners too much."<sup>510</sup> Mitter was initially impressed by all things English on first arriving in the country, but his tastes have since changed. Like Alun Lewis, Mitter appreciates the value of his own culture when faced with a dominant alternative. During his time in England Mitter has become aware of the strategies of power relations used by the coloniser in India, where one culture is given a superior civilised status, and the other is dismissed as savage or mysterious. He indicates this via his preference regarding the ethnic origin of the type of women that he considers attractive:

[I]n those days when he came to England he never admired any but fair women who seemed to him like so many primroses and yellow daffodils. But now he liked dark women better again.<sup>511</sup>

But as always in Edwards' work, characters like Mitter are not straightforwardly victims of the dominance of power in society. In the above passage Mitter shows at

---

<sup>508</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>510</sup> Edwards, 'Mitter', 177.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid, 176.

once an awareness of his own oppression whilst simultaneously contributing to the subjugation of others; namely, women. His ethnically-based selection of women to find attractive is a constructed and informed choice, and not a natural and impulsive response.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that in national discourse women have historically been constructed as signifiers of ethnic or national difference, suggesting that women ‘do not only teach and transfer the cultural and ideological traditions of ethnic and national groups. Very often they constitute their actual symbolic figuration’.<sup>512</sup> Mitter, in his deliberate redirecting of his sexual attention from the ‘fair’ woman to his own ‘dark’ woman, is participating in such nationalist articulation of women as literal guardians and reproducers of the nation, bearing his young and raising them in the national tradition, while ensuring the ‘purity’ of the ethnic line. As Anthias and Yuval-Davis emphasise, ‘[women] may be required to transmit the rich heritage of ethnic symbols and ways of life to the other members of the ethnic group’.<sup>513</sup> Like Frederick’s disappointment at Gwyneth’s failure to sing the Welsh song in the manner he expected, or even Garnett’s disappointment at Edwards’ inability to speak Welsh, Mitter locates his reclamation of his ethnic identity in his relations with women, suggesting that, like his uncle’s paintings or Bahka’s English clothing, women are also key possessions in cultural identity.

In ‘Mitter’ Mrs Fornwood in effect is acting as one such ‘cultural guardian’, passing art from one man to another in a move which, despite the new owner’s ethnic difference, will perpetuate the perceived superiority of the former owner’s culture and values as well as reinforcing her own marginalised status. In effect, Mrs Fornwood performs a similar role to that of Antonia Trenier in ‘Rhapsody’ or Leonora Morn in

---

<sup>512</sup> Anthias and Yuval-Davis, ‘Introduction’ to *Woman, Nation, State*, 9.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

‘Days’ as a mere bearer or carrier, and not creator or owner, of art. But, unlike the women in *Rhapsody*, Mrs Fornwood is offered an opportunity for revenge on her controlling husband and considers taking it. Mitter’s suggestion that the pictures are of substantial value brings out ‘almost a trace of vindictiveness’ in her voice: by selling the pictures that defined her husband, she can reclaim some ground of her own (she decides that if she does sell the paintings, the money will go into an artists’ fund in her husband’s name, thus obtaining no financial gain herself).<sup>514</sup> Her husband has tied her to the house forever: “‘I should have liked to sell the whole place & live somewhere else but you see we can’t,’” she says, looking at Fornwood’s grave, prominently visible from the drawing room window.<sup>515</sup> The beautiful headland above the pebbled bay, where Fornwood’s grave sits, looking ‘haughtily down at the sea on either side of it’, is surrounded by railings, erected specifically by Fornwood before his death, and a nearby sign warns “‘Trespassers will be prosecuted’”.<sup>516</sup> By choosing to be buried in its grounds, Fornwood continues to assert his ownership of his home, his land, and indeed his wife, even after his death.

Edwards indicates the complexities of colonial and indeed gendered identity via Mitter and Mrs Fornwood – both are equally subjugators of others and victims of others’ power, and illustrate the complexity with which power relations – of class, gender, and colonialism – are bound up with one another. In one of the last stories she ever wrote, again in exile in London, Edwards finally makes an explicit link between colonial ventures and the area from which she came.

‘Mutiny’, published posthumously in *Life and Letters To-day* in 1934, concerns the return to England of Reverend Edward Montgomery, a Nonconformist missionary who has spent most of his life working in South Africa. Accompanied by

---

<sup>514</sup> Edwards, ‘Mitter’, 177.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid, 174.

his teenage granddaughter Primrose, who is visiting Britain for the first time, Montgomery, on board ship on the passage home, finds himself caught up in a sailors' mutiny over food supplies and sleeping conditions. Montgomery supports the rebellion, able to see the validity of their cause – a fight against oppression and tyranny – and as a result has attracted the interest of the British press. Montgomery and Primrose are staying with Anthony Delcage, a self-styled 'hermit monk', taking a break from the social pressures of his upper-class lifestyle, and living alone in a mock Grecian temple on a large expanse of family-owned land. In this story, which follows the developing relationship between Primrose and Delcage, Edwards reveals an intricate awareness of British imperial presence in South Africa, and indeed of British colonialism as a whole, as well as continuing to criticise those seduced by or longing for power.

When discussing his future plans with James Rankin, a young reporter sent to cover the story of the mutiny, it emerges that Montgomery sees himself as the voice of the oppressed. He says,

'I have not stopped work. I am on my way to South Wales, and after a short holiday I shall undertake whatever labours await me in the distressed areas there.' The young man respectfully applauded this, and they spoke for a while about the schemes for helping the unemployed throughout the country, when Montgomery displayed an extraordinary ignorance, for he was merely setting out blindly with ready hands and broad and still upright shoulders in the direction of the suffering he had heard most about. (*R.*, 221-2)

Here, Edwards draws a parallel between south Wales and South Africa; Montgomery wishes to continue his missionary work, which he began in South Africa, in another distressed area, which has also arguably been impoverished in consequence of colonial processes.

Primrose, on the other hand, does not share her grandfather's passion for helping others, but instead, like Gwyneth in 'The Conquered', is seduced by the



appeals of ruling power. Her late mother was South African, and her English father is involved in the South African mines, the conflict surrounding which initiated, in 1899, the South African Wars between Afrikaans and the British incomers. (Interestingly, Edwards had a South African cousin, presumably an émigré, although nothing further is known about this family member.)<sup>517</sup> Primrose has until recently been a pupil at a boarding school in Bloemfontain, a South African city with many colonial links. In 1909 Bloemfontain was the location of negotiations between the British and the Boers, following the South African Wars; the city is also home to the National Women's Monument, a memorial erected in 1913 in remembrance of the 45,000 women and children who died in British concentration camps during the conflict.

As the story develops, Primrose becomes increasingly aware of the advantages of living amongst the English upper class. She undergoes an internal struggle, torn between the influence of her kindly but misguided grandfather, and the appeal of Delcage's wealth and social status. As the story progresses, Primrose is increasingly seduced by the perceived superiority of Delcage's type: 'Prim walked along beside him [Delcage], copying his dignified processional stroll as well as she could, getting nearer to it each minute' (*R.*, 226). Montgomery, although readily accepting of Delcage's hospitality, hopes that Primrose will be able to resist the material attractions of Delcage's ruling-class status, and in prayer he 'begged that those who have allowed their hearts to become set upon high places and the temptations of the world might be brought back to the path of grace' (*R.*, 233).

Mimicry operates on several levels in this story. In the passage above, Primrose attempts to emulate Delcage, while he knowingly mimics the working class:

---

<sup>517</sup> In a letter to Kelly and Jones, Edwards comments: 'Our South African cousin is coming for a few days'. Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1932]. Reading Collection, packet 4, item 27.

[Delcage] told them an extraordinarily amusing story about an orderly his younger brother had had during the war. He was a Yorkshireman, a queer fellow. Anthony even imitated his accent. Prim laughed at it with great amusement and the old man [Montgomery] put aside his suspicions and laughed and made him repeat the comic part of it. (*R.*, 231)

Despite claiming to have cut himself off from society to live a more natural existence, Delcage cannot help demonstrating the social snobbery characteristic of his class position, as we see in his reaction to the young reporter Rankin:

Delcage began to talk to him [Rankin], asking him various questions about political and social personages that he knew. [...] It gave Anthony a strange sensation to have that world that he had seen nothing of for nearly a year delineated so completely and yet with a slightly hostile pencil by this undistinguished young man. He terminated the conversation when he had heard enough by getting up from his seat, while Rankin was still speaking[.] (*R.*, 237)

For all its colonial references, ‘Mutiny’ is essentially about Primrose and her attempts to emulate the upper classes in order to win Delcage’s approval and ultimately his title; its concerns are very much like those in ‘Summer-time’, in that a young woman has left school and needs to find her way in the world, but has very few options open to her. Edwards is critical of the social structures that compel Primrose to behave in such a way: she describes her as vulnerable in her oscillations between naivety and an attempt at sophistication:

[I]n the expression on her face and her whole attitude, a desire to be impressive and disdainful struggled for mastery with what must have been a natural simplicity and naive enthusiasm for quite childlike things. (*R.*, 220)

The eponymous mutiny, then, could be said to be not that on board the ship, but Primrose’s rejection of her grandfather’s values. Like Gwyneth, Primrose both resists and internalises the power politics dominant in patriarchal society. But the very manner in which her resistance manifests itself shows that she is also ‘conquered’ – by the appeals of the ruling class, as well as her dependent status as a woman. Her internal struggle is evident when Montgomery asks her to walk with him, in order to

avoid leaving her alone with Delcage:

Montgomery went up to her and put his hand with undue earnestness upon her shoulder. 'I would like you to come. It would do you good,' he said, and this was a request and a command too.

She was on the point of putting down her book and coming; she looked up at him. But suddenly a cold expression came for a moment into her eyes. 'I would rather stay here and read,' she said with decision, and the effect was just as if she had shaken his hand from her shoulder. (*R.*, 237-8)

Although she finally evades her grandfather's influence, she does this only by marrying Delcage, and adopting the social power he represents.

Despite writing through the medium of English, Edwards, in her conscious criticism of those who emulate the coloniser, contributes to a continuing body of Welsh colonial criticism. Aaron reveals the awareness and criticism of Welsh mimics of the English upper classes in the work of the late-eighteenth-century Welsh-language poet Jac Glan-y-Gors. In a series of ballads Glan-y-Gors uses a central figure, Dic Siôn Dafydd, to mock those who reject their ethnic background in their pursuit of a perceived cultural superiority. Aaron says:

The name and image of Dic Siôn Dafydd entered Welsh consciousness as the archetype of the native betrayer. He represents those who succumbed to the cultural pressure to leave behind all the 'singular sinister uses and customs' of Wales in order to promote their social advancement in a Britain under English domination.<sup>518</sup>

Most interesting about this frequently used figure are the social as well as the national connotations of his actions. '[T]he original Dic Siôn Dafydd betrayed his people not only by disavowing his Welshness but also by becoming a capitalist [...] To speak that language of capitalism is just as much to speak a foreign language as to speak English, in these poems', suggests Aaron, indicating the historical link between socialist and nationalist ideologies in Wales.<sup>519</sup>

The fact that Edwards, in life, continually asserted her Welsh identity

---

<sup>518</sup> Aaron, 'Bardic Anti-colonialism', 147.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid, 148, 149.

suggests, I think, that she intended to convey her social and cultural criticism through the complex medium of her fiction. If she had wished to pass as an English writer she had the opportunity to do so, and with little difficulty. Rather than aspiring to an English identity in failing to describe industrial Wales in her fiction, as some critics and contemporaries alike have suggested, Edwards in fact, like her father, takes ‘imaginative flights into the upper reaches of society’ in order to test the strength of her own ideology.<sup>520</sup> As Diana Wallace has suggested in her analysis of female authors using a male narrative voice,

for women writers, the chance to use a male protagonist can be both liberating and even dangerously pleasurable [...] Writing, perhaps more than any other art form except drama, can offer the writer the imaginative experience of ‘being’ the opposite sex - or of ‘divining’ it.<sup>521</sup>

In the same sense, this can also offer the imaginative experience of ‘being’ the other class (upper) or nationality (English). Just as Edward Edwards relished the opportunity to masquerade as another class or nationality during family holidays in order to test the metal of his socialist beliefs, and also the perceptions of others, so his daughter journeys similarly into the world of the ‘other’. Edwards in her fiction employs and deconstructs gender, class and ethnic hierarchies to devalue the establishment that she has mirrored, proving that claims of birth, upbringing or heritage are void. Far from ignoring Welsh issues, then, Edwards’ attention in her writing is, in fact, focussed on questions of power imbalance and cultural imperialism which she sees as pervasive in Welsh society, as they have been and are in other previously conquered or colonised nations, long after the passing of any formal manifestation of legislative colonisation.

---

<sup>520</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.  
<sup>521</sup> Wallace, “‘A Sort of Genius’”, 60.

## CONCLUSION

On the evening of Friday 5th January 1934 Dorothy Edwards left her home in Cardiff, to which she had recently returned from her ten-month stay in London, to take a walk on Rhiwbina Hill. During her walk Edwards called on her friends Mr and Mrs Tom Russell, with whom she shared a passion for music; they noticed nothing out of the ordinary in her manner or conversation. At 9.30 that evening Mr Rich of Caerphilly was on his way to work when he noticed a young woman matching Edwards' description rush past him and head towards the nearby railway line. At 7.20 the next morning Edwards' body was found on the track; she had died as a result of a fracture at the base of the skull caused by an engine, probably belonging to a train that had passed at 10.34 on the Friday night. A note found in her pocket read:

I am killing myself because I have never sincerely loved any human being all my life. I have accepted kindness and friendship and even love without gratitude, and given nothing in return.<sup>522</sup>

This note led the coroner to conclude the inquest into her death with a verdict of suicide while in a state of unsound mind. She was cremated on the following Tuesday at 2.30 in Glyntaff, Pontypridd, and her ashes scattered on an unmarked plot.<sup>523</sup>

Edwards' suicide inevitably left her friends and family shattered, particularly her by now elderly and invalid mother, on whom this note must have had a particularly devastating effect. 'This has been a terrible shock [...] [Dorothy] was quite happy all the time she was home and full of her work,' Vida wrote to David Garnett of her daughter on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934.<sup>524</sup> In another letter she describes

---

<sup>522</sup> This note was printed on page 13 of the *Cardiff Times* on January 13th 1934 after it was produced as evidence during the inquest into Dorothy Edwards' death.

<sup>523</sup> The circumstances surrounding Dorothy Edwards' death are taken from reports in the *Western Mail & South Wales News*, January 10th 1934, 8, the *Glamorgan Gazette*, January 12th 1934, 8, and Watkins, 'Dorothy Edwards', 49-50.

<sup>524</sup> Vida Edwards, letter to David Garnett, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1934. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

herself, understandably, as ‘heartbroken’.<sup>525</sup> The strain of the situation evidently proved too much, and Mrs Edwards died just six months later, at the age of 68, on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1934.<sup>526</sup>

On the day of her death Edwards had spent the morning burning some papers in the garden, but when she left the house Vida noticed nothing unusual in her demeanour or actions. It is reasonable to assume that the documents she burned included letters from her former fiancé John Thorburn, and her ‘bad novel’, which she had requested Beryl Jones to destroy if she were to die suddenly. As I have shown, material held in the Reading collection reveals that Edwards’ self-destructive feelings had begun to manifest themselves well before this point; in an undated letter from Vienna (c. 1926), she wrote to Jones:

I am paralysed with dread when I think of the future. I shall perhaps live another fifty years. I shall write say 10-15 books (& that is too much.) That represents at the most 5 to 7 years regular work. That makes 43-45 years of contemplating suicide. And as a whole human nature seems to be constructed so as not to go further than contemplation.<sup>527</sup>

Such comments persist in Edwards’ letters to Jones and Kelly and, during the late 1920s and 1930s, they lose their flippant tone and become increasingly ominous. Her remark to Jones and Kelly on David Garnett’s offer of an attic room in his Endsleigh Street flat (‘If my attic proves to have been a vain dream & I have to stay at home instead I shall put my head in the gas oven & turn on the tap,’ she had said) proved to be eerily prophetic.<sup>528</sup> Likewise, she states that, despite the temporary nature of her arrangement with David Garnett, she does not ‘intend of course having at last got away from home to go back there if there is any sort of alternative’, indicating the

---

<sup>525</sup> Vida Edwards, letter to Ray Garnett, n.d. [1934]. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

<sup>526</sup> Glyntaff Crematorium records.

<sup>527</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c. 1926]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 37.

<sup>528</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelly and S. Beryl Jones, n.d. [c.1933]. Reading Collection, packet 3, item 18 (a).

intensity of her desire to escape from her home environment.<sup>529</sup> Garnett, too, received similar messages: a letter that Edwards sent to him on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1932 indicates the extreme emotional stress that she was suffering: ‘I contemplate easy ways of slipping out of this world of tears [...] last week I nearly did it’.<sup>530</sup> Ironically, such comments become less frequent in her letters to Jones and Kelly from her Endsleigh Street attic. In fact, she becomes uncharacteristically hopeful: in her August 1933 diary, the manuscript of which has survived in the Reading collection, one entry reads:

I really have begun a new life, I am happy again after many years of disturbance and fear and lostness; I even feel that there is in me a new power of some kind, or rather an old power reawakened that I can now use.<sup>531</sup>

And yet, this entry was written just four months before her suicide: the note of hope it strikes is false, much like that felt by her character Olivia Neran at the close of *Winter Sonata*. As in Edwards’ diary, in the last story of hers ever to be published there is, for once, a sense of hope: the promise of a real connection between a man and a woman, on equal terms. In ‘A Problem of Life’ a middle-aged man, Mr Rose, visits his friend Mr Barron’s countryside home, where he lives with his half-siblings Adrian and Rachel. Adrian is a sensitive student who reads avidly, and, despite his close relationship with his sister, feels very isolated. During a dinner party in the company of Rose, Barron, Rachel, and their neighbours Mrs Chenery and her daughter Emilia, Adrian suffers from a fit of depression not unlike those described by Edwards herself:

Adrian was very conscious of this feeling of being shut in, but it was something he sometimes experienced. It came inexplicably and went again; it brought with it a kind of melancholy somewhere deep down in his soul, too far down for him to find it and cast it away. And he felt this now. (*R.*, 259)

Emilia has the insight and sensitivity to pick up on Adrian’s despondent mood: “‘I

---

<sup>529</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to Winifred Kelley and S. Beryl Jones, 14<sup>th</sup> February [c.1933]. Reading, packet 3, item 18 (b).

<sup>530</sup> Dorothy Edwards, letter to David Garnett, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1932. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.

<sup>531</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, 4<sup>th</sup> August [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

looked at you once during dinner and I thought then that you felt sad inside,” she says to him (*R.*, 260). Adrian is ‘so much astonished at this that he did not answer,’ but from this point on the two are able to confide in one another about the depression that they apparently share (*R.*, 261). Emilia, in her sympathetic understanding of his feelings, pulls Adrian back from the brink of isolation.

As I have shown, Edwards’ feelings of isolation, alienation and frustration with the circumstances of her own life not only found their way into her correspondence with her closest friends, but strongly influenced her fiction. Clues abound in Edwards’ fiction to her mental state. Issues of ownership, belonging and isolation reoccur throughout her work: as we have seen, her stories often feature diffident characters excluded from a particular world to which they yearn to belong, like Nettle’s idolisation of the Nerans in *Winter Sonata*, for example. More disturbingly, a study of Edwards’ fiction reveals that she had worked out the sentiments expressed in her suicide note some time before her death. In *Winter Sonata*, after Curle has found Eleanor crying over some throwaway comment made by Premiss, he thinks it ‘really extraordinary’ that Eleanor ‘should cry because someone had told her that she was incapable of love’ (*WS.*, 175). Of course, it is in fact not in the least surprising that Eleanor should be upset to be deemed incapable of experiencing such a principal human emotion. Perhaps this comment had been made to Edwards, for its sentiments certainly seemed to preoccupy her to the extent that later she chose to include them in her suicide note. But the most striking connection occurs with Richard’s comment to Mary in ‘La Penseuse’, the evening before he embarks for Italy. “‘I suppose there are girls like you [...] You take my love and live on it [...] and give nothing in return’”, he accuses her (*R.*, 202).<sup>532</sup> And yet, ironically,

---

<sup>532</sup> This similarity has been pointed out by Christopher Meredith in ‘*Rhapsody*’s lost story’, 170.



in Edwards' fictions it is women, like Mary in 'La Penseuse', Olivia Neran in *Winter Sonata* and Lenora Morn in 'Days', who suffer as a result of such cold and unloving treatment at the hands of men, as I have shown in chapters three and four.

According to Margaret Higonnet, in her essay on women's suicide, a suicidal act 'may be dedicated, like a poem, to someone in particular. In order to limit the intrinsic ambiguity of the act, many suicides are doubled by explanatory texts.'<sup>533</sup> Edwards left an 'explanatory text' in her suicide note; this appears, however, to be deliberately ambiguous, in that it is not directed to one person but to everyone that she met. Most of all, however, it is condemning of herself. Contrary to her final statement, the letters and diaries held in the Reading collection prove that Edwards did in fact experience feelings which would generally be categorised as 'love', not only towards friends (particularly Beryl Jones and Winifred Kelly) but towards lovers (her emotional attachment to both Stitt Wilson and Ronald Harding is made painfully clear in her 1933 diary). Furthermore, the reverence in which she held her father's views and teachings, as well as the at times suffocating and very difficult role she maintained as her mother's only carer, show a filial devotion that others were often unable to comprehend.

In her suicide note, then, Edwards blames no-one but herself for her difficulties in forming fulfilling relationships, but her fictions tell a different story. While my intention in this thesis has been, primarily, to offer a new reading of Edwards' work in the light of paradigms of gender, class, and ethnicity, it has emerged that such issues permeated Edwards' life as they did her fiction. As I have shown in chapter one, Edwards' early years were dominated by the theories of class and gender equality so integral to her father's ideology; his early death, and the

---

<sup>533</sup> Margaret Higonnet, 'Speaking Silences: Women's Suicide', in Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), 69.

manner in which Edwards internalised his teachings, means that an awareness of her life serves to illuminate a reading of her work, and her deconstruction of power-based relationships.

As I have shown in chapter two, Edwards deconstructs the primacy of the masculine role in society in a variety of ways in her fiction, in *Rhapsody* in particular. Through her manipulation of the male narrative voice in such stories as ‘A Country House’ she takes gender criticism one step further than did her female Modernist forerunners. Edwards does not simply *tell* the reader about the lives of marginalised women confined to the drawing-room; rather, it is precisely via the *lack* of a female voice in these stories that she reveals the stiflingly oppressive nature of patriarchy. If her men reveal their prejudices and idiosyncrasies by saying too much, the silence of her women speaks volumes. In this sense, her work is also testament to the fact that, far from solely representing industrial landscapes and social strife through male eyes, Welsh writers were engaging in literary experimentation in a manner comparable to their Modernist contemporaries elsewhere. Edwards’ work has significance in terms of feminist criticism not only within Welsh writing, but in a wider twentieth-century context, and needs to be assessed alongside the work of other women writers such as Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and Dorothy Richardson.

As the third chapter of this thesis has argued, Edwards’ deconstruction of predefined gender roles in *Rhapsody*, not only in terms of women acting outside of conscribed gender roles (as does the female scientist Rahel in ‘A Garland of Earth’), but also men acting outside conventional boundaries (like the young male dancer Basil in ‘Summer-time’), highlights the illogical nature of the gender stereotypes that so constricted her own life and those of her contemporaries of both sexes. By showing their effects rather than forcing a prescriptive rhetoric that could have the effect of

alienating the reader, she demonstrates a startling subtlety in her polemic.

I maintain that gender concerns are inextricably linked to Edwards' critique of class ideology. Her exploration in 'Days' and *Winter Sonata* of the destructive effects of a passivity labelled by society as a desirable attribute in women in particular not only serves to criticise stereotypically gendered attributes, but links them irrevocably to constructions of class. As I have shown, Leonora Morn in 'Days' and Olivia Neran in *Winter Sonata* suffer an oppressive atmosphere as a result of both their gender and class status; they are, specifically, *middle-class ladies*. By means of her portrayal of the potentially negative effect of class- and gender-based expectations, then, Edwards demonstrates the destructive nature of such divisions.

Chapter four has illustrated that class divisions are shown to be equally constricting for Edwards' lower-class members of society. In *Winter Sonata*, as a result of the impermeable boundary that the telegraph clerk Arnold Nettle not only perceives, but reinforces, between himself and the object of his affection, Olivia Neran, the possibility of forming fruitful cross-class bonds is lost. Whilst Pauline Clark in the same text is able to embrace a far more natural and responsive lifestyle than the repressive atmosphere suffered by Olivia, class-based ideas ultimately inform others' perceptions of her. Despite her beautiful singing voice, for example, Pauline is considered ignorant of the aesthetic value of her own artistic talent as a result of her class. Her torn, dog-eared songbook and the fact that she is unable to name any of the composers whose songs she sings, indicates to the Neran household that she is uncultured and thus unqualified to appreciate artistic beauty. Equally, her class position leaves her vulnerable to David Premiss' insincere attentions, yet this connection will ultimately offer her no escape from the life of drudgery and gruelling domestic labour for which she appears to be destined.

Class differences were clearly highly problematical for Edwards. The views instilled in her during her early years regarding gender equality would in all likelihood have been seriously challenged in the proper environment of Howell's School for Girls, where middle-class girls were trained to become middle-class women. Edwards often explores such conflicts through a subtle use of classical allusion. Her use of myth is a long-overlooked aspect of her work; in this chapter, by means of an analysis of the tale of Persephone's abduction, I hope to have gone some way to suggesting a new context within which to read and assess Edwards' work.

In her fictions Edwards suggests that the class distinctions which dominate British society have no justifiable basis. Ultimately, her characters use what class power they have to exploit those below them on the social scale; just as Premiss exploits Pauline Clark, so the owner in 'A Country House' believes that his wealth and status entitle him to dominate others. In effect Edwards draws in her work a parallel between the marginalised status of the working-class male and the middle-class female, while characters like Pauline Clark, as working class *and* female, face oppression and subjugation on the terms of both their gender and their class. For others, as in the case of Mitter, their ethnicity too becomes a factor in their dispossession.

Edwards' association with Garnett and his Bloomsbury friends, which dates from 1928 to her death in 1934, saw her, perhaps as a result of being confronted with her Welsh difference in a London setting, become increasingly concerned with issues of national identity and colonial politics, and their relationship with class. In the stories 'Mitter' and 'Mutiny', both written in 1933 when she was living with Garnett in his Endsleigh Street flat, she explicitly developed the link between Wales and other colonised nations that she first suggested in 'The Conquered'. These stories, and her

diaries and letters from this time, suggest that her perception of a pervasive and mentally colonising cultural imperialism is key to understanding her work. Far from masquerading as a member of the leisured classes in her writing, then, Edwards is mimicking this group in order to attack it, thus devaluing the establishment that she has mirrored and proving that claims of superiority in terms of birth, upbringing or heritage are void. As I argue in chapter six, just as her father adopted and discarded national and class identities to test social convention during family holidays, Edwards through her literary work exposes the inconsistencies of an elitist hierarchical system constructed on claims to gender, class, and ethnic difference,

The current development of postcolonial theories by Welsh critics serves to highlight the significance of the fact that, almost eighty years ago, in stories such as ‘Mitter’ and ‘The Conquered’, Edwards constructed patterns of representation which inextricably connect colonialist issues to those of race and class, thus demonstrating how aware she was of the construction of ethnicity. In her work, she exposes the methods used by dominant colonial nations to oppress, control and exploit nations that they deem ‘inferior’, just as the dominant class, or dominant gender, use an assumed predetermined superiority to justify their privileged place in society. Rather than ignoring the issues that affected her country, then, Edwards, unlike her characters Gwyneth in ‘The Conquered’ and Primrose in ‘Mutiny’, far from internalising the dominant culture’s values, criticised them in a complex and suggestive fashion.

During the period leading up to her suicide, Edwards had started to write about Wales in her diaries if not in her published fiction. In her 1933 diary, in an entry dated 31<sup>st</sup> August and apparently written in London, she describes Wales as:

a little country so full of steep hills that when the sun sets behind them, its golden rays turn them into great waves seeming almost transparent in the strange dying light. The whole land resembles an ocean petrified in the midst of its anger [...] Clouds love for days together to send down upon the earth a

soft drizzling rain which covers even the hill tops with green, makes the wide valleys luxuriant and keeps flowing in the narrow valleys the little rivers dyed coal black that find their way along the shallow stony beds [...] In some of the valleys the coal has come out from the earth like some pestilential lava thrown out by terrible volcanoes, that has swept between the hills & left behind nothing but great blocks of blackened stones among which live the people of the country who sing for ever like nightingales nesting in the ruins, sending their rich sweet voices up to the hill tops where the sheep in gentle inanity clip the sweet mountain grass & breath the bright air [...] Here you will meet often a solitary wanderer, an older man who has begun to understand the mystery of life and drags his tired miner's body up to those heights where with the clear eyes of childhood and the ardent vision of youth he first glimpsed it and loved it [...] Yea, Wales, thou beloved, lovely two-voiced land, when will thy people sing together of joy instead of sorrow, when wilt thou tend thy sons and daughters in the valleys as thy timorous sheep are fed and clothed upon thy tender hills.<sup>534</sup>

There is much in this passage to suggest that it is in part a reaction against the continued pressure placed on Edwards, as a representative of Wales in English society, to present a stereotyped, sentimental and parochial view of her country.<sup>535</sup> On the surface of it, Edwards seems in this passage to be submitting to the pressure by Garnett and others to construct a romanticized, rural Welsh idyll. But the undertones of violence and anger are evident: Wales is presented as an angry landscape, its natural resources (and the source of its colonial exploitation) spewed from the livid land like a 'pestilential lava'; its people, unquestioningly singing like nightingales in a country long abandoned of hope, are likened to the sheep that chew the mountain grass in 'gentle inanity'. The final sentence calls for change on the basis of national unity, indicating the extent of Edwards' move from class to state politics during this time. Her deliberate clichés communicate her underlying anger at the patronising response of people like Garnett, many of whose friends and associates profited from the exploitation of the industrial areas. His request, that she should 'write [...] a

<sup>534</sup> Dorothy Edwards, diary entry, n.d. [1933]. Reading Collection, packet 6.

<sup>535</sup> In his autobiography Rhys Davies commented: 'I found among the English an indulgent dismissal of Wales [...] [t]he native language was a joke.[...] the Welsh, like the Scottish and Irish, were expected to be idiosyncratic and, better still, amusing.' Davies, *Print of a Hare's Foot*, 113.

Welsh sketch of narrow valleys<sup>536</sup> and participate in the ethnic stereotyping of her nation that caused her so much pain, isolation and confusion in her later years, is, I suggest, the object of criticism in this passage.

Edwards died just nine years after the publication of her first short story. Her writing career, then, was by default very short, but during that brief span, she produced a small but fascinating body of work that is yet to take its rightful place in the canon of Welsh writing in English. Excluded by language from the Welsh intelligentsia, excluded by nationality and class from the English bourgeoisie, excluded by gender from the working-class communities to which her politics, and perhaps her heart, belonged, Edwards' attempt to negotiate a liminal space in which to develop her life and work failed with devastating consequences.

The recent resurgence of interest in Dorothy Edwards' work validates the importance of continued research on previously overlooked Welsh women writers. In the four years since I began writing this thesis, no less than five new critical articles have appeared on Edwards, all based in some way on the new material found in the Reading collection, as well as the republication of *Rhapsody*, along with 'La Penseuse', 'Mutiny', and 'The Problem of Life' in the 'Library of Wales' series. Because Edwards' work does not fit the pattern of male-dominated industrial fiction that has come to define the field of Welsh writing in English, it has been overlooked. But its republication and reanalysis contributes significantly towards redressing the gender imbalance in Welsh society, and goes some way towards rectifying the way in which Wales is often seen as synonymous with male-dominated social and cultural signifiers. The manuscripts held in Reading make a significant contribution towards unravelling the mystery of Edwards' writing, her life, and ultimately her tragically

---

<sup>536</sup> David Garnett, letter to Dorothy Edwards, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1932. Reading Collection, packet 1, item 1.

early death. More centrally, however, as this thesis has argued, an in-depth and critical analysis of her fictional writing in terms of feminist, class and postcolonial theory in itself reveals the way in which her work subtly and successfully deconstructs the hierarchies which, in life, overwhelmed her.



[BLANK PAGE]

**Appendix i:** S. Beryl Jones, 'Dorothy Edwards: A Personal Estimate', unpublished essay, 1986. Reading Collection, packet 11, item 2.

This essay, held in the Reading archives, was written as a reaction to the republication of *Rhapsody* and *Winter Sonata* by Virago Press in 1986. Material held in the Reading Collection indicates that Jones sent this piece to Virago (see Reading Collection, Packet 11), and Tony Brown has indicated that this piece was also sent to the *New Welsh Review* for publication in the late 1980s. Despite these attempts, however, this essay remains unpublished. See page 16 for further discussion of this piece.

This novel, which first appeared in 1928, has been in 1986 republished among its Modern Classics by The Virago Press, a choice on which they are to be congratulated, for, though at the time it received the highest praise from some discerning reviewers such as David Garnett and Gerald Gould, since then it has failed to maintain the place that it deserves in the ranks of the novel, partly, no doubt, because its author died before publishing further novels. But so, after all, did Emily Brontë,

Unfortunately the new issue's Introduction does less than nothing to help this situation, being decidedly inaccurate and misleading, diminishing Dorothy and her father and providing a completely false angle of approach to the kind of novel this is. It makes fun of her father's socialism in quite an unhistorical way, as he was accepted in his time as an equal by men such as Keir Hardy, Bruce Glasier, George Lansbury and the distinguished American socialist Stitt Wilson, all formative figures in the development of the international Labour movement,

To diminish Dorothy as a person it uses David Garnett's account in *Familiar Faces* too uncritically. At one stage in their relation David seemed to regard himself as slumming in his patronage of Dorothy, whereas she to the end spoke of him with respect and affection. At that time in spite of his continued high estimation of her work, he indulged in comments on her appearance and behaviour which are as misleading as they are unforgivable, especially his attribution to her of the social snobbery which he himself was more likely to be prone to. For example, being appalled when she was not sufficiently overawed at lunch by Lawrence of Arabia, he offered the explanation, "Dorothy had assumed that our visitor knew me because of my interest in flying, and she seemed to resent a common air craftsman joining as an equal in a conversation about the ancient Greeks," Dorothy may indeed have had political or even pacifist prejudices against Colonel Lawrence; she certainly had no class prejudice against air craftsman Shaw!

I stress this particular mistaken judgment of David's, only one of a number lurking behind this Introduction, because it is of a piece with the general guidance it gives to readers of the book, "The author," it suggests, "has selected her caste of characters... to enable her to illustrate the intricacies and the comedy of the English social system and its attitudes to life and love and class distinctions." A reference to H.G.Wells's *Kipps* is thought relevant! Certainly anyone who hopes to understand *Winter Sonata* has

to dismiss such suggestions absolutely. All the characters are estimated not by any social importance or difference of income or ancestry they may have but by their own human worth. To take a trivial but telling example, when Eleanor at seventeen feels sad that Mr Nettle in his lodgings has a jam-pot on his tea-table, she is not being aware of a miniscule class difference (which did in fact exist before the Great Wars!) but feeling in an immediate and sensitive way that as a person he is being deprived daily of a small aesthetic appurtenance.

The author of the Introduction cannot be blamed in the same way for the assertion that before Dorothy committed suicide "she burnt her letters and papers," though indeed some enquiries could have been made to ensure that this was correct. In fact the only letters that Dorothy made known she wished to be destroyed were those from John Thorburn to whom she had been briefly engaged. It was to me and a friend that Mrs Edwards entrusted the task of sorting the rest, and among other papers I still have in my possession an octavo diary covering a part of the year before her death together with letters that she had chosen to keep from various people, including those from David Garnett. I also have indeed a few score very useful letters that she wrote to me now and again over about fifteen years.

However, though I have thought it necessary to clear up some of the mistakes and misunderstandings, it is at the same time true that one of the most intriguing things about this novel is the apparent lack of connection between the life and the book. Written evidence and personal acquaintance prove on the whole equally irrelevant. I once commented to Dorothy that she did not appear to base her characters on anyone that she knew. She answered with great surprise that she certainly did; that one character, for example, was the young Pavlova, another came from a newspaper report of Madame Curie's daughter, a fat woman she had been searching everywhere to find a model for was discovered in a book on the Medicis, after scanning the streets of Vienna had proved useless, and that another woman had *my* forehead. She certainly drew

ussia, especially Dostoevsky and Turgenev, but there is not much of their influence at all readily apparent in her own writing, though there are minor echoes in style and situation and Mr Nettie has some points of comparison with the heroes of *The Idiot* and *The Raw Youth*. In fact the writers who get appreciation in her letters about this time are Knut Hamsun, Colette and smart Istrati, none of whom clearly were direct influences.

to will make references easier to have a short summary of the plot: Arnold Nettie, a newly appointed telegraph clerk has rooms in a village at the house of Mrs Clark, who has a rather flighty daughter of seventeen, Pauline, and a little son, Alexander. On the hill above the village is a white house where live two Neran sisters, Olivia, the elder, and Eleanor, the younger, live with a aunt, Mrs Curle and their older cousin, George. Mr Nettie becomes acquainted with them in the post office, falls in love with Olivia and is invited by Mrs Curle to call on them, bringing his cello. Later a Mr David Dennis, a literary friend of George's, pays them a long visit. All are referred to always with great formality.

If the absence of direct influence from life or reading on this novel is a bit unusual, its most obvious claim to originality is the basis of its structure on the sonata form, with four movements, marked themes, repeats, inversions, developments etc. In Dorothy's first published book, *Rhapsody*, she had already exercised on short stories with musical themes, and she was delighted when a fine Polish violinist she knew in Vienna said that one of these stories, *Arnold of Earth*, was "like a little scherzo."



Pauline is extended to nature, "it seemed to him that the little trees with their feathery black branches and the soft grey sky had an air of restrained gaiety like a little scherzo in a minor key." The other characters too contribute rather fantastic ideas. When George, for example, often prosaic and pompous, takes Promise to visit Nettle in his lodgings "he felt in a sort of way that these two were two distinct sides of himself, and it was a source of disappointment and annoyance to him that two portions of his personality should sit on either side of the fire-place and fail to drop into conversation," Mr Promise, however, by his actions as well as by his words, frequently provides amusing dramatic moments, e.g. while, Pauline having tapped after dark at Mr Nettle's window went slowly upstairs, "he took off his hat and made her a low bow from the pavement, laughing all the time with immense amusement." The same sort of mocking grace happens in the Nerans' house: "After coming up the stairs, talking and laughing with his friends, he would bow theatrically to Olivia and Eleanor, perhaps suggest a romantic theme for George's dreams." In the drawing room "it gave him immense pleasure to hear the voice of Bach's Virgin come from Pauline's lips."

To approach Chapter 3, the third movement, an *adagio*, from a slightly different angle, it is interesting to notice how the definite slowing down of the prose tempo which marks the transition from *scherzo* to *adagio* is achieved, verbs are extended by such qualifications as 'beginning to' or 'becoming' instead of being simply enacted or take a considerably lengthened form such as 'beat down' or 'hang down' or the prolonged 'he did indeed insist on paying a visit.' There is, too, the obvious slowing down of the subject matter: 'she talked as slowly as possible,' and 'he had to be dragged along the road.' It's true similar expressions are to be found in the quicker sonata movements, but they are more frequent here in making the transition. It is this phase of the winter weather that Olivia characterises as "numbed and helpless," denoting a sense of expectation in the air, but an expectation that was completely negative, which "did not express hope or fear or anything particular." As life slows down to the mid-winter, the texture of the prose seems to loosen: Olivia was standing there, with her hand resting on the bare tree, quite motionless, her large dark eyes contemplating the fields in front of them quietly and sadly." Sense and sound, syntax and punctuation all play their

starless heavens." Chapter 4 starts when Mr Premiss "packed up" after taking an early walk and Pauline "ran like a little rat" and was "kissed good-bye," and soon Eleanor, in contrast with her sister but looking at the same snowy scene, felt "like a bird whom no obstacle prevents from spreading its wings and flying to and fro over the earth, now coming in a low, swooning flight to the ground, now wheeling up to the low, grey sky." The movement is free and fast, with opposites and reverses all the time in play, as, for example, the slow but irreversible growth of the snowdrop leaves, "pushing their blunt tops up through the hard earth." But there is a steady over-all feeling of quickening, in both senses. Near the end of the movement even Olivia seemed "in a particularly vivacious and even gay mood."

The last movement is certainly some form of *allegro*, but for me, it has rather the structure of a *rondo*, as the characters recur and recur. Eleanor is almost a continuous presence; Pauline is constantly but briefly in and out of the scene, George even more so in his capacity of listener and philosophical commentator. Near or far it is around Olivia and Nettie that they revolve.

Most readers, of course, have no need to analyse in order to appreciate the quality of the different chapters as based on different musical movements, for they are enjoyed straight away, as are the natural settings and the irony and the humour. It is actually a very very funny book, and no-one can fail to respond with great delight to the scenes with the doughty and companionable Alexander.

However some people are put off by what they call the 'simple' or even 'childish' style of the writing; so it may be useful to look and see how it works.

In the opening lines of the opening paragraph, where, as usual, the style is established, the word 'it' occurs five times and sounds immediate warning notes of the central emphasis on the weather and the season. There are also other deceptively simple words such as 'rather,' 'in fact' and 'quite,' which imply that judgments of comparison and value have been at work in the background already. Such judgments become explicit if we follow up another two innocent-words 'as if' and thereby reveal the shape of the whole novel. The

elaborately, Olivia's quality is imaginatively conveyed in a comparison bringing into the stuff of this story the world of folk and fairy tale, which, once impinged on, will persist and begin to build up what will become a multi-dimensional background: "As she came down between the bare grey trees and along the hard grey road it was difficult to tell whether the white figure was more like summer going sidly away from the earth or like winter stealing quietly upon it." The background already sketched in with the white house and Hans Christian Andersen fir trees is deepened and we are subtly prepared for tragic possibilities only bearable because of the beauty of their presentation.

The characters are always felt to be on the edge of other worlds. Even the scornful and insolent Pauline knows that she will never sing as the organist plays, "like a great strong pillar stretching up to heaven," - her connection with the village choir has given her imagination here an Old Testament ring.

The range of reference grows and gets a considerable extension in Chapter 2 as Mr Premiss is so much at home in the whole realm of literature and philosophy.

As far as the characters are concerned their mutual dependence is double that in other novels since they are bound not only on the formal side by the sonata structure but also on the content side by their common love of music, which is what has brought them all together. Even Mrs Curle is ready to go out of her way to listen to a special choir-boy and she is always on the look-out for new musical talent for her drawing-room.

If all the characters it is Mr Nettie who is the continued centre of interest and with him contact is kept right through his heroic dreams and long illness. Mr Premiss not only comes into the story late but vanishes before the final high-tension scene. However between these times he is built up to become quite a formidable candidate for 'hero', responsible as he is for some of the finest philosophical and poetic insights. Could anyone but the hero be given such a wonderful passage as that at the beginning of Chapter 4 when Premiss looks down at a copse in a hollow and describes how the firs among the dead trees seemed to stand down there among the shades like heroes who alone can descend living into Hades? Among them was "the wonderfully delicate green of a young fir, like a strange little maiden who had wandered by some mischance into that anaful place, like poor Persephone herself, with her beauty obscured and veiled by joyless shadows." On reflection one sees that his narrow and casual



over the undoubted heroine Olivia needs, living as she does at an essentially magic level.

Pauline is undoubtedly one of the most solidly realised of all the characters with her working-class background, frank sexuality (as it would appear then!) and regular supply of scorn for everybody, but at the same time she is much attracted to cultured people and their way of life and appurtenances. She loves music as she comes in contact with it in the village church and immediately responds warmly to pretty clothes, attractively wrapped chocolates and the luxury of jewelry and scent. The scenes between her and her little mother, Alexander, are among the high lights of the book, full of colour and innocent enjoyment. She outlasts Mr Premiss in Chapter 4, making several very short appearances, but is not included in the final apotheosis.

Eleanor, who like Pauline is seventeen, gains a lot from Mr Premiss. As he is charmer with children he is also very much at home with girls of this age, though Olivia has to help once or twice when Eleanor gets a bit upset. She is a very spring-like character and exemplifies the strong life that continues on the young even in the winter time. At the end of Chapter 4 it is she who unctiously ushers in the first signs of spring, the snowdrops and the crocuses, and as the last movement develops she is the first to be "very happy and gay," when Olivia is still "sad and depressed," and George hasn't his usual flow of good spirits."

Olivia all along is the most distinguished figure in the group, with those large rather sad eyes" and gentle smiles, which play a clearly recognisable musical part in the sonata, recurring regularly till finally at the end of the last movement they develop into being "like dark jewels." Mr Nettle once describes her as looking "innocent and queenly at the same time."

When Mr Premiss has been there a while she speaks of her "sensation of happiness, inexplicable and filled with that certainty of its lasting forever, which comes just before it begins to die again." But when later he makes remarks which show his inability to understand her, she fails to smile, solicitously marking the end of her incipient love for him. The genuine

Mrs Curle provides just such heavy contrast as the sense and the music demand, for example to Pauline's flightiness and Eleanor's ebullience. Her last appearance in the book is to say "you'll get tired of it" to act as ballast to Mr Nettle's so significant utterance, "I am going to stay here always," with its undertones of death and its overtones of resurrection.

The final scene begins its big build-up as Nettle recovering from his mid-winter illness ponders on "how these people who seemed to him not to possess any of the customary human failings could be so full of humility." Soon the turn in the winter weather comes with the falling of a "thin warm rain," and it was such an evening that he chose to go "up there" again, excited at feeling well as he climbs the hill and experiencing the atmosphere as like a "low-pitched monotonous phrase in some music," and he in his extraordinary happiness "might have been singing an octave above it, a long, sustained song of joy," a comparison taking us implicitly this time into the dimension of the last movement of the Choral Symphony. As he stands at the door and knocks, his heart was beating quickly and there are here more of those anticipatory notes, announcing that the finale is imminent. Inside they all welcome him and Eleanor's bowl of snowdrops provides an indoors springtime, a miniature of what he had found so exciting in the atmosphere outside, and they are "in all their green and white innocence like children, singing with thin, childish voices a sort of New Year's hymn," Olivia was in a "particularly vivacious and even gay mood," and those 'dark eyes' which have saddened so much of the story and formed a recurrent theme in the music "like dark jewels shone out into the room," a phrase which brings her presence very close to the reader. The further sensuous description of her hair lying "on her head like something asleep, but breathing a deep and mysterious life," suddenly puts her, too, on the edge of the world of vegetation deities to whom Nettle of course is akin.

At supper he is to see them all as sitting around the table "like stars," and their voices "seemed to come to him from far away, as though by some chance the heavens had opened... and a fragment of some angelic conversation had floated down to him upon the earth," a comparison which adds overtones of a Christian nativity to this religio-magical rite of spring. Further, as

conversation goes on, he gazes at his friends intently but is too humble to see that "it was on him they had turned their angelic glances." Finally, when Olivia asks him how much longer he is staying, there is a scriptural resurrection echo as he answers, "I am going to stay here always," a phrase with overtones of immortality and undertones of death.

At this point in the *rondo* Mr Fremiss gets a negative mention as one whose look has been "forgotten."

When the tired but transcendently happy Mr Nettle is about to leave the house, Eleanor prevents his simple exit through the front door comparatively unseen and bringing him firmly into the centre of the picture, where he belongs, insures that he avoids the curse of seeing the new moon through glass and warns him not to tread on the crocuses, so that he makes an entirely auspicious exit from the house and from the story with all the simple humility of a Saint Francis, "bending his head to look carefully on the ground for the little flowers."

The only written guide I have to Dorothy's aim in writing comes from her diary for the autumn before her death. In a passage directed towards her "prophet" as she called him, the American, Stitt Wilson, famous in his day as a Christian socialist, she speaks of hoping and willing to write "something that is pure and unclouded so that the beauty of the universe and of man and women is reflected upon its untarnished surface." In *Winter Sonata* she seems to me to have done just this; the simple clear surface of the story is created so as to reflect all along the universal background as it has been shaped through time by man's thought and imagination. Because the novel is about people who are related to each other through the love of music and is presented in a medium based on a musical form, as it goes on the writing itself almost seems to reach the condition of music.

The sonata form demands a last movement in which earlier problems are resolved in some supreme qualitative experience, the lead up to which I have tried to

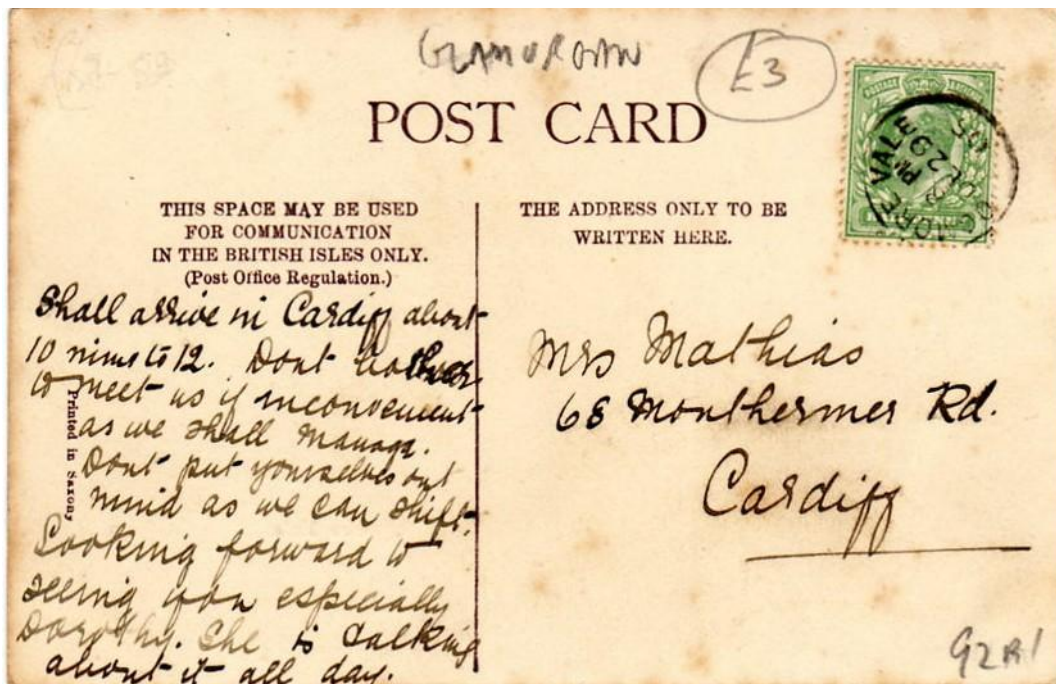
Pauline's home is sordid and her scivvying activities as she lights Mr Lettice's fire early on a cold morning as pitiful as the *Mörrike* poem set by Hugo Wolf which Dorothy used to sing. Eleanor is often in tears as she suffers the excruciating moods of the adolescent of those days; Olivia's mid-winter depression forms the nadir of the whole book: "A sudden feeling of loneliness had come upon her, so intense, that the place and the people around her, the yard, stony garden and the trees, stood out empty and bare as though without any deeper implications, as though she had withdrawn into herself all the imagination and affection which could have given them life and depth. She felt in that moment an almost intolerable distaste for life, a kind of nausea." Mr Lettice is of course a very sick man, the absolute quality of whose descent into a winter 'death' can only be measured by the spring joy of his return like Thammuz from 'the dead'. A book about winter is by its very nature a book about death.

My own judgment is that *Winter Sonata* is a novel of such an original and poetic kind that it should be assured of a place not only as the best Anglo-Welsh novel, but, like *Wuthering Heights*, as one of the best novels in the



## Appendix ii: Illustrations

**Figure 1:** Postcard, written by Vida Edwards, showing the position of Brynteg, Glyn Street [c. 1905]. Courtesy of Phillip Taylor.



**Figure 2:** Photograph of Edward Edwards [c. 1912]. Courtesy of the Ogmore Valley Local History and Heritage Society.



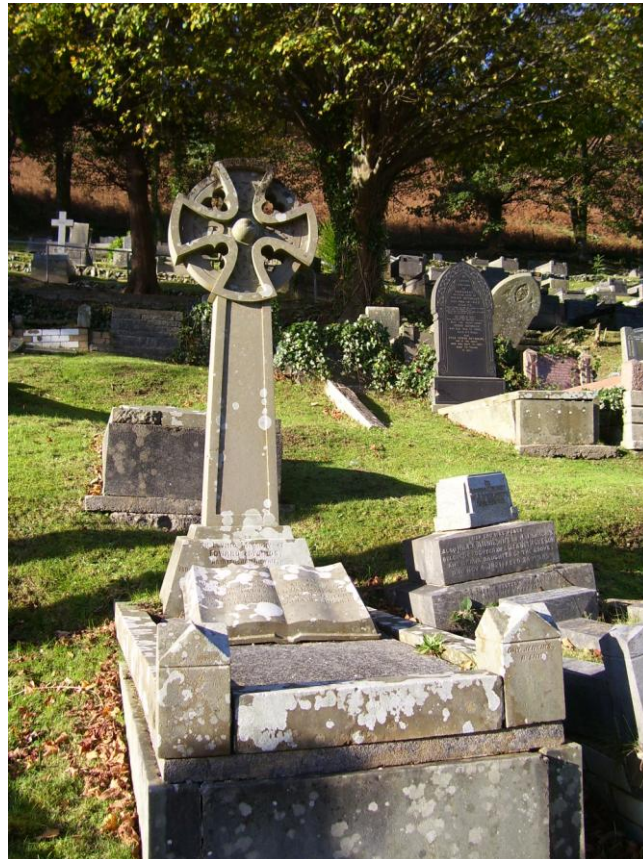
**Figure 3:** Dorothy Edwards, aged 10. Reverse of postcard reads ‘With love to Mama from Dorothy for her birthday May 13th 1913’. Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers. Courtesy of Richard Garnett.





**Figure 4:** Photograph of Edward Edwards' gravestone. Copyright Claire Flay, 2006.

The inscription reads: 'This book was laid by the Tynewydd Ward Labour Party, the Trade Unions & the Co-operative Society. In memory of Edward Edwards, Schoolmaster & Socialist Pioneer.'





**Figure 5:** Photograph of Dorothy Edwards in dramatic production by University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire [c. 1920]. Courtesy of Emrys Evans.



**Figure 6:** Photograph of Dorothy Edwards and David Garnett [c. 1930], ref King's/PP/FCP/7/4/2/102. Copyright King's College Library, Cambridge.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Primary material

#### **Fiction, journal articles and reviews**

- Edwards, Dorothy, and K.F. [Kathleen Freeman] 'Vers Libre, written in 1922', *Cap and Gown*, 20/1 (1922), 27-28
- \_\_\_\_\_, Untitled poem, *Cap and Gown*, 21/2 (1924), 14
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'A Lullaby', *Cap and Gown*, 22/1 (1924), 36
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'On Temperatures', *Cap and Gown*, 22/1 (1924), 27-29
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Pas De Maria', *Cap and Gown*, 22/2 (1925), 19-21
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'On Writing', *Cap and Gown*, 23/1 (1925), 11-12
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Winter Sonata* (1928; London: Virago, 1986)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'G. K. Chesterton', in Edgell Rickword, ed., *Scrutinies* (London: Wishart, 1928), 29-40
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Balkans: primitive ways and motoring days', (review of M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs in the Balkans*; P. T. Etherton and A. Duncombe, *Through Europe and the Balkans*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1929
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Four novels by women: reaction to modern tendencies' (review of Catherine I. Dodd, *Scarlet Gables*; Marjorie Terry, *The Continental Courier*; Ethel Mannin, *Crescendo*; Phoebe Fenwick Gaye, *Vivandiere*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1929
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Hardy's Wessex: the spirit of the landscape' (review of Donald Maxwell, *The Landscape of Thomas Hardy*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 28<sup>th</sup> March 1929
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'A quartette: Miss James's retort to the censor' (review of G. B. Stern, *Petruchio*; Anne Parish, *All Kneeling*; Phyllis Bentley, *Carr*; Norah James, *Hail, All Hail*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1929
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Famous women: figures in history and romance' (review of H. E. Wortham, *Three Women: St. Teresa, Madame de Choiseul, Mrs Eddy*; *Diary of St. Helena. The Journal of Lady Malcolm*; Marjorie Bowen, *The Third Mary Stuart*; Flora Annie Steel, *The Garden of Fidelity. The Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel*), *Western Mail and South Wales News*, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1929
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Mutiny', *Life and Letters To-day*, 9 (1934), 325-346, reprinted in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007), 217-240
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Problem of Life', *Life and Letters To-day*, 10 (1934), 662-676, reprinted in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; Cardigan: Parthian, 2007), 241-268
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Mitter', in Lucy Stevenson, ed., 'Two Drafts of an Unpublished Story by Dorothy Edwards', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 10 (2005), 174-183

#### **Unpublished material**

Dorothy Edwards Collection, Reading University Library, MS 5085

Dorothy Edwards Papers, David Garnett Collection, private family papers (courtesy of Richard Garnett)

## **B. Secondary and critical material**

- Aaron, Jane, Teresa Rees, Sandra Betts and Moira Vincentelli, eds., *Our Sisters' Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'A national seduction: Wales in nineteenth-century women's writing', *New Welsh Review*, 27 (1994-5), 31-8
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c. 1850 - 1950* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 1999)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'A review of the contribution of women to Welsh life and prospects for the future', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 8 (2002), 188-204
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Chris Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Nineteenth-century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007)
- Adams, Sam, and Gwilym Rees Hughes, eds., *Triskel One: Essays on Welsh and Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1971)
- Adamson, David L., *Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991)
- Alpers, Anthony, *The Life of Katherine Mansfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980)
- Anand, Mulk Raj, *Untouchable* (1935; London: Penguin, 1940)
- Anthias, Floya, and Nira Yuval-Davies, eds., *Woman, Nation, State* (London: Macmillan, 1989)
- Attridge, Derek, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (2002; London: Routledge, 2004)
- Baldick, Chris, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Bates, H. E., *The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1941)
- Beauman, Nicola, *A Very Great Profession: The Women's Novel 1914-39* (London: Virago, 1989)
- Beddoe, Deirdre, 'Images of Welsh Women', in Tony Curtis, ed., *Wales: The Imagined Nation* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), 225-238
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939* (London: Pandora, 1989)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Women in Twentieth-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000)
- Bell, Anne Olivier, ed., *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 1 1915-1919* (London: Hogarth Press, 1977)

- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 2 1920-1924* (London: Hogarth Press, 1978)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 3: 1925-1930* (London: Hogarth Press, 1980)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume 4: 1931-35* (London: Penguin, 1983)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf Volume 5 1936-41*, (London: Penguin, 1984)
- Bell, Michael, ed., *The Context of English Literature 1900-1930* (London: Methuen, 1980)
- Bell, Quentin, *Bloomsbury Recalled* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- Berger, Stefan, and Angel Smith, *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity 1870-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999)
- Bhabha, Homi K. *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Location of Culture* (1994; London: Routledge, 2003)
- Bohata, Kirsti, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004)
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Psycho-colonialism" Revisited, *New Welsh Review*, 69 (2005), 31-9
- Bradbury, Malcolm, 'The Calendar of Modern Letters: A Review in Retrospect', *The London Magazine*, 1/7 (1961), 37-47
- Bradshaw, David, *A Concise Companion to Modernism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003)
- Brennan, Catherine, and Katie Gramich, eds., *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460 - 2001: An Anthology* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 2003)
- Brown, Andrew, *A New Companion to Greek Tragedy* (London: Croom Helm, 1983)
- Brown, Judith M. and Wm. Roger Louis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Brown, Terence, and Patrick Raftery, *The Irish Short Story* (Gerrard's Cross: Colin Smythe, 1979)
- Brown, Tony, and Russell Stephens, eds., *Nations and Relations: Writing Across the British Isles* (Cardiff: New Welsh Review, 2000)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The ex-centric voice: the English-language short story in Wales', *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 1/1, (2001), 25-41
- \_\_\_\_\_, "'A personal isolated odd universe": Dorothy Edwards and her short fiction', in Christopher Meredith, ed., *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), 140-158
- Browning, Robert, *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1989)
- Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- Cook, Albert and Edwin Dolin, *Greek Tragedy: An Anthology* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1972)
- Daniel, Huw, ed., 'History of the Tynewydd group of schools (1975)', *Ogmore Valley Local History and Heritage Society Journal*, 8, (2007), 11-29
- David, A. P., *The Dances of the Muses: Choral Theory and Ancient Greek Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Davies, D. Hywel, *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925-1945: A Call to Nationhood* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983)
- Davies, Norman, *The British Isles: A History* (London: Macmillan, 1999)
- Davies, R. R., 'Colonial Wales', *Past and Present*, 65 (1974), 3-23
- Davies, Rhys, 'Writing about the Welsh', *Literary Digest* 2/2 (1947), 18-19
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Collected Stories Volume 1* (Llandysul: Gomer, 1996)

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Print of a Hare's Foot* (1969; Bridgend: Seren, 1998)
- Dawe, R. D. ed., *Sophocles: Oedipus Rex* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- Dirks, Nicolas B., ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992)
- Dowson, Jane, ed., *Women's Poetry of the 1930s: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Eagleton, Mary, ed., *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)
- Easterling, P.E., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Evans, Neil, and Dot Jones, "'A blessing for the miner's wife': the campaign for pithead baths in the south Wales coalfield, 1908-1950", *Llafur*, 6/3 (1994), 5-23
- Fenson, Harry, and Hildreth Kritzer, *Reading, Understanding and Writing About Short Stories* (London: The Free Press, 1996)
- Ferve, Ralph, and Andrew Thompson. eds., *Nation, Identity and Social Theory: Perspectives from Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999)
- Flay, Claire, 'Strange Music: The Life and Writings of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)', University of Glamorgan M.A. Thesis (unpub., 2004)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'A brief biography of the author Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)', *Ogmore Valley Local History and Heritage Society Journal* 2005, 6 (2005), 59-60
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Conquering Convention', *New Welsh Review*, 77 (2007), 60-66
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The Subversive Cinderella: Power Dynamics and Cultural Imperialism in the Short Stories of Dorothy Edwards', in Ailsa Cox, ed., *The Short Story* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), 116-129
- Foley, Helene. P., ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994)
- Frader, Laura L., and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *Gender and Class in Modern Europe* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996)
- Fromm, Gloria G., *Dorothy Richardson: A Biography* (Chicago & London: University of Illinois Press, 1977)
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson* (Athens & London: University of Georgia Press, 1995)
- Gandhi, Leela, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998)
- Garlick, Raymond, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1970)
- Garnett, Angelica, *Deceived with Kindness: A Bloomsbury Childhood* (London: Chatto & Windus/The Hogarth Press, 1984)
- Garnett, David, *The Golden Echo* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Flowers of the Forest* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Familiar Faces* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962)
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *The White/Garnett Letters* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Great Friends: Portraits of seventeen writers* (London: Macmillan, 1979)
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *Carrington: Letters and Extracts from her Diaries* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970)
- Genette, Girard (trans. Jane E. Lewin), *Narrative Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980)

- Girard, René, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1965)
- Gramich, Katie, 'Gorchfygwyr a Chwirydd: storïau byrion Dorothy Edwards a Kate Roberts yn y dauddegau', in M. Wynn Thomas, ed., *Diffinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 80-95
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Introduction' in Allen Raine, *Queen of the Rushes* (1906; Dinas Powys: Honno, 1998), 1-23
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007)
- Hadow, W. H., *Sonata Form* (London: Novello & Company, n.d.)
- Haig, Margaret (Lady Rhondda), *This Was My World* (London: Macmillan, 1933)
- Hamilton, Roberta, and Michele Barrett, eds., *The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism and Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1986)
- Hanscombe, Gillian, *The Art of Life: Dorothy Richardson and the Development of Feminist Consciousness* (London: Peter Owen, 1982)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Virginia Smyers, *Writing for their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (London: The Women's Press, 1987)
- Hanson, Clare, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985)
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed., *Re-reading the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1989)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Looking within: women's writing in the modernist period, 1910-40', Marion Shaw, ed., *An Introduction to Women's Writing: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, 1998), 203-234
- Harris, John, 'Queen of the Rushes', *Planet*, 97 (1993), 64-72
- Hart, David, 'The Thread of Poetry', *Planet*, 162 (2003/2004), 28-34
- Head, Dominic, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- Hechter, Michael, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (1975; London: Routledge, 1978)
- Heilbrun, Carolyn, *The Garnett Family* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961)
- Higonnet, Margaret, 'Speaking Silences: Women's Suicide', in Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1986), 68-83
- Holroyd, Michael, ed., *Lytton Strachey by Himself* (London: Heinemann, 1971)
- Hroch, Miroslav, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (1985; New York: Columbia University Press, 2000)
- Huneker, James, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (London: Charles Scribner, 1903)
- Hywel, Elin ap, ed., *Luminous and Forlorn: Contemporary Short Stories by Women from Wales* (Dinas Powys: Honno, 1994)
- Ingman, Heather, *Women's Fiction Between the Wars: Mothers, Daughters and Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998)
- Isbister, J. N., *Freud: An Introduction to his Life and Work* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985)
- Jenkins, R. T., ed., *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (London: The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, 1959)
- Joannou, Maroula, ed., *Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)
- John, Angela V., ed., *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-*

- 1939 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991)
- Jones, Glyn, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues: Essays on Anglo-Welsh Writers and Writing* (London: Dent, 1968)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and John Rowlands, *Profiles: A Visitor's Guide to Writing in Twentieth-century Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer, 1980)
- Jones, Gwyn, 'Notes on the Welsh Short Story Writers', *Life and Letters To-day*, 36/67 (1943), 156-163
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'The First Forty Years: Some Notes on Anglo-Welsh Literature' (1957), Sam Adams and Gwilym Rees Hughes, eds, *Triskel One: Essays on Welsh and Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1971), 75-95
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Times Like These* (London: Gollancz, 1979)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Michael Quinn, eds., *Fountains of Praise: University College, Cardiff 1883-1983* (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1983)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Islwyn Ffowc Elis, eds., *Classis Welsh Short Stories* (1971; Oxford: University Press, 1992)
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (1949; London: Everyman, 2000)
- Jones, Sally, *Allen Raine* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979)
- Jones, S. Beryl, 'Dorothy Edwards as a writer of short stories', *Welsh Review*, 7 (1948), 184-93
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Winter Sonata by Dorothy Edwards – a personal estimate', (unpub., 1986), Dorothy Edwards collection, Reading University Library Archives, University of Reading
- \_\_\_\_\_, *In the Armpit of a Mountain* (Hereford: Lapridge Publications, 1996)
- Jones, W. A. M. ed., 'Extracts from the School Logbook: Ogmore Grammar School' (unpub., 2005)
- Joyce, James, *Dubliners* (1914; London: Penguin, 1992)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916; London: Penguin, 1992)
- Kallberg, Jeffery, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre* (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996)
- Kaplan, Sydney Janet, *Feminine Consciousness in the Modern British Novel* (London: University of Illinois Press, 1975)
- Kavaler-Adler, Susan, *The Creative Mystique: From Red Shoes Frenzy to Love and Creativity* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Knight, Stephen, 'The Voices of Glamorgan: Gwyn Thomas's Colonial Fiction', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 7 (2001-2), 16-34
- \_\_\_\_\_, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004)
- Knights, Ben, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1999)
- Kravitz, David, *The Dictionary of Greek & Roman Mythology* (London: New English Library, 1975)
- Lee, Hermione, ed., *The Secret Self 1: Short Stories by Women* (1985; London: Dent 1991)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Secret Self 2: Short Stories by Women* (1987; London: Dent 1991)
- Lee, Hugh, ed., *A Cézanne in the Hedge and Other Memories of Charleston and Bloomsbury* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- Lefkowitz, Mary R., *Women in Greek Myth* (London: Duckworth, 2007)



- Leslie, R. F., ed., *The History of Poland since 1863* (Cambridge: University Press, 1980)
- Levy, Paul, ed., *The Letters of Lytton Strachey* (London: Viking, 2005)
- Lewis, Alun, *In the Green Tree: The Letters & Short Stories of Alun Lewis* (1948; Cardigan: Parthian, 2006)
- Light, Alison, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Llewelyn Davies, Margaret, ed., *Life As We Have Known It by Co-operative Working Women* (1931; London: Virago, 1977)
- Llewellyn-Williams, Hilary, *Greenland* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003)
- Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen, *Margiad Evans* (Bridgend: Seren, 1998)
- Lucas, John, *The Radical Twenties: Writing, Politics, Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications, 1997)
- McAllister, Laura, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party* (Bridgend: Seren, 2001)
- McClary, Susan, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991)
- McGann, Jerome, ed., *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Collected Poetry and Prose* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003)
- McLean, Iain, *Keir Hardie* (London: Allen Lane, 1975)
- Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield* (1945; London: Penguin, 1981)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Short Stories* (1983; London: Dent, 2000)
- May, Charles E. ed., *The New Short Story Theories* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994)
- Meredith, Christopher, 'The window facing the sea: the short stories of Dorothy Edwards', *Planet*, 107 (1994), 64 -7
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Foreword' in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody*, 'Library of Wales Series' (Cardigan: Parthian, 2007), ix-xiv
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Rhapsody's Lost Story', in Christopher Meredith, ed., *Moment of Earth: Poems & Essays in Honour of Jeremy Hooker* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2007), 159-170
- Meredith, Luned, 'Dorothy Edwards', *Planet*, 55 (1986), 50-56
- Miller, Jane Elridge, *Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism and the Edwardian Novel* (London: Virago, 1994)
- Mills, Sara, Lynne Pearce, Sue Spaul, and Elaine Millard, eds., *Feminist Readings/Feminist Reading* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989)
- Moi, Toril, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985)
- Morgan, Elaine, 'Introduction' in Dorothy Edwards, *Rhapsody* (1927; London: Virago, 1986), ix-xxii
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Introduction' in Dorothy Edwards, *Winter Sonata* (1928; London: Virago, 1986), ix-xviii
- Morgan, Kenneth O., *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922* (1963; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1970)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Age of Lloyd George* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1971)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (1975; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984)
- Murdoch, William, *Chopin: His Life* (London: John Murray, 1934)

- Nicolson, Nigel, ed., *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf 1923-1928* (London: Hogarth, 1977)
- Nicholson, Virginia, *Among the Bohemians: Experiments in Living 1900-1939* (London: Viking, 2002)
- O'Brien, Edward J., ed., *The Best Short Stories of 1926* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926)
- O'Connor, Frank, *Guests of the Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1931)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (London: Macmillan, 1963)
- Olsen, Tillie, *Silences* (London: Virago, 1980)
- Oswalt, Sabine G., *Collins Concise Encyclopaedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* (1965; Glasgow: Collins, 1969)
- Parsons, Deborah, *Theorists of the Modernist Novel* (London: Routledge, 2007)
- Partridge, Frances, *Memories* (London: Gollancz, 1981)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Diaries 1939-1972* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000)
- Porter, Brian, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Punter, David, *Postcolonial Imaginings: Fictions of a New World Order* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000)
- Purkiss, Diane, 'Women's Rewriting of Myth' in Carolyne Larrington, ed., *The Feminist Companion to Mythology* (London: Pandora, 1992), 441-457
- Rainey, Lawrence, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)
- Reid, Ian, *The Short Story* (1977; London: Routledge, 1994)
- Richardson, Dorothy, *Pilgrimage 1* (London: Virago, 2002)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Pilgrimage 2* (London: Virago, 2002)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Pilgrimage 3* (London: Virago, 2002)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Pilgrimage 4* (London: Virago, 2002)
- Richardson, N.J., ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
- Richlin, Amy, 'Striking Back at the (Roman) Empire: The Artist as Classicist in Stead and Others', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 11/2 (1992), 265-87
- Rickword, Edgell, and Douglas Garman, eds., *The Calendar of Modern Letters March 1925 - July 1927, Volume 1 March 1925 - August 1925* (London: Frank Cass, 1966)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Literature in Society: Essays and Opinions (I) 1921-1931* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1974)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Literature in Society: Essays and Opinions (II) 1931-1978* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1978)
- Rickword, Edgell, and Douglas Garman, eds., *The Calendar of Modern Letters March 1925 - July 1927, Volumes 3 and 4 April 1926 - July 1927* (London: Frank Cass, 1966)
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith, *Narrative Fiction* (1983; London: Routledge, 2002)
- Roberts, Gwyneth Tyson, *The Language of the Blue Books* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)
- Roberts, Kate, *Feet in Chains*, trans. John Idris Jones (1936; Bridgend: Seren, 2002)
- Rosenbaum, S. P., ed., *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs, Commentary and Criticism* (London: Croom Helm, 1975)
- Scott, Bonnie Kime, ed., *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990)

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Refiguring Modernism Volume 1: The Women of 1928* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995)
- Seton-Watson, Hugh, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967)
- Shaw, Marion, ed., *An Introduction to Women's Writing: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, 1998)
- Shaw, Valerie, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983; Harlow: Longman, 1994)
- Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing* (1978; London: Virago, 1982)
- Sinclair, May, 'The Novels of Dorothy Richardson', *The Egotist*, V, 4 (1918), 57-59  
\_\_\_\_\_, *The Three Sisters* (1914; London: Virago, 1982)
- Slemon, Stephen, 'Post-colonial Critical Theories' in Gregory Castle, ed., *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 100-116
- Smith, Angela, *Katherine Mansfield & Virginia Woolf: A Public of Two* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999)
- Stein, Gertrude, *Three Lives* (1927; London: Pushkin Press, 1945)
- Stephens, Meic, ed., *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)
- Stevenson, Lucy, 'Loneliness and Isolation in the Life and Fiction of Dorothy Edwards (1903-1934)', University of Wales, Bangor M.A. Thesis (unpub., 2004)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Two Drafts of an Unpublished Story by Dorothy Edwards', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 10 (2005), 160-189
- Stevenson, Randall, *Modernist Fiction* (1992; new edn., London: Prentice Hall, 1998)
- Storr, Anthony, *Freud: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Sophocles, *Sophocles Volume I: Oedipus the King; Oedipus at Colonus; Antigone* translated by F. Storr (1912; London: Heinemann, 1981)
- Taylor, Irene, *Holy Ghosts: The Male Muses of Emily and Charlotte Brontë* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990)
- Thomas, Gwyn, *Sorrow For Thy Sons* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986)
- Wallace, Diana, *Sisters and Rivals in British Women's Fiction 1914-1939* (London: Macmillan, 2000)
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Ventriloquising the Male: two portraits of the artist as a young man by May Sinclair and Edith Wharton', *Men and Masculinities*, 4/4 (2002), 322-33
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Woman's Historical Novel: British Women Writers, 1900-2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
- \_\_\_\_\_, "'A Sort of Genius": Love, Art, and Classicism in May Sinclair's *The Divine Fire*', in Andrew J. Kunka and Michele K. Troy, eds., *May Sinclair: Moving Towards the Modern* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 49-64
- Watkins, Harold M., 'Dorothy Edwards', *Wales*, 6 (1946), 43-50
- Watts, Carol, *Dorothy Richardson* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1995)
- Webb, Rachael Ann, *From Caerau to the Southern Cross* (Port Talbot: Alun Books, 1987)
- Whitford, Margaret, ed., *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Wilkinson, Ellen, *Clash* (1929; London: Virago, 1989)
- Williams, Charlotte, Neil Evans and Paul O'Leary, eds., *A Tolerant Nation?*

- Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003)
- Williams, Chris, *Capitalism, Community and Conflict: The South Wales Coalfield, 1898-1947* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)
- Williams, Michael, 'Welsh Voices in the Short Story', *Welsh Review*, 6/4 (1947), 290-298
- Williams, Sian Rhiannon, 'Teacher supply and the Wales-England border, 1922-50: a gendered perspective', in Henrice Altink, Chris Weedon, and Jane Aaron, eds., *Gendering Border Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, forthcoming)
- Williams, Teleri, "'Women like sibyls" and "whisps of things": The feminine stories of Dorothy Edwards', *New Welsh Review*, 43 (1998-9), 63-6
- Winnicott, D. W., *Playing and Reality* (1971; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (1929, 1938; London: Penguin, 1993)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Collected Essays: Volume 1* (London: Hogarth, 1966)
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Collected Essays: Volume 2* (London: Hogarth, 1972)
- Wright, Anthony, ed., *British Socialism: Socialist thought from the 1880s to 1960s* (London: Longman, 1983)

### Personal letters

- Evans, David Emrys, letter to Claire Flay, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008
- Jones, Glyn, letter to Gwen Davies, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1985 (courtesy of Luned Meredith)
- \_\_\_\_\_, letter to Luned Meredith, 14<sup>th</sup> December 1985 (courtesy of Luned Meredith)

### Archival material

- Cardiff Times*, 1934
- Glamorgan Gazette*, 1903-1934
- Glyntaff Crematorium Records, Glyntaff Crematorium
- Kelly's Directory of Monmouthshire and the principal towns and places of South Wales 1891* (London: Kelly & Co., 1891)
- Tynewydd Schools Logbook (E/M/ 55/6), Glamorgan Records Office
- Western Mail & South Wales News*, 1927-1934

### Online material

- 1901 Census of England and Wales. 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2005  
<<http://www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>>
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2008, Oxford University Press.  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>
- Roberts Jones, Sally, 'Painting in the open air: an annotated bibliography of the Anglo- Welsh short story', Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales (CREW), Swansea University, 2003. 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006  
<[http://www.swan.ac.uk/english/crew/SRL\\_BIBAWSS](http://www.swan.ac.uk/english/crew/SRL_BIBAWSS)>
- Wingfield, Chris, 'Diploma students in Anthropology, University of Oxford 1907-1945', Pitt Rivers Museum, South Parks Road Oxford, University of Oxford, May 2006. 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008 <<http://history.prm.ox.ac.uk/students.php?all>>

