

Martyrdom and Masculinity: Ideology and Masculine Identity in the Work of Radclyffe Hall

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Abstract

This thesis explores the depiction of masculinity by one of literature's most famous female masculine writers, Radclyffe Hall. Chapters One and Two discuss two extremes in the reception of Hall's work: one a successful poem, 'The Blind Ploughman' (1913); and the other, *The Master of the House* (1932), a novel that was a commercial and critical failure for Hall. Both 'The Blind Ploughman' and *The Master of the House* depict spiritual, sensitive working class men who are different. While these texts are often mentioned in Hall scholarship, they have rarely been discussed individually. Chapter One addresses the impact of 'The Blind Ploughman' and its success as poem/song through association with the war wounded and how this, in turn, influenced Hall's depiction of damaged/different masculinity and its relationship to homosexuality. Chapter Two explores Hall's engagement with themes that were also being explored by modernist writers, in particular D. H. Lawrence's reimagining of the Christ story in his novella, 'The Escaped Cock' (1928); the chapter argues that *The Master of the House* uses Christianity to disguise the homoromantic subtext of the novel. In contrast, Chapter Three explores the more familiar topic of female masculinity in relation to Hall, but instead of focusing on male masculine identities, it presents evidence that Joan of Arc, one of history's most famous crossdressing women, was a female masculine role model for Hall. The influence of Joan of Arc is present both in Hall's understanding of her own female masculine identity and in the representation of her female characters. The aim of all three chapters in this thesis is to present a new way of viewing Hall and her work in order to demonstrate that she is more than just a writer of lesbian fiction.

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Introduction

This thesis focuses on Radclyffe Hall's depiction of masculinity, including female masculinity, in a wide range of her works to suggest that she deserves broader examination beyond that of being a niche lesbian writer. Hall's name has become unfortunately synonymous with lesbianism, because of the fame and notoriety surrounding the lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), but she also produced poetry, short stories, two comedy novels and four dramatic novels (in addition to *The Well*) which are rarely included in discussion of her work.¹ Decades of negative and critical reactions to *The Well of Loneliness* have contributed to undermining and damaging Hall's personal and professional reputation to the extent that her contribution to literature in the early twentieth century is limited to just female sexuality and censorship. This is despite the fact that Hall won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize and the Femina Vie Heureuse award for her novel *Adam's Breed* (1926), a feat previously achieved only by E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). Admittedly, *The Well of Loneliness* is a challenging novel for the modern reader, due to Hall's portrayal of lesbianism, which reinforces negative sexual stereotypes with a protagonist who spends most of the novel wishing she had been born a man. In addition, Hall is a complex and at times unlikeable individual. However, *The Well of Loneliness* was a product of its time and at its heart was a plea to a largely prejudiced heterosexual audience for understanding and tolerance towards gender/sexual difference in the early part of the twentieth century. Despite its association with lesbianism, *The Well of Loneliness* also includes experiences of the wider queer community, including that of gay men, which is a significant factor that has been overlooked in critical discussions of gender and sexuality in the novel. The aim of this thesis is to address this major gap in Hall scholarship and to draw critical attention towards her depiction of masculinity and more general understanding of early twentieth-century gendered identities in a wider context.

¹ Hall's papers at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, also contain an incomplete comedy play with the title 'Two to One'. It is the only known and surviving attempt by Hall to write a dramatic script see 'Typescript fragments and publisher's copies', Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 22, Folder 1.

0.1 Poetry and Blindness: Damaged/Different Masculinity

Critical analysis of Hall's work has been inclined to overlook Hall's poetry, because it is dated in its style and subject and for the most part is overly sentimental. Chapter One of this thesis, "The Blind Ploughman": Developing the Sexually Ambiguous Male Character', challenges this dismissal by exploring Hall's first major success as a writer, the poem 'The Blind Ploughman' (1913). Adapted into a popular song during the First World War, the poem/song became an anthem associated with soldiers who had been blinded and maimed in the war. While biographers and other critical studies of Hall mention the success of 'The Blind Ploughman', there has been no in-depth examination of the poem's subject matter and the cultural and historical impact of the song. In addition, there has been no acknowledgement of Hall's early success in representing masculinity as spiritual, sensitive, working class and damaged/different. The aim of the chapter is to explore how the figure of the blinded Ploughman would continue to influence Hall's depiction of certain types of masculinity throughout the rest of her writing career.

The most comprehensive examination of Hall's poetry to date appears in Richard Dellamora's *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (2011). Dellamora contextualises Hall's poetry as antimodernist, because it embraces 'both pastoral and rustic, [which] enabled a specifically localized reaction against the brutalizing effects associated with modern life in the northern industrial towns and the East End of London but most pointedly against the mechanized slaughter of trench warfare'.² Most of Hall's poetry was published before the First World War and presented a utopian vision of a pastoral England. The concept of this idealised country is also discussed by Claire Buck in her article, "'This Other Eden": Homoeroticism and the Great War in the Early Poetry of H. D. and Radclyffe Hall', in which she describes the England of Hall's pre-war poetry as 'an Eden that will never come again'.³ The rural figure of the Ploughman is also contrary to the modernist depiction of masculinity that Scott McCracken describes in *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and the Urban Public Sphere* (2007) which focuses on 'the new urban masculinities that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries'.⁴ In view of such critical opinion, Hall's romantic pastoral poetry appears to date her work even at the time of its publication.

² Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.36.

³ Claire Buck, "'This Other Eden": Homoeroticism and the Great War in the Early Poetry of H. D. and Radclyffe Hall', in *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945*, ed. by Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W Lewis (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p.73.

⁴ Scott McCracken, *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and the Urban Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), ix.

However, Hall's last collection of poetry *The Forgotten Island* (1915), published during the war, marks a change in her style, because it is written in blank verse and explores lesbian love and desires within a mythological setting.⁵ The chapter argues that despite exploring Hall's poetry, Dellamora's and Buck's main objective is to link her poems to a rather predictable lesbian reading.⁶ By contrast, the chapter considers the contemporary response to Hall's poetry by the Scottish politician, writer and journalist, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, by focusing on his Introduction to *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* (1913; the collection which contained 'The Blind Ploughman') which is more open to exploring the broader themes of her work. Although Cunninghame Graham acknowledges that Hall's poetry is not modern, he contends that it follows a tradition and heritage of classical poetry and as such guides the reader to understand its style and themes. Writing in 1913 and therefore before *The Well of Loneliness*, Cunninghame Graham is not viewing Hall from the same historical and cultural perspective as Dellamora and Buck, even though a reader in the know would realise the potential homosexual subtext of the poems through his references to Sappho. Cunninghame Graham focuses on Hall's abilities as a writer without fixating on her sexuality. In particular, his Introduction distinguishes 'The Blind Ploughman' as an example of her skill at capturing an unusual, but enduring example of humanity.

Dellamora's discussion of 'The Blind Ploughman' acknowledges the success of the poem/song and its association with the war wounded, but he aligns the figure of the Ploughman to that of the lesbian.⁷ The rationale for this connection is not entirely clear, and seemingly is based upon the fact that 'The Blind Ploughman' was performed at a concert which Hall attended with her lover Mabel Batten and Dorothy Diehl (Hall's cousin and former lover):

⁵ Hall's archive at Harry Ransom Center has a number of poems written in 1918 that deal with the subject of war, with titles such as: 'A Prisoner in the Enemy Lines', 'War' and 'The Angels' she explores the devastation of war on the lives of young men. The poem 'The Angels' starts with the lines: 'On the Beaches of Death we have laid down our lives for you England do not forget us./On the Beaches of Death we were maimed, we were tortured, we agonised,/Do you remember?'. Hall's rhetoric is powerful and sentimental in this long (and unpublished poem) as she questions the sacrifice of war. See 'Poems by M. R. H.', Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 23, Folder 2.

⁶ Dellamora states: 'Hall's Antimodernism functions as a specific articulation of modernist culture, one that defines itself for Hall in terms of desire', Dellamora, p.42.

⁷ Dellamora could be referring to Gay Wachman's concept of 'lesbian crosswriting [which] transposes the otherwise unrepresentable lives of invisible, silenced, or simply closeted lesbians into narratives about gay men', see Gay Wachman *Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p.1. However, this theoretical position is contrary to Hall's visibility as a female masculine woman and the fact that she wrote openly about same-sex love even at this early stage in her career.

In attending the performance as she [Hall] did, she implicitly claimed the spiritual, even visionary, capabilities of what a condescending onlooker might have regarded as a regrettable deviation from propriety. Sapphic readers or observers and others in the know might listen to the song or read the poem as affirming the creative possibilities of Sapphic desire.⁸

One of the reasons why the poem/song is so popular is the fact that the reader/listener is able to identify with the Ploughman and to sense not only his experience of blindness, but also the joy of his faith. Although this may include the lesbian experience, Dellamora's connection of the Ploughman with lesbianism seems disjunct and forced; one questions if a lesbian interpretation would be attached to the poem if the writer's sexuality were unknown. Buck also follows a similar pattern, acknowledging the success of 'The Blind Ploughman' song, but then not discussing it in any significant detail or even connecting it to the article's homoerotic theme. Dellamora and Buck are only concerned with the lesbian content of Hall's poetry, when in fact there are poems that explore the male experience (as in 'The Blind Ploughman') and poems that are non-gender specific.

In contrast to the approach taken by Dellamora and Buck, the overall aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Hall was an inclusive queer humanitarian writer. Hall's affiliation to those who are outsiders or different extends beyond that of the lesbian experience, for which reason 'The Blind Ploughman' is a critically important piece of work, because it demonstrates her early interest and success with representing damaged/different masculinity. Chapter One of the thesis argues that Dellamora and Buck are too focused on revealing the emerging lesbian writer of *The Well of Loneliness*, to the extent that they overlook the professional and cultural significance of 'The Blind Ploughman' in order to maintain the Sapphic myth that is Radclyffe Hall. The objective of the chapter is not to deny the lesbian content of Hall's poems, but to recognise that the scope of her imagination and interest in humanity extends beyond lesbianism. While Hall could never have anticipated how 'The Blind Ploughman' would connect with the war audience and how its meaning would shift to incorporate the suffering of thousands of men, the success did influence her and it can be traced throughout her writing career. The chapter reveals how the figure of the Ploughman shaped Hall's long-term depiction of damaged/different masculinity and how he continues to surface in her writing.

Twenty years after the publication and success of 'The Blind Ploughman', Hall gave a lecture on 'The Writing of Novels' (1933), in which she discusses how a writer would

⁸ Dellamora., pp.47-48.

approach the topic of ploughing. It is a pointed reference to her own early success with 'The Blind Ploughman', although Hall never directly mentions the poem. In addition, there is a significant reference to the Ploughman which appears in an unpublished talk that Hall was preparing to give to inverts and war veterans, entitled 'Ghosts' (circa 1930s; see Appendix One). Dellamora also discusses 'Ghosts', but the chapter argues that he misleads the reader by linking the figure of the Ploughman with lesbians: 'Into the 1930s, she [Hall] continued to identify herself and other Sapphists with the image of the ploughman as a stricken and blessed worker/activist'.⁹ Dellamora bases his assumption on Hall's declaration at the end of 'Ghosts':

For we have a harder furrow to hoe – a hard, long, gruelling furrow to hoe.
And we dare not take our hands from the plough – [nor look back, for so
much as a moment] till this furrow is driven home straight and true, we dare
not to relax our grip for a moment.¹⁰

It is an impassioned plea to inverts and survivors of the war that their battle for acceptance is far from over and they must continue to fight. While Hall's imagery and symbolism undoubtedly evoke 'The Blind Ploughman', by stating that Hall is addressing inverts, Dellamora implies that they are lesbians and that 'Ghosts' is only concerned with women. On the contrary, 'Ghosts', also describes the fate of injured soldiers and the plight of gay men who fought in the war, but now find themselves isolated in their communities because of their sexuality and age. As an archival text, 'Ghosts' is not widely known or discussed, although Jana Funke in her doctoral thesis, *Sexual Intermediacy and Temporality in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Literature and Culture* (The University of Edinburgh, U.K., 2010), also examines the manuscript. Funke acknowledges the fact that men feature in 'Ghosts', but her focus is primarily on Hall's representation of women and female masculine women. My chapter argues that 'Ghosts' is an important text, because it demonstrates that Hall was not just female-centric in her writing. Instead, she shows great compassion towards the war-injured men and questions their disappearance from the streets of cities and towns, and more significantly, makes a legitimate connection between their damaged masculinity and that of the invisible homosexual gay men who also fought in the war.

Chapter One of this thesis starts the process of examining Hall from a perspective that is not driven by the need to position her as the writer of *The Well of Loneliness* and as such it does not seek evidence of the embryonic lesbian writer. Instead, it follows the course

⁹ *ibid.* p.48.

¹⁰ Radclyffe Hall, "Ghosts", Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 18. Folder 8.

of her career, by examining her first success and the artistic and personal impact on her when 'The Blind Ploughman' was adopted as an anthem to represent the devastation of war injuries at a national level. While the success of 'The Blind Ploughman' has been noted in previous studies, the chapter examines the poem and song within a historical and cultural context and traces the influence and development of damaged/different masculinity in Hall's writing.

0.2 Hall's other Gay Novel: *The Master of the House* (1932)

The Master of the House (1932) is most often discussed as the novel that followed the publication and scandal surrounding *The Well of Loneliness*, but like 'the Blind Ploughman' is very rarely discussed as a separate piece of work. Chapter Two of this thesis, 'Sexualising the Figure of Christ: Radclyffe Hall and D. H. Lawrence', redresses the lack of critical attention to *The Master of the House* through examining Hall's representation of a sexual Christ figure. Hall was not alone in retelling and reimagining the story of Christ in this way: D. H. Lawrence's novella 'The Escaped Cock' (1928) also concerns a sexualised Christ-like figure. Although Gerald Gould in his 1932 *Observer* review of *The Master of the House* recognises this connection, the two texts have not been otherwise comparatively discussed.¹¹ Intriguingly, 'The Escaped Cock' and *The Master of the House*, not only share a common theme, but the events leading up to the publication of the texts are also remarkably similar. Both Lawrence and Hall faced targeted Government censorship and they were confronted with images of themselves portrayed as crucified Christ figures. But whereas Lawrence could artistically portray a sexually active heterosexual Christ figure (albeit the premise was still controversial), Hall was not able to depict a gay Christ figure, because male homosexuality was illegal in the United Kingdom. However, the chapter argues that *The Master of the House* is nevertheless a gay novel: a homoromantic novel that depicts unrequited, unrealised and unspoken love between rural working-class men. While Hall presents Christophe as a heterosexual Christ figure, the subtext of the novel points towards a gay reading/interpretation. The chapter reveals evidence from the manuscripts for *The Carpenter's Son* (the working title of *The Master of the House*), which demonstrates how Hall revised her Christ figure to ensure that she did not make him too sexual and to reduce any obvious homosexual content. The aim of the chapter is to position *The Master of the House* as a gay novel that has been neglected as a queer text within Hall's canon of work.

¹¹ See *The Observer*, 28 February 1932.

On its publication, reviews for *The Master of the House* were polite but indifferent, with many critics uncertain about the portrayal of Christophe, a Christ-like character who was considered too perfect, while readers who were expecting something more salacious from the author of *The Well of Loneliness* were disappointed by the novel's religious theme. In the context of Hall's literary output, *The Master of the House* was a commercial and critical failure. However, Hall and her long-term partner, Lady Una Troubridge, consistently maintained that *The Master of the House* was her best novel.¹² Whatever she may herself have thought, *The Master of the House* has remained an anomaly and mostly ignored in Hall scholarship. Unlike some of her other works, the novel has not been rediscovered by a modern audience and subsequently they have not had the opportunity to engage with or reevaluate *The Master of the House* in the same way that they have *A Saturday Life* (1924), *The Unlit Lamp* (1924), *Adam's Breed* (1926) and *The Well of Loneliness*.¹³ Consequently, from its publication onwards there has been an awkwardness about *The Master of the House*, an uncertainty in how to respond to a novel about a boringly perfect Christ-like figure in a story that is familiar. Hall's intention with *The Master of the House* was to focus on the small, routine and monotonous events that make a life, her premise being that even Jesus Christ must have experienced these moments as well as the epic events described in the Bible. Despite Hall's artistic intentions and her own opinions, *The Master of the House* remains her most neglected novel.

The most detailed examination of *The Master of the House* to date is Claudia Stillman Franks's discussion in *Beyond The Well of Loneliness: The Fiction of Radclyffe Hall* (1982). As *The Master of the House* was a commercial and critical failure, Stillman Franks's study predominately focuses on the reasons why the novel failed to connect with the audience. Consequently, it is a rather negative review of the novel and Stillman Franks concludes that *The Master of the House* failed because 'Radclyffe Hall never

¹² Responding to a letter for information about *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall wrote: 'With the exception of: "The Master of the House" published 1932 (Jonathan Cape Inc., New York), I consider "The Well of Loneliness" to be my best book'. Radclyffe Hall, letter to Mr Munson, dated 2 June 1934, Lesbian Herstory Archives, New York, < <https://www.instagram.com/p/BdjAT9ZDdiQ/?taken-by=lesbianherstoryarchives> > [accessed 26 January 2018]. In addition, Una's diaries record any praise *The Master of the House* received from friends or fans, for example her entry for Thursday 20 April 1933 documents a conversation with the actress Sybil Thorndike in which they discuss the novel: 'she [Sybil Thorndike] says all the family are raving about 'The Master' which they read on the voyage. She says it should be in every language all over the world; that it is John's finest book ... they praised it to the skies', Una Troubridge Diary, Vol. 15, April 13, 1933 - June 13, 1933, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 27, Folder 4.

¹³ Virago Press published some of Hall's novels in the 1980s and 1990s, but not *The Master of the House* or *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936). A publishing note in the 1989 Virago reprint of *The Unlit Lamp* states: '*The Forge* [1924] will be published in 1990'. 'Radclyffe Hall' biographical and printing information in Radclyffe Hall, *The Unlit Lamp* (London: Virago, 1989), p.1. However, this print of *The Forge* never materialised, see Virago's catalogue list: <<https://www.virago.co.uk/books/virago-modern-classics/>> [accessed 25 January 2018]

comes to terms with some potentially interesting questions which the book raises, questions involving the identity of Christophe Bénédict and the nature of his mystical experiences'.¹⁴ Stillman Franks also refers to Margaret Lawrence's *The School of Femininity* (1936), an unusually early and positive recognition of both *The Well of Loneliness* and *The Master of the House* as novels about inverts.¹⁵ Lawrence's appreciative reading, however, had no lasting effect on the subsequent reception of *The Master of the House*.¹⁶

Considering the range of published and unpublished materials that Richard Dellamora discusses in *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, *The Master of the House* does not significantly feature in his critique of her work. One of the most important recent studies of Hall, Dellamora's lack of engagement with *The Master of the House* is disconcerting, because it reinforces the novel's insignificance and perpetuates the assumption that it is unworthy of critical attention. *The Master of the House* is Hall's most male-centric novel, yet Dellamora approaches it from the perspective that she is a lesbian writer. In actual fact, *The Master of the House* offers little in the way of Sapphic readings, which may account for Dellamora's (and the overall) lack of scholarly interest in the novel. Gill Rossini's Introduction to *The Master of the House*, in the recent Kindle publication of *The Complete Works of Radclyffe Hall* (2014) contextualises the publication of the novel, but avoids discussing, in any particular detail, the themes of the book. Most worryingly, Rossini states: 'He [Christophe] is attracted to girls, but refrains from having a relationship, held back by some unknown power — his closest friend is his male cousin Jan, (but this is not a novel about homosexuality)'.¹⁷ Rossini is correct that fundamentally the novel is not about homosexuality (compared to, for example, the centrality of sexuality in *The Well of Loneliness*), and is instead concerned with exploring the development of masculine spirituality. However, Rossini is incorrect to imply that Christophe and Jan are not homosexual, and as such she perpetuates the myth that Hall was not interested in male homosexuality. In this way, as twenty-first-century responses to *The Master of the House*, both Dellamora and Rossini not only continue to contribute to the historical and cultural

¹⁴ Claudia Stillman Franks, *Beyond The Well of Loneliness: The Fiction of Radclyffe Hall* (Wellingborough: Avebury, 1982), p.120.

¹⁵ See Margaret Lawrence, *The School of Femininity* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1972) [1936], 'The Master of the House, like *The Well of Loneliness*, deals with inversion', p. 329.

¹⁶ Biographies tend not to discuss the literary merit of *The Master of the House*, focusing instead on Hall's alleged stigmata and the commercial failure of the novel. A review of Sally Cline's, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (1997), noted: 'She [Cline] introduces one book, *The Master of the House*, as Radclyffe Hall's "greatest novel", but in her subsequent account of it she can scarcely find a word to say in its favour'. 'The literary lesbian' in *The Telegraph*, 28 June 1997.

¹⁷ Gill Rossini, *The Complete Works of Radclyffe Hall* (Kindle Edition, 2014).

difficulty attached to discussing the novel, but also mislead readers on the scope of Hall's work and her depiction of male homosexuality.

Chapter Two, accordingly, presents a new approach to *The Master of the House*, because rather than focusing on its failure or the lack of available lesbian readings, it contextualises the novel within a cultural and historical framework and engages with Margaret Lawrence's reading of Christophe as a gay male character. While acknowledging that *The Master of the House* is a flawed novel, the chapter argues that it should not be an ignored text in Hall scholarship and queer studies, because it offers a unique and sympathetic representation of gay men by a female masculine lesbian author.

0.3 The Hidden Presence of Joan of Arc

The final chapter of this thesis explores a more familiar theme within Radclyffe Hall studies, that of female masculinity. Other studies, including Judith Halberstam's seminal *Female Masculinity* (1998), view Hall's female masculinity as a variant or reflection of male masculine identities. However, Chapter Three, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity', explores the influence upon Hall of Joan of Arc, one of history's most famous female masculine women. The rise in Joan of Arc's popularity at the turn of the twentieth century with her canonisation and representation in the arts increased her profile in the public consciousness. The chapter presents evidence that Joan of Arc was one of the most positive, accepted and visible examples of female masculinity available to Hall in her day, arguing for a connection between these two iconic female masculine women that has gone unrecognised to date. The chapter reveals how Joan of Arc's presence, though never directly named, is nonetheless visible in Hall's work, and provides new evidence of Hall's engagement with the figure of Joan. More significantly, the chapter presents evidence that Hall both saw and read George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1924). Thus, the aim of Chapter Three is to present Joan of Arc as a figure who was important in Hall's development of female characters, because there is always a hint of Joan in each of her female protagonists. In addition, where male role models have previously been noted as influencing Hall's female masculine identity (Christ, Oscar Wilde and Noël Coward), the chapter offers Joan of Arc as an alternative, but positive (and also subversive) female masculine role model. By this argument the chapter positions Joan of Arc as an important cultural and religious figure that helped shape Hall's personal and artistic perception of female masculinity.

While Joan of Arc is a greatly admired historical, cultural and religious female masculine figure, Hall is not. Modern feminist and lesbians critics have pulled her up for

failing to represent lesbianism and female masculine identities in a positive manner to the extent that her reputation has been severely damaged. However, twenty-first-century queer readings are becoming more fluid in their views and expectations surrounding gender and sexuality, offering new ways in which to explore the significance of Joan of Arc. It follows, then, a less restricted view on Hall would open up greater possibilities to see the positive qualities that she offers as a female masculine woman and writer.

Despite their iconic female masculine identities, little research connects Joan of Arc to Hall. One of the most significant statements that suggests that Joan of Arc was an influence on Hall appears in *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (1993), in which Terry Castle discusses how Joan of Arc is an iconic figure for lesbians and that Hall wanted to write a novel about Joan.¹⁸ Unfortunately, Castle's statement is unreferenced and no other scholarly work has substantiated this claim.¹⁹ However, Castle argues that Joan of Arc was a figure that lesbians (including Hall) were attracted to, because she offered an alternative (and accepted) representation of female identity and difference within society. The view that Joan of Arc is a role model for lesbians is shared by Jamie E. Hovey in her article, 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West'.²⁰ In this article, Hovey also engages with my published chapter, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity' (2014), which presented initial circumstantial evidence on the presence and influence of Joan of Arc in Hall's writing.²¹ Hovey acknowledges that Joan of Arc was an influence on Hall, but seeks a more definitive version of Joan by focusing on Hall's novels, *The Unlit Lamp* and *The Well of Loneliness* (novels that have a tomboy and a female masculine woman as the protagonist). In contrast, the approach in Chapter Three is less prescriptive, because it presents evidence that Joan of Arc is a significant historical, religious and cultural figure whose influence and presence can be seen in all of Hall's female protagonists and not just those who have more obvious tomboy/female masculine characteristics.

Chapter Three, briefly explores the historical, religious and cultural development of Joan of Arc and suggests how Hall may have been exposed to her image and story. By examining locations and key cultural events, the chapter is able to present circumstantial

¹⁸ See Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 'Joan of Arc travels through time as a peculiarly Sapphic heroine: Vita Sackville-West wrote a book about her; Radclyffe Hall wanted to', p.185.

¹⁹ Terry Castle, email correspondence, 23 February 2012: 'I'm very sorry to say I don't remember where I got the idea about Hall and Joan of Arc. I know I read it somewhere but alas can't recover it now'.

²⁰ See Jaime E. Hovey, 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West' in *Feminist Modernist Studies*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-2, (2017), pp.113-137.

²¹ Steven Macnamara, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity' in *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology*, ed. by Karioris, F.G. and Loeser, C. (Witney: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014).

evidence of where Hall would or may have encountered presentations of Joan of Arc. Although Joan of Arc is one of the most recognised female saints in popular culture, her crossdressing also makes her a subversive figure, whose difference is visible, but nevertheless accepted by the Church and the wider Establishment. At a time when access to images of gender difference was not readily available, Joan of Arc offered an alternative version of female identity to generations of women and queers. It is in this context that the chapter explores how Hall and Una, engaged with the figure of Joan of Arc, through George Bernard Shaw's version in his play, *Saint Joan*. The chapter examines the similarities between the conclusion of *Saint Joan* and *The Well of Loneliness* by contextualising the cultural influence of a specific Joan of Arc on Hall's writing and her portrayal of Stephen Gordon (the female masculine lesbian protagonist in *The Well of Loneliness*). The final section of the chapter reveals how Joan of Arc's presence is visible in Hall's female protagonists as Joan offers a role model for presenting female identities and characteristics.

The aim of Chapter Three is to present evidence that during her life the social, cultural and religious focus on Joan of Arc captured Hall's attention and imagination. Consequently, Joan of Arc became a formative role model for Hall's representation of female characters. The significance of her influence on Hall's writing is such that it can range from female masculine identities to something that is more symbolic and emblematically connected to Joan of Arc (hair and fire) or to characteristics that are associated with her role as an outsider or rebel. The chapter offers an alternative and additional role model to the traditional figures of Christ, Wilde and Coward who are more usually associated with Hall's identity and work.

0.4 Conclusion

This thesis does not attempt to reclaim Hall as a writer of men or masculinities, but instead presents evidence that illustrates that her interest extends beyond lesbianism and *The Well of Loneliness*. By focusing on her representation of masculinity, the thesis offers an opportunity to explore Hall's work in a broader social, historical and cultural context.

Chapter One: 'The Blind Ploughman': Developing the Sexually Ambiguous Male Character

1.1 Introduction

In her memoir and biography of her lover, Radclyffe Hall, Lady Una Troubridge wrote that 'the quality of such lyrics as 'The Blind Ploughman' was the first serious indication of things to come'.¹ Despite Troubridge's endorsement and the popular and critical success of 'The Blind Ploughman' (1913), the poem/song has always existed in the periphery of studies and biographies of Hall. In fact, there has been no extended examination of the poem and no commentary on its significance in relation to her later writing on the spiritually sensitive, sexually ambiguous working-class man who occupies a central place in the novels *Adam's Breed* (1926) and *The Master of the House* (1932). One of the main reasons for this omission is that Hall's work has been predominately studied from a feminist and lesbian perspective and, as such, it is the poem's success, rather than its content, which has been of primary interest to scholars and biographers. The aim of this chapter is to manoeuvre 'The Blind Ploughman' from the margins of scholarly writings on Hall and to place it as a central and important piece of work within her canon. The poem not only provides an early indication of her interest in a particular type of masculinity, but it also contains themes and images that Hall would use and return to throughout her writing career.

The chapter begins with a brief analysis of 'The Blind Ploughman', which argues that Hall was using a well-established form to explore a specific type of masculinity. It then considers how Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham's introduction to Hall's collection of poems *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* (1913) and his discussion of 'The Blind Ploughman' alerted readers to the complexity of her seemingly simple poetry. As interest in the poem was also generated by its adaptation into a song, the chapter suggests how music offers a significant interpretative context for 'The Blind Ploughman'. Hall had already demonstrated her skill in openly presenting the subversive as respectable with the 1910 performance of her 'Ode to Sappho' (1908) at the Royal Albert Hall and this leads to an examination of how technological changes in the ways in which music was being heard influenced the interpretation of the song for both artists and audiences. Written before the outbreak of the First World War, 'The Blind Ploughman' song was adopted as a war anthem, because it offered a positive and hopeful message to those who had lost their sight in the war. Images of masculine blindness such as those on the St. Dunstan's postcards, the Estaires photograph of men holding on to each other after a gas attack and the artist

¹ Una Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond Hammond, 1961), p.29.

John Singer Sargent's painting *Gassed* (1919) presented blindness in order to provoke a national response to, and understanding of, the blinded men.² Sargent's two works *Gassed* and *Mrs. George Batten Singing* (1895) were exhibited together in an exhibition in 1926. Hall owned the portrait of Mabel Batten and lent it to the exhibition. It is therefore likely that she would have taken an interest in how her picture was hung, aware that alongside the famous painting of war blindness was the personally significant image of her first real lover. This implicit connection between blindness and homosexuality can be discerned not only in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), which describes the aftermath of gassing on the battlefield, but also in *The Master of the House*. There, the effects of war and gas are seen in descriptions of soldiers in the street, as well as in the minor character Beauvais, whose physical difference reflects the protagonist Christophe Bénédict's own sense of difference.

Blindness in literature is often linked to sexuality or used to symbolise emasculation. For example, both D. H. Lawrence's short story 'The Blind Man' (1918) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) explore male blindness in order to empower blind men or to re-examine and challenge social stereotypes. I argue that the blind man of Hall's phenomenally successful early poem 'The Blind Ploughman' informs her depiction of masculine characters and their relationship to blindness/vision in much of her work to come. Her fiction often suggests links between blindness/vision, disfigurement and sexual ambiguity: the comedic character Hilary Brent in *The Forge* (1924) wears an eye-patch; Gian Luca in *Adam's Breed* develops universal insight. In *The Well of Loneliness*, three characters are disfigured by the war to indicate their difference: Stephen Gordon, Jonathan Brockett and Martin Hallam (whose eyesight is also endangered). Christophe's difference in *The Master of the House* has always been apparent, because he has a shared vision with Christ and he is figuratively blind to the possibility of homosexual love. And in Hall's final novel, *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936), there is a pair of male vagabonds who live together, one of whom is losing his sight; their homosexuality is hinted at, but never explicitly stated. Hall's fiction suggests her fascination with the relationship between masculinity and blindness/vision, disfigurement and homosexuality, but it is in an unpublished talk, 'Ghosts' (circa 1930s; see Appendix One) that she explores her social awareness of both the injured war veteran and the isolated life of the male homosexual after the war. 'Ghosts' has been discussed by Richard Dellamora and Jana Funke, but neither has focused on Hall's sympathetic response to the male

² See Figure 10, John Singer Sargent, *Gassed* (1919).

homosexual.³ This chapter examines Hall's awareness of the difficulties faced by male homosexuals by exploring her portrayal of Jonathan Brockett in *The Well of Loneliness*. It will demonstrate that 'The Blind Ploughman' is a key text for understanding the development of Hall's depiction of masculinity and her exploration of difference.

³ See Radclyffe Hall, "Ghosts" Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 18. Folder 8. The talk is discussed in Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.48 and in Jana Funke, *Sexual Intermediacy and Temporality in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Literature and Culture* (The University of Edinburgh, U.K., 2010), p.125.

1.2 Critical Responses to 'The Blind Ploughman'

Despite the cultural and popular significance of 'The Blind Ploughman', there has been little critical focus on it in relation to Hall's other work. One brief exception is Alison Hennegan's 1985 introduction to the Virago edition of *Adam's Breed*, in which she discusses Hall's fascination with vision:

The relation between sight, in its physical sense, and vision, in its spiritual one, was something to which Hall returned again and again in her work: we see it in her earliest and her last. Her poem, 'The Blind Ploughman', was first published in 1913. Later, set to music, it became one of the most popular songs of a war in which so many men had lost their sight.⁴

Hennegan suggests that the themes Hall explored in her poetry are ones that she would continue to write about in her novels. Hall's poetry has been significantly overlooked in favour of the more notorious *succès de scandale*, *The Well of Loneliness*. However, in her article "'This Other Eden": Homoeroticism and the Great War in the Early Poetry of H. D. and Radclyffe Hall', Claire Buck attempts to view Hall's work from a different perspective, examining the embryonic development of the artist through her early work and how she changed her genre from poetry to the novel as a result of the War.⁵

Buck starts her article by mentioning the success of 'The Blind Ploughman' and by quoting a letter of 10 June 1918 from Mignon Nevada to Hall. Nevada was a clairvoyant and a friend of both Hall and Una, who attended a performance at Usher Hall in Edinburgh in 1918 when the war-blinded Captain MacRobert performed the song. Nevada writes with great excitement about the extraordinary scene:

Over the audience's head a grey haze that as it ascended higher gradually went from blue to violet, and then to pink, then to a dazzling yellow-white which seemed to be full of moving forms. Some looked like spirits—and over the whole building there seemed a wonderful feeling of Peace and Harmony.⁶

⁴ Alison Hennegan, 'Introduction' in Radclyffe Hall's *Adam's Breed* (London: Virago, 1985), xiii.

⁵ See Claire Buck, "'This Other Eden": Homoeroticism and the Great War in the Early Poetry of H. D. and Radclyffe Hall', in *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945*, ed. by Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W Lewis (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁶ *ibid.*, p.63. Buck is quoting Nevada's letter from an extract in Lovatt Dickson's biography on Hall, Lovatt Dickson, *Radclyffe Hall at the Well of Loneliness: A Sapphic Chronicle* (New York: Scribner, 1975), p.45. The original source of Mignon Nevada's letter to Radclyffe Hall is 10 June 1918. Richard Dellamora also discusses this letter from Nevada, but notes an awareness on her part of a growing lesbian movement, as he states 'This web of connections demonstrates the tight interweaving of private and public politics and the barely submerged development of a lesbian public politics, one to which Nevada was sympathetic and which involved Troubridge and Hall as well'. Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.50.

Acknowledging the popularity of the song and the fact that it captured the complex emotions of a generation who were dealing with loss and physical damage, Buck states that Hall had given the public 'the assurance that the wounding leads to a better life'.⁷ Buck displays little interest in the spiritual activity that Nevada claims to have witnessed, but in his book, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (2011), Richard Dellamora considers Nevada's letter an important catalyst for Hall's belief in herself as a successful commercial writer:

the wartime success of "The Blind Ploughman" also shaped her [Hall's] sense of her role as the impersonal medium through which the experience of the suffering of some could be communicated to the public at large. The vehicles of belief for these exchanges were vernacular notions of Catholicism, Theosophy, and Spiritualism. This approach to communication was wedded to mass spectacle as in the Usher Hall concert and the dissemination of feeling and belief through mass media. At Usher Hall, Hall's salon writing crossed over into the media of modern entertainment.⁸

Dellamora argues that not only did Hall's very simple words bond together different communities and classes in their sadness, but that Nevada's letter also illustrates the popularity of her song and the contemporary interest and belief in spiritualism during this period.

After the death of her first significant lover, Mabel Batten (known as Ladye) in 1916, Hall and Una explored spiritualism with passion and enthusiasm. As a couple, Hall and Una attended regular *séances* with the medium Gladys Leonard and purportedly communicated with Mabel. Hall's commitment to spiritualism resulted in her reporting her findings to the Society for Psychical Research in January and March 1918. The paper detailed the nature and topic of the discussions at the *séances*, but in doing so it also publicly revealed the close relationship between Hall and Mabel. Nevada's letter would have arrived on or around the same time that Hall was aware of Cara Harris's (Mabel's daughter's) official complaint to the Society for Psychical Research about the accuracy of Hall's paper.⁹ Michael Baker's biography of Hall, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (1985), describes how:

Cara claimed that John's [Hall] paper was inaccurate. She and her mother, she declared, had been 'like sisters', and John and Una had deliberately prevented her from sitting with Mrs Leonard. Cara went on to accuse the

⁷ *ibid.*, p.64.

⁸ Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.49.

⁹ The second reading of the paper was a public event and Minna Taylor (Una's sister), Marie Visette (Hall's mother), Cara Harris and Dolly Clarke (Hall's cousin. Hall and Dolly had had a brief sexual relationship before Dolly's marriage to Robert Coningsby Clarke) attended.

two women of being 'too emotional and excitable' to be reliable investigators. Much of her criticism was directed against Una. Cara pointed out that Ladye had disliked Una and had quarrelled with John about her just prior to her stroke.¹⁰

At a time when Nevada is praising Hall's ability as a writer and a communicator, one who could transcend and move the worlds of both the living and the dead, Hall is also being criticised for the inauthenticity of her research and writing. Hall defended her position and threatened a libel suit, which was enough to ensure that Cara did not press charges. However, the Society did change Mabel's initials in Hall's paper 'to protect Ladye's [Mabel's] identity and avoid any possible offence to Cara'.¹¹ Unfortunately for Hall, when the paper was published in December 1919 St. George Lane Fox-Pitt shared a copy with Ernest Troubridge (Una's husband), who confirmed the nature of his wife's relationship with Hall. Incensed by its content Fox-Pitt described Hall as a 'grossly immoral' woman, which resulted in a public slander court case, which Hall won.¹² The combination of Nevada's letter, Cara's complaint and the Fox-Pitt court case was a significant factor in Hall's life at this particular period. Nevada's letter confirmed the popularity of 'The Blind Ploughman' and offered Hall corroboration of the spiritual power of her words. Hall was also defiantly self-assured in the way she defended herself against Cara's and Fox-Pitt's accusations. Hall was not only growing in confidence as a writer, but also growing in confidence to defend her position in public as a lesbian.

In her article, Buck discusses this developing sense of Hall as a writer exploring lesbian experience. Buck argues that the popular success of 'The Blind Ploughman' led Hall to write her next book of poetry, the lesbian-themed *The Forgotten Island*. The focus of Buck's article is to reveal the lesbian thematic issues of *The Forgotten Island* and to examine how Hall later returned to this theme in her fiction. Although Buck may be approaching Hall's work from a different perspective, she still reiterates the widespread view that Hall was a lesbian writer only concerned with lesbian matters. It is clear that Buck is primarily concerned with Hall's interest in lesbianism, as there is no mention of male homosexuality. Buck completely side-steps the fact that Hall explored male experience in the far more popular earlier poem 'The Blind Ploughman' and would go on to depict gay male characters in *The Well of Loneliness*. While it may be understandably difficult to consider Hall's work as lending itself to anything other than the lesbian view, because of the infamy surrounding *The Well of*

¹⁰ Michael Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (London: GMP Publishers, 1985), p.106.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.108.

¹² *The Times*, 19 November 1920.

Loneliness, it is precisely this approach which has limited and restricted the ways in which Hall's work has thus far been interpreted.

Buck goes on to position Hall as a literary figure against the modernist writer H. D., to explore how the War altered the perception and representation of homosexuality in relation to the sense of nationalism. Buck concludes by stating:

Hall's search for the proper form for the representation of early twentieth-century modes of sexuality is shaped more by the effects of the war than by modernism. The modernity of her forms in the years before and during the war is not yet necessarily defined by modernism, although it does involve a desire to be modern. H. D.'s version of the modern is specific to the configuration of aesthetics, sexuality, and gender in high modernism. The modern is thus not a fixed category to which these writers have a stable relationship.¹³

Buck suggests that Hall was engaging with modern themes, albeit in her own inimitable style, and that the War altered the form of her writing and how she depicted homosexuality. In pre-war Britain, Buck argues, Hall was still using late-Victorian Aesthetic pastoral verse to describe homosexuality, but the War altered the notion of the imperialist country, an imaginary Eden, as the idyllic image of England was destroyed. Consequently, Hall and H. D. were seeking new ways in which to position the homosexual (read the lesbian) in this modern/modernist landscape. The difficulty with Buck's approach is the value she places on modernist writing which means that Hall's poetical output will always be viewed as inferior. Instead, Hall was using and playing with the late-Victorian Aesthetic pastoral form to her advantage, in a manner which Buck disregards, because her view of Hall is restricted to a lesbian context and a desire to align Hall with a modernist framework and reading.

Buck and Dellamora both acknowledge that the adaptation of 'The Blind Ploughman' into a popular song, which captured the hearts of the wartime public, was responsible for a significant shift in Hall's perception of herself. Buck identifies Hall's artistic success as a stimulus for the more daring expression of lesbian love and desire in *The Forgotten Island*, but her poetry also reflected the dying embers of imperial national pride and the end of Victorian expressions of same-sex love. By contrast, for Dellamora it is the success of the song/poem that triggers a change in the way Hall viewed her craft, as her words not only resonated with a large audience, capturing the mood and interest in spiritualism, but they also changed her into a more commercially-aware female writer. Although they are focused on different aspects, both Buck's and Dellamora's approaches are rather similar, in as much

¹³ Buck, p.77.

as they examine the aftermath of the poem's success for the writer, rather than the significance of the poem itself. In many respects, for Buck and Dellamora it could have been any one of Hall's poems that was adapted into song; so long as it achieved the fame and success of 'The Blind Ploughman' their hypotheses would still be the same. Instead of ignoring the poem this chapter will explore how the central theme of blindness and, by association, insight and disfigurement recurs throughout Hall's work. Inadvertently, she had pre-empted a broader social and artistic awareness of blindness during the First World War and in post-war Britain, which became part of both literary and social consciousness. This chapter will demonstrate that 'The Blind Ploughman' offers a depiction of ambiguous masculine identity and one that Hall would thematically return to throughout her work.

1.3 'The Blind Ploughman': The Poem

'The Blind Ploughman' is a lyrical poem following a four-stanza structure:

The Blind Ploughman

Set my hands upon the plough,
My feet upon the sod;
Turn my face towards the east,
And praise be to God!

Every year the rains do fall,
The seeds they stir and spring;
Every year the spreading trees
Shelter birds that sing.

From the shelter of your heart,
Brother – drive out sin,
Let the little birds of faith
Come and nest therein.

God has made His sun to shine
On both you and me;
God, who took away my eyes,
That my *soul* might see!¹⁴

Hall's language is simple throughout the poem, with the majority of the words consisting of just one syllable. There is also a degree of repetition, as the words 'my', 'upon', 'God', 'year', 'shelter' and 'birds' are all repeated, which adds to the illusion of the repetitive and unassuming task of the Ploughman. The rhyme scheme is akin to a lyrical ballad with a quatrain scheme of xaxa xbx xcx xdx, but the meter of the poem varies slightly between lines, reflecting the inner thoughts or the conversational quality of the poem. The poem's simple structure mirrors the simplicity of the Ploughman's task, but his role is important as he cultivates the land so that others can survive off its produce, the moral being that simple tasks can and do reap great rewards and simple words can be beautiful and evoke powerful emotional responses. Thematically, the power and the appeal of the poem comes from the philosophical position of the humble and maimed Ploughman, who is not only in harmony with the nature around him but also has a great and powerful understanding of the omnipresence of God. Hall's symbolism is relatively straightforward and seemingly uncomplicated. In the first stanza, the association between God and the sun expresses the Biblical tenet that 'the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no

¹⁴ Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall, 'The Blind Ploughman' in *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* (Redditch: Read Books Ltd, 2011) [1913], p.32.

good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly'.¹⁵ The Psalm, like the poem, reassures the reader that God, who is a source of light and life, will always protect and shield those who believe in him. The symbolic refrain is repeated in the fourth and final stanza, as the Ploughman, who can feel the sun although he cannot see it, is aware that the same God has created the sensation of the sun and his reaction to it. Hall is comparing unquestionable faith to blindness, as the blind coexist in the same world as those who can see, but their understanding and experience of that world will be different. In other words, true faith affords individuals a true vision as their souls see and interpret the world around them in a way that those who have no faith will never see, appreciate or understand.¹⁶

The poem is unashamedly and unapologetically sentimental. There is no hint of realism as Hall romanticises not only the hardship of rural manual working life but also the debilitating nature of blindness. Written during the modernist period, the poem lacks any obvious experimental use of language or form; instead 'The Blind Ploughman' employs a style and tone which are firmly rooted in the Victorian past. The old-fashioned poem does anything but follow Ezra Pound's well-known instruction to 'make it new'.¹⁷ Consequently, it is easy to understand why Hall's poetry has been overlooked by scholars of the modernist period. Indeed, Hall's poetry could be used as a prime example of everything that Pound argued against. The apparent simplicity of her work, along with its clichéd stylistic motifs and use of the ballad form ('The Blind Ploughman' has a Wordsworthian quality) is the complete antithesis of modernist ideals. Yet, to dismiss Hall's poetry because of its artless simplicity and sentimentality is to overlook the radical inventiveness of her work. She is a writer who plays within the perimeters of the well-known and the recognisable, exploiting the reader's familiarity with a literary genre to such an extent that contradictory and subversive undercurrents are not always obvious.¹⁸ Hall's poetry gives the impression of being

¹⁵ Psalm 84:11.

¹⁶ See John 20:29, 'Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'.

¹⁷ The expression appeared in Pound's poem 'Canto LIII', when the Emperor Tching Tang 'wrote MAKE IT NEW/on his bath tub/Day by day make it new', in Ezra Pound, *Cantos LII-LXI* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940), p.19. However, Pound had also used motto as a title for a collection of essays *Make it New: Essays by Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934). Peter Liebrechts, discusses the impact of the 'make it new' statement and suggests: 'Pound's entire oeuvre is a catchphrase signifying the necessary act of regeneration', *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism* (Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004) p.297.

¹⁸ See Hannah Roche, 'An 'ordinary novel': genre trouble in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*' in *Textual Practice*, Volume 32, Volume 1, March 2018, pp.101-117, <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0950236X.2016.1238001?scroll=top&needAccess=true>> [accessed 16 March 2018]. Roche argues that the much-criticised style of *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) was a conscious decision on Hall's behalf to deliver an ideological message: 'But Hall's adoption of an unremarkable or palatable formula does not indicate indolence or a lack of imagination; on the contrary, we might read the decision to appropriate an ostensibly ordinary genre as a well-planned tactical ploy'. p.106. Roche's reading of *The Well of Loneliness* suggests that Hall was more avant-garde than she has previously been given credit for and that her work contains a depth that is often overlooked in favour of modernist writers.

unassuming, particularly when compared to the highbrow intellectualism of modernist writers, but she uses the form to her advantage to communicate sexual and radical social ideas to the masses, in the guise of the popular and the familiar. Scott McCracken discusses this tension between modernism and popularism:

The binary opposition of modernism and mass culture is a false one as well as too narrow an account of the development of prose from the late nineteenth century onwards. Rather, the cultural politics of modernism extends directly from the cultural points of the *fin de siècle*. Modernist writers responded to the same sense of crisis.¹⁹

McCracken suggests there is common ground between the apparently elitist modernist works and the popular, because writers were responding to the same cultural and social issues. Consequently, while 'The Blind Ploughman' appears to present a romanticised ideal of the rural working class and the impact of blindness on the individual, Hall is also experimenting with portraying a type of sensitive masculinity that is sexually ambiguous. Interpreting 'The Blind Ploughman' as a hopeful and inspiring poem is a perfectly satisfactory reading. However, there is another way of reading it, which demonstrates the complexity of her work and displays her interest in a type of masculinity that is rarely positioned as the main protagonist.

Just as Pound was promoting modernism in 1913, the politician, writer and literary patron Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham was also confronting modernity within the arts. In his introduction to Hall's book of poetry, *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* (1913) Cunninghame Graham asks, 'What is Modernity? To be modern is to touch the senses of the age you write for'.²⁰ Hall's old-fashioned poetic style may have provoked this rhetorical question and theme in his Introduction. However, as a man who had supported, befriended and inspired such literary luminaries as Ford Madox Ford, Oscar Wilde, John Galsworthy, W. H. Hudson, G. K. Chesterton, and George Bernard Shaw, it is clear that even at this relatively early stage in her writing career Cunninghame Graham spotted something unique in Hall's writing.²¹ As he debates the merits of being modern Cunninghame Graham commends Hall for the subject matter of 'The Blind Ploughman', declaring that 'This shows the poet in an unusual light, for most poets write on far different subjects; but here is one

¹⁹ Scott McCracken, *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and the Urban Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p.24.

²⁰ R. B. Cunninghame Graham, 'Introduction' in *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems*, x.

²¹ See Cedric Watts and Laurence Davies, *Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) for more information on Cunninghame Graham's literary connections.

which is eternal, and has been since the time of Œdipus.²² Oedipus is a famous mythological figure who suffered blindness, so the comparison suggests that Hall's work is classic and timeless, but Oedipus, of course, blinded himself as a form of self-punishment for his sexual transgressions with his mother. It is a curious reference by Cunninghame Graham as it comes only three years after Sigmund Freud had coined the term 'Oedipus complex' to describe the development of human sexuality.²³ Cunninghame Graham was an astute reader and his mention of Oedipus can be linked to Freud's developing psychological theories, but it is also possible that he is creating an association between the Ploughman's blindness and one of classical Greek mythology's most notorious examples of sexual misdemeanour. It is an indication that Cunninghame Graham was acutely aware that something deeper was happening within Hall's work, beyond its romantic sentimentalisation. Although his introduction does not explicitly state that Hall's work contains radical sexual and social ideas, covertly he is hinting at this by mentioning Oedipus as an example of an individual whose lack of insight leads to his downfall. Hall's poetry can, and largely has, been read superficially, but Cunninghame Graham suggests that there is another way to view her poetical output.

In fact, Cunninghame Graham guides the reader to understanding Hall, as he compares her poetry to the work of a number of poets, stating that 'Those who wrote so all men could understand, as Sapho [sic], Campion, Jorge Maurique [sic], Petrarca, Villon ... all wrote clearly'.²⁴ Clarity and simplicity of language appear to link these poets, but they are nevertheless an eclectic group. The best known is Sappho, particularly as her identity had become closely associated with lesbianism during the Victorian period.²⁵ Leaving aside Petrarca/Petrarch, there is a degree of ambiguity surrounding each of the poet's sexuality,

²² Cunninghame Graham, xii.

²³ The term 'Oedipus complex' was first used in Sigmund Freud's essay 'A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men' (1910) see *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, The Vol 11: v. 11*, trans by James Strachey (London: Vintage, 2001), p.171.

²⁴ Cunninghame Graham, x-xi.

²⁵ See Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999) 'Although questions about Sappho have persisted for many centuries, her association with lesbian identity is a particularly Victorian phenomenon, and a legacy that persists in modern lesbian studies.', p.94.

since none of them married.²⁶ However, their sexuality may be only one aspect that Cunninghame Graham was referring to since the poets also offer a commentary on Hall's poetical style. In his book, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (1933), T. S. Eliot describes Campion's lyrical style:

The second greatest accomplishment of the age was the lyric [the first being blank verse]; and the lyric of Shakespeare and Campion owes its beauty not primarily to its use of rhyme or to its perfection of "verse form," but to the fact that it is written in musical form; it is written to be sung.²⁷

Hall's poetry has been criticised for its links with parlour music, but the comparison to Campion suggests that the association between music and words is an established one in English poetry. Consequently, Hall is merely following this tradition. The reference to Manrique is likely to have arisen from Cunninghame Graham's interest in Spanish history and culture.²⁸ Frank A. Domínguez describes Manrique's portrayal of love in the following terms:

The true Christian sacrifices even his life in a token of faith and hope. The lover, on the other hand, believes in a wayward, unjust god, whose only promise is the satisfaction of an impossible desire. Therefore, where the Christian martyr finds fulfillment in his passion, the martyr of love only finds pain and sorrow.²⁹

This quotation expresses the interplay between Christianity and love that is such a dominant theme in Hall's work. Evidence of the Christian martyr is prominent in 'The Blind Ploughman', as the Ploughman accepts his fate because of his belief in God. It makes

²⁶ **Thomas Campion** (1567-1620), was an English composer, poet and physician. Campion would never marry or have children. When he died, his lifelong friend, Philip Rosseter, was named as his sole heir. **Jorge Manrique** (1440-1479), is considered to be one of Spain's greatest lyrical poets and is best known for the work *Coplas a la muerte de su padre* (*Verses on the death of Don Rodrigo Manrique, his Father*) (1480). Little is known about his personal life, but he never married. **Francesco Petrarca/Petrarch** (1304 – 1374), an Italian scholar and poet. His most famous work was a collection of sonnets dedicated to his unrequited love Laura. While heterosexual in content, the collection of sonnets inspired Shakespeare's sonnets, which according to Christian A. Gertsch, 'are the most distinguished example of openly homoerotic – if not outright homosexual – verse, a fact that has been played down by heterosexist literary criticism throughout the centuries'. Christian A. Gertsch, 'Love Poetry, the Petrarchan Tradition' in *Encyclopedia of Gay Histories and Cultures*, ed. by George Haggerty (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p.550. **François Villon** (1431-1463?), a poet and criminal. His work reflected on his criminal activities, by playing with the form and hiding mysterious jokes and references in his poetry, with some of encoded slang interpreted as an indication of his own homosexuality and the engagement in homosexual acts.

²⁷ T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1933), p.31.

²⁸ See Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Significance of Cunninghame Graham' (1952) in *Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Duncan Glen (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 'Cunninghame Graham's subject matter was drawn from Spain, Morocco, Spanish America, Iceland – only in a few cases from Scotland itself.', p.121.

²⁹ Frank A. Domínguez, *Love and Remembrance: The Poetry of Jorge Manrique* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1988), p.40.

Cunninghame Graham's comparison to Manrique particularly insightful as this was at an early stage in Hall's career. Just as the comparison to Campion demonstrated the poetical heritage of her work, the comparison to Petrarca/Petrarch, who developed the structure of the sonnet, which in turn influenced Shakespeare's sonnets, suggests that Hall's work is traditional and classical in its themes and structure. Hall's poem will seem old-fashioned when compared to experimental modernist poetry, but her work evokes the styles of different eras.

Cunninghame Graham's final reference is to Villon, who would later become the subject of Pound's opera, *Le Testament de Villon* (1926). In a letter to W. B. Yeats, Pound writes:

I don't know whether you have ever grasped the fact that I have made an opera out of Villon's text; I mean all the words sung, save about twenty as connecting links, are taken strophe by strophe from Villon's testament. It ought to be a french [sic] national fete; as Villon is their only possible substitute for Homer.³⁰

The vanguard of modernism clearly greatly admired Villon, whose poetry reflected his criminal activities and possible homosexuality by playing with form and encoding mysterious jokes and references. Cunninghame Graham recognised something of Hall's similarly playful use of form and the hidden meanings in her text. Therefore, what appears to be a rather random collection of poets mentioned in Cunninghame Graham's introduction, actually guides the reader to understanding Hall as a lesbian, lyrical, religious, traditional and subversive writer. Cunninghame Graham locates her poetry within a specific and relatively obscure strand of literary history.

As well as being a literary figure, Cunninghame Graham was a staunch socialist and Liberal politician who fought throughout his life for the rights of the working classes. Although he was born into a wealthy and privileged family, he believed in social equality and fairness and was even imprisoned for his part in the Bloody Sunday riots on 13 November 1887.³¹ 'The Blind Ploughman' may be a romanticised depiction of blindness and the hardship faced by the rural labouring classes, but it captured Cunninghame Graham's attention and

³⁰ Letter from Ezra Pound to W. B. Yeats, dated 19 June 1924 quoted by Noel Stock in *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1970), p.455.

³¹ See Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866-1915* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) 'The M. R. F. [Metropolitan Radical Federation] nevertheless went ahead, and on 13 November – 'Bloody Sunday' – the authorities clashed with demonstrators in a fashion which entered into the folk mythology of radical protest. The following Monday nine men were sentenced to between one and six months' hard labour on unsupported evidence, and others were fined [...] two M. P.s, Cunninghame Graham and John Burns were among those arrested.', p.286.

imagination. He describes his vision of the Ploughman: 'One sees him sitting, wrinkled and bent, and ploughworn in the sun, and thanking God according to his faith, for light interior, for that interior vision which all mystics claim'.³² The spiritual tone of the poem is not lost on Cunninghame Graham, but the hardship faced by the Ploughman illustrates the challenges for those who must earn a living despite physical adversities. The power of 'The Blind Ploughman', from a socialist viewpoint, resides in the fact that it focuses on the struggle of the individual worker, both in terms of his labour and disability. The knowledge of God's presence offers hope, but the poem also acts as a plea to society to support the blinded Ploughman and other men like him. Hall's intentions for the poem may have been to illustrate the concept that sight will not guarantee that God is seen, but the rural environment appears to display sympathy with the working-class man. The reality is that for Hall the struggle of the working classes aligned itself to modern-day martyrdom rather than the more socialist sympathies of Cunninghame Graham. However, Cunninghame Graham's reaction to 'The Blind Ploughman' demonstrates how open the poem is to interpretation.

The importance of Cunninghame Graham's Preface is noted in Hall's next book of poems, *The Forgotten Island* (1915), which contains a collection of press notices that give a flavour of the critical reactions to *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems*, many of them mentioning Cunninghame Graham. An extract from *The Daily Telegraph* on 14 March 1913 is typical of how Cunninghame Graham is referred to:

The present volume [*Songs of Three Counties*], which deals largely with rustic life among the Malvern Hills, is distinguished by a brief preface from the pen of Mr. R. B. Cunninghame-Graham, who commends the poet's natural touch and true love of Nature. In particular, he calls attention to the striking lyric called "The Blind Ploughman", in which an original idea is expressed in tender and haunting phrases: this little poem makes a piquant appeal to sympathy, and the country songs of love and remembrance are no less eloquent.³³

A review in *The Athenæum* also highlights the unusual subject matter of the poem, stating that 'Love is dominant in the book, but not to the exclusion of themes less hackneyed, such as that of 'The Blind Ploughman'.³⁴ Cunninghame Graham's interest and reaction to 'The Blind Ploughman' focused press attention onto the poem. In a piece of autobiographical writing, Hall reflects on the significance of Cunninghame Graham's preface:

³² Cunninghame Graham, xi.

³³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1913 quoted in Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall, *The Forgotten Island*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1915), pp.73-4.

³⁴ *The Athenæum*, 15 February 1913 quoted in *The Forgotten Island*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1915), p. 74.

Another kind and most valued friend has been Robert Cunninghame Graham, he wrote a preface to my "Songs of Three Counties" a great honour this and one that makes me feel proud whenever I think of it. ~~To this great master~~ To him, as a master of literary style I always send my books as soon as they are published, ~~waiting~~ I metaphorically hold my breath while awaiting his criticism.³⁵

Cunninghame Graham's endorsement of the poem was therefore significant. However, it was the poem's adaptation into a song by the composer Robert Coningsby Clarke (who was married to Hall's American cousin Dolly Clarke née Diehl) and the fact that it was adopted as a thematic anthem of the First World War, which brought Hall's work to the masses.³⁶ In her biography, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (1997), Sally Cline notes that 'The Blind Ploughman':

acquired national celebrity during the First World War, and was still sung during the Second World War and long afterwards. Dame Clara Butt, Chaliapin, Powell Edwards, Paul Robeson and Nicola Rossi-Lemeni all used the song as a powerful appeal for those who had lost their sight in the war.³⁷

When Coningsby Clarke first married Dolly, Hall provided them with an allowance and, in return, a musical partnership between Clarke and Hall was formed. Cline describes how 'Marguerite [Hall] and Bobby [Coningsby Clarke] began a successful musical collaboration. It was Bobby's way of acknowledging the usefulness of the allowance Marguerite afforded them'.³⁸ In addition to the press notices in *The Forgotten Island*, the book also lists forty-two of Hall's poems, which had been set to music, and over half of these were adapted by Coningsby Clarke. Despite the number of songs the partnership yielded, none of them achieved the success of 'The Blind Ploughman' for either Coningsby Clarke or Hall. His obituary in *The Times* noted:

Mr Robert Coningsby Clarke, who died recently at the age of 54, enjoyed for some time before the present decline in the vogue of the drawing-room song a considerable reputation as a composer of such musical miniatures, of

³⁵ Radclyffe Hall, 'Biographical Material', Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 24, Folder 1, Untitled and Undated Draft by Hall.

³⁶ In her early twenties Hall and Dolly had a brief sexual liaison, but the affair ended when Dolly met Clarke. Hall gave Dolly and Clarke an allowance to subsidise Clarke's relatively poor income. However, the allowance was abruptly stopped when Dolly sided with Cara Harris (Mabel Batten's daughter) who complained to the Society for Psychical Research about Hall's paper on the psychical research and findings on her mother.

³⁷ Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997), p.88.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.48.

which "The Blind Ploughman" perhaps attained widest popularity about the time of the end of the War.'³⁹

Coningsby Clarke may have been a relatively successful composer, but for Hall the association between her poetry and the 'drawing-room song' is one of the reasons why her poetical output has not been taken seriously, both during her lifetime and in subsequent years. In the recent Kindle edition of *The Complete Works of Radclyffe Hall* (2014), her poems are discussed by Gill Rossini for their success as 'very popular parlour songs', but very little attention is paid to their actual literary merit.⁴⁰ Rossini's opinion is typical of Hall criticism generally, which notes the popularity of 'The Blind Ploughman' as a song, but neglects to consider the importance of the relationship between Hall's words and Coningsby Clarke's musical setting. As 'The Blind Ploughman' is undisputedly the one piece of Hall's poetical writing which has reached such a vast and extended audience, it is necessary to examine Coningsby Clarke's music alongside Hall's lyrics.

³⁹ *The Times*, 6 January 1934.

⁴⁰ Gill Rossini, 'The Poetry of Radclyffe Hall' in *The Complete Works of Radclyffe Hall*, (Kindle Edition, 2014).

1.4 'The Blind Ploughman': The Song

Just as the language of Hall's poem is simple and uncomplicated, so Coningsby Clarke's music is relatively straightforward and easy to follow, making the sheet-music accessible for people to play at home. Although it has been recorded on many occasions 'The Blind Ploughman' would have achieved its popularity through sales of sheet-music, as this was the way in which most people enjoyed music in the early part of the twentieth century.⁴¹ Whilst she appreciated the lyrics, Una Troubridge described the music rather pejoratively: '(a poor and over-theatrical setting in my opinion) ... the plain words of a puritan peasant set to an emotional organ obligato'.⁴² The song starts in F minor with a sombre labouring tone to reflect the Ploughman's hardship, but unlike the text on the page, music is able to create the mood before any words are sung. Whilst the poem has four stanzas, the song is presented as one musical idea, the first verse being comprised of stanzas one and two, followed by a brief musical interlude and finishing with stanzas three and four as the second and last verses. The heavy F minor tone at the start of the song gradually moves up the F minor scale until there is a shift into the related key of A flat major as the Ploughman announces 'Turn my face'. The effect is immediate, and it lightens the tone of the song at the moment when the Ploughman asks to have his face turned towards the sun to praise God. The word 'God', which is at the end of Hall's first stanza, signals the highest and longest held note so far, emphasising the hope that God offers to the Ploughman. The song now shifts into F major and has a lighter tone, the words becoming less laboured and tender as the melody becomes sentimental. At the end of the first verse (the poem's second stanza), there is a slight return to the opening pattern of the song, but instead of reverting to F minor, it stays in F major to retain its lighter tone. At the start of the second verse (the poem's third stanza), the chords become light and broken, suggesting a transition, as the Ploughman is asking his brother to open his heart and 'Let the little birds of faith Come and nest there-in'. The melody remains light, but two emphatic points occur with the words 'eyes' and 'soul' and then the song ends with a sustained note on the word 'see'. The momentum of the song moves from heavy drudgery

⁴¹ Chappell & Company published the sheet music, but details of the sales were lost when Warner Bros. purchased the company in the 1980s. Archival records have not survived and no biography of Hall details the actual sales figures. Newspapers give some indication of the song's popularity, because of the number of times it is performed at concerts. A catalogue from the 1925 *Columbia Records* lists 'The Blind Ploughman' costing three shillings: <<http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TEXTS/029I-COLXX1925XXX-0000A0.pdf>> [accessed 11 June 2016]. Also iTunes offers the song sung by seven artists these are: Nelson Eddy, Paul Robeson, Sigrid Onegin, Feodor Chaliapin, Benjamin Luxon and David Willson, Alun Jones and Côr Godre'r Aran, and George Beverly Shea [accessed 12 June 2016].

⁴² Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, p.29. There are many recordings of 'The Blind Ploughman' available on YouTube, including:

Feodor Chaliapin: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M66eAMzQv8A>> [accessed 29 January 2016].

Nelson Eddy <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EEuhJBUoeI>> [accessed 29 January 2016].

to a lighter and more hopeful finish with particular emphases through scoring, notation and tempo on the words 'God', 'eyes', 'soul' and 'see' to ensure that the message is not lost. Overall, the music not only reflects the message of Hall's original poem, but also enhances the emotional and enlightening journey of the Ploughman.

Many famous singers have sung 'The Blind Ploughman', but surprisingly for a song that is about the male experience, it has not been exclusively sung by men. Cline notes that the singer Dame Clara Butt performed the song.⁴³ Although Butt was renowned for her contralto voice (the lowest female singing voice in the classical range), she was not the only woman to perform the song. The British Newspaper Archive contains over one hundred mentions of 'The Blind Ploughman' between 1914 and 1918 and many of these are from local concerts where female signers performed the song. A female voice will offer a different experience of the song because the Ploughman is male and the words are from his personal perspective. When a woman performs the song, it feminises the voice through which the Ploughman's thoughts are expressed. In addition, when the song is sung by a female singer its metaphoric nature is instantly revealed, as the gender of the Ploughman is distinguishable from that of the singer and the 'my hands' at the start of the song are clearly not the hands of the singer. Rather than the performative illusion that the male singer is the Ploughman, the female singer reveals the universality of the song and its message.

Hall would have been aware that she had created a masculine speaker, and that through the medium of the song both male and female singers could relate to and interpret him in their own way. It would have assured Hall as a writer that her work, and, in essence, her artistic voice not only moved and touched people, but also enabled her to present characters that readers/singers could connect with regardless of their gender. The very fact that female singers sang the song could have something to do with the spiritually sensitive representation of masculinity that makes the Ploughman a non-threatening masculine figure.

The popularity of 'The Blind Ploughman' song, both nationally and internationally, changed Hall's own perception of herself from that of an amateur to a professional writer.⁴⁴ It was Hall's first real taste of success and it shifted her belief in her work as a commercial commodity, causing her to realise that the hobby/pastime of writing could actually generate some income. Understandably, Hall was frustrated at the meagre royalties she received for the poem and so she wrote to the Chairman of Chappell & Co. William Davey replied to her:

⁴³ See note 37.

⁴⁴ Cline, 'Hall's view of herself as a gifted amateur was now transformed by the succession of established composers who queued to collaborate with her', p.89.

Dear Miss Radclyffe-Hall,
I yield to no one in my admiration of your words for "The Blind Ploughman". They are a big contributing fact to the success of the song. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to pay royalties to lyric writers. One or two other publishers may but if we were to once introduce the principle, there would be no end to it. Many lyrics are merely a repetition of the same words in a different order and almost always with the same ideas. Hardly any of them, frankly, are worth a royalty, although once in a way [sic] they may be. It is difficult to differentiate, however. What I do feel is that you are quite entitled to have an extra payment for these particular words, and I have much pleasure in enclosing you, from Messrs Chappell, a cheque for twenty guineas.⁴⁵

Chappell's response illustrates not only the exploitative way in which music publishers treated lyricists, but also the contempt meted out to them as wordsmiths. Dellamora compares the fate of Lena Guilbert Ford, who wrote the majority of the words to Ivor Novello's 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' (1914), to Hall's experience with 'The Blind Ploughman'.⁴⁶ Novello's song was a huge success, becoming one of the most important wartime anthems and making him a considerable amount of money. However, Gilbert Ford, like Hall, earned little money from her part in the song's success, while Novello had negotiated a commercial deal to ensure maximum profit for his artistic endeavours. Hall's and Guilbert Ford's experiences were not isolated cases, but more formalised arrangements were being established in the music industry for lyricists and songwriters, with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, and the Performing Rights Society in Great Britain both created in 1914, followed by a reciprocal agreement in 1919. Hall's challenge to Chappell illustrates a very contemporary argument in the music business, but it also demonstrates how prepared she was to speak up for inequalities and injustice when she experienced them in her professional life. Dellamora states that with her fiction she 'worked hard to control the financial terms on which her work was published'.⁴⁷

Besides 'The Blind Ploughman', little of Hall's poetry/music remains for the modern audience to review or hear, but biographies do give an account of a performance at the Royal Albert Hall on 2 October 1910 of Hall's poem 'Ode to Sappho'.⁴⁸ Mabel, Hall's lover at the time, had set the poem to music; it had originally been published in *A Sheaf of Verses*:

⁴⁵ Letter from Chappell & Co. Ltd., to Radclyffe Hall, 13 June 1918 quoted by Simon Frith's chapter 'Why do songs have words?' in *Contemporary Music Review: Music and Text*, ed. by Paul Driver and Rupert Christiansen, (London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1989), p.77.

⁴⁶ See Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp.51-2.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.52.

⁴⁸ Diana Souhami's *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 1998) 'On 2 October [1910] they went with him [George, Mabel's husband] and Ladye's [Mabel] sister-in-law, Nelly Hatch, to a concert at the Albert Hall where Louise Kirkby-Lunn sang Ladye's setting of John's 'Ode to Sappho'', p.50.

Poems (1908). The poem/song is an example of Hall using her artistic voice within the social, literary and legal boundaries of explicitness. The poem reads like a naïve tribute to the Greek poet, but with a first line of 'Immortal Lesbian! canst thou still behold' it leaves the reader/listener in little doubt as to the real subject matter of the verse.⁴⁹ Despite some of the homosexual content and themes of her poems, Hall was never subjected to the criticism or condemnation she experienced with *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Diana Souhami states that 'Reviewers saw no unacceptable affections in these poems'.⁵⁰ As such, the performance at the Royal Albert Hall is remarkable. Not only did Mabel's husband attend the evening, but also a song which praised a lesbian poet was openly performed in one of the British Establishment's most iconic musical venues, a building dedicated to the memory of Queen Victoria's husband and consort Prince Albert. It is a subversive scenario: Mabel's husband is listening to his wife's music intertwined with the lyrics of her lesbian-lover, in a venue associated with the British Empire and a monarch's love (a monarch who, as the urban myth would have it, could not conceive of lesbianism). Hall's ability to flaunt non-conformity as convention is a skill that is greatly underestimated in her work and it has often gone unnoticed. The bold explicitness of 'Ode to Sappho' was presented as an artistic homage to a classical poet, but Hall was sending a clear message both in terms of the poem (for the reader at home) and her attendance at the Royal Albert Hall with her lover (to the audience) about the presence of lesbians throughout history and their visibility in contemporary society. The form of the poem may be Victorian in its style and it is overly sentimental in its adoration of Sappho, but Hall is pushing forward an explicit message about modern sexuality.

When 'Ode to Sappho' was performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Mabel and Hall had been in a two-year sexual relationship. As well as being married, Mabel was a mother and grandmother and was twenty-seven years older than Hall. Mabel and Hall had met in 1906, but their friendship and subsequent courtship did not start until 1907. Cline describes their first meeting and Hall's immediate fascination with Mabel's voice:

The woman [Mabel] was considerably older than either of the young writers [Hall and Violet Hunt]. She had beautiful hands that were less accustomed to rough work than to playing the piano and plucking the guitar. Marguerite [Hall] watched and listened from across the room. The unknown woman had an enchanting speaking voice, an ample and gracious figure, and a sensual warmth that demanded notice. She was accustomed to recognition. Marguerite and Violet recognized her.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Marguerite, Radclyffe-Hall, 'Ode to Sappho' in *A Sheaf of Verses: Poems* (Redditch: Read Books Ltd, 2011) [1908], p.36.

⁵⁰ Souhami, p.42.

⁵¹ Cline, p. 58.

Mabel had gained notice in society as a leading amateur mezzo-soprano. Her voice, beauty and personality had attracted the attention of many men during her marriage and she had affairs with Edward VII and the poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. In addition, she was also the subject of paintings by Sir Edward Poynter and John Koopman, but it is John Singer Sargent's portrait for which she is best remembered.

Sargent's portrait of *Mrs George Batten Singing* (1895) captures Mabel mid-song with her head thrown back, mouth provocatively open and her chest thrust forward (see Figure 1). The portrait is sensual as Mabel's face is lost in a moment of ecstasy and pleasure. In this fleeting moment, her eyes are almost closed and her vision impaired by the joy and



Figure 1: John Singer Sargent, *Mrs. George Batten Singing* (1895)
Source: Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, Ref: 1769_01
<<http://www.csimages.org.uk/indexplus/result.html>> [accessed 7 August 2016]

rapture of singing. The viewer of *Mrs George Batten Singing* is glimpsing a transient moment when the singer is lost in her song, but this preserved moment is also highly sexual, which affords the on-looker the opportunity to witness the private and possibly orgasmic face of Mabel. The lack of context and an indistinguishable background also add to the intensity of the portrait, because it is unclear where Mabel is singing and to how many people she is performing, or indeed if she is standing up or lying down. The focus in the painting is purely on Mabel; with her ample chest and open mouth, Sargent is attempting to portray the voice in the medium of paint, but he is also displaying her as an object to be stared at either legitimately as a performer or in a more private and intimate moment. The painting has a subversive subtext because Sargent has captured Mabel singing, something she is well-known for in society, but in addition, she was also known for her affairs and flirtation and the portrait shows her as a sensual and erotic woman.



Figure 2: Lady Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall with John Singer Sargent's portrait of Mabel in the background (1927)

Source: Getty Images, Editorial #: 2666793 < <http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/license/2666793> > [accessed 7 August 2016]

When Mabel died in 1916, she left the Sargent portrait to Hall. Although Hall and Una were in a relationship and living together, this very sensual portrait of her previous lover (and Una's cousin) was on display in their home as a reminder of Mabel's significance in Hall's life. In a photograph of Hall and Una taken in 1927, the painting is clearly visible on the wall (see Figure 2). However, Hall would eventually sell the portrait in 1929 to donate the funds to the miners who had supported her during the trial of *The Well of Loneliness*. Baker states:

Another debt of gratitude which John [Hall] paid off at this time was to the miners, whose union had protested to the Home Secretary at the ban on *The Well*. The miners were again strike-bound and many mining communities were suffering great hardship. John sold one of her most treasured possessions, the Sargent portrait of Ladye [Mabel]. It was bought by the Glasgow Art Gallery for £1,000 and John presented the sum to the Lord Mayor of London's Fund for the Relief of Distress in the Coalfields.⁵²

⁵² Baker, p.251.

It is one of the more intriguing incidents and unexpected associations in Hall's life, but it displays her sense of obligation and illustrates that she had some empathy towards the working classes, *en masse*, despite not treating her own household staff with much sympathy or understanding.⁵³ *The Scotsman* reported on the acquisition of the painting:

Sargent's well-known portrait, "Mrs George Batten" has been sold by Miss Radclyffe Hall to the Hamilton Bequest for the art galleries of the city of Glasgow. The price paid for the picture is £1000, and Miss Radclyffe Hall will give this sum to the Lord Mayor's Fund for the relief of distress in the coalfields. As the Government will give a pound for every pound subscribed by the public, Sargent's picture will bring £2000 for the miners.

Miss Dadclyffe [sic] Hall, interviewed last evening said: - "I hope that by parting as I have done with the thing I value most among my possessions, I shall be able to inaugurate what I may call a 'gift in kind' movement to help the miners. There must be many people like myself who cannot give large sums of money, but who may have a valuable picture hanging on the wall, or some other art treasure of real worth which they could very well spare. The portrait is one of Sargent's best known works, and it has an interesting history. Mrs Batten, the subject of the picture, was a well-known amateur singer, and Sargent, having heard her sing, admired her art so much that he insisted on painting her portrait singing. She is portrayed by lamplight. Afterwards he gave her the picture as a tribute of respect from one artist to another.

"The picture was left to me by Mrs Batten, who was an old friend of mine. It was wrench to part with it, because, apart from its intrinsic [sic] worth, it has a great sentimental value to me, but I feel that in what I have done I have followed her wishes. She felt so keenly in any time of distress, and was so specially devoted to children, that I am sure that at such a time as this she would never have tolerated such value hanging on a wall when it might bring real aid to distressed home."⁵⁴

In this interview, Hall emphasises her Christianity by selling an item that has both personal and private meaning for her in order to help those who are suffering and she encourages others in her position to do the same. While the true nature of her relationship with Mabel is not explicitly stated, at this time Hall was one of the most famous lesbians in the world and, as such, there is a delicate implicitness in the sentimental value attached to both the portrait and its subject. The act of selling the portrait may appear altruistic, but it is a political gesture by Hall, which links the private upper-class lesbian world to that of the working-class man. The publicity generated by selling the portrait gave Hall a platform to appear charitable,

⁵³ Describing their staffing arrangements whilst they lived at 37 Holland Street, Baker states, 'A staff of three, a cook and two maids completed the establishment. John [Hall] was a stickler for correct dress for the servants, insisting that her maids wore the traditional white aprons and brimless caps. Sloppiness or incompetence, as always, received short shrift', *ibid.* pp.169-70.

⁵⁴ *The Scotsman*, 1 February 1929.

while defiantly opposing a Government that had been determined to ban *The Well of Loneliness*.

Hall was not alone in her public support of the miners. The year before Hall sold the Batten portrait, the singer, actor and political activist Paul Robeson encountered a group of miners from South Wales who had walked from their homes to London in order to protest about their working conditions. Immediately moved by their plight, Robeson established a life-long commitment to supporting them, as Arnold H. Lubasch describes:

Robeson went on to raise enough money to provide the miners with a train ride home, along with food and clothing for their families in Wales's Rhondda Valley. He also donated the proceeds of one of his concerts to a relief fund for the Welsh miners. He sang in the mining communities and forged a strong bond of friendship with the miners of South Wales.⁵⁵

Hall's act of kindness to the miners was only a cursory phase in her life and could perhaps have been inspired by the publicity that Robeson had received for his support of the miners. Yet Robeson, with his political leanings towards communism and socialism, and his sense of kinship with anybody subjected to social injustice, aligned himself to their struggle for the rest of his life.

On the day he first met the miners, Robeson sang his most famous song to them, 'Ol' Man River' from the musical *Show Boat* (1927).⁵⁶ Robeson's association with a song that depicts the hardship of African-American labourers, who worked on the water or at the waterfront of an uncaring river, suggests not only his solidarity with those who suffer from racial oppression, but also an affiliation with the lives of the working classes. In addition to 'Ol' Man River', Robeson later recorded one of the most enduring versions of the 'The Blind Ploughman'.⁵⁷ His baritone bass voice suggests the epic struggle of the working man, but as a minister's son and a regular church singer, he also captures a sense of the genuine enlightenment and hope that the Ploughman experiences in the verse. Robeson's version of 'The Blind Ploughman' acts as a suitable companion piece to the struggles he sings of in 'Ol' Man River' and offers a different interpretation of Hall's lyrics and the song. Instead of the idyllic English country settings in *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems*, Robeson's version of the song suggests slavery and the oppression of African-Americans. Robeson

⁵⁵ Arnold H. Lubasch, *Robeson: An American Ballad* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2012), p.58.

⁵⁶ Paul Robeson recorded several versions of 'Ol' Man River', changing the lyric to remove reference to 'niggers' to 'darkies'. This recording from 1929 retains the original lyrics: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sftRHKyvBiM>> [accessed 1 April 2016].

⁵⁷ Paul Robeson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t_XfcB0ZVg> [accessed 29 January 2016].

achieves this through not only his voice and his association with other cultural and political references, but also through the folk-like quality of 'The Blind Ploughman', which has a universal rather than a culturally specific identity. Lubasch describes how Robeson was attracted to spiritual and folk songs, because 'they all shared a "deep-lying affinity" to people's expression of basic emotions. He said he was not trying to appeal to the highbrow or the lowbrow – he was singing for "common humanity"'.⁵⁸ Robeson, like Hall, was attracted to art and entertainment that appealed to the masses, and both were aware that the popular could also be radical.

In her discussion of the relationship between modernist writers and the Harlem Renaissance, Sharon Lynette Jones argues that 'African-American writers worked within and against the modernist movement in the exploration of the human condition from an African-American perspective'.⁵⁹ In the same way that Hall was playing within boundaries of the popular and familiar to push a homosexual agenda, Robeson was a performer who throughout his career challenged racial perceptions and actively sought material that portrayed African-Americans in a positive light.⁶⁰ During his stay in London in the 1920s and 1930s, Robeson connected with the spirit of his African heritage through Britain's colonial past and present by meeting Africans who had settled in the country. According to his biographer Lindsey R. Swindall, it was during this period that:

Robeson's study of black music, such as spirituals, reinforced his conviction that African-American songs were "in the tradition of the world's great folk music." The music of working people and people who had suffered oppression was born from a similar place in the human spirit. His repertoire, thus, began to expand to include folk songs from around the world. The kinship he discovered with African people and other groups motivated his stand against fascism in the 1930s'.⁶¹

We do not know for sure whether Robeson and Hall ever met, but she certainly saw him perform in London, as Una's diary for 10 September 1925 states: 'In [the] evening we

⁵⁸ Lubasch, p.77.

⁵⁹ Sharon Lynette Jones, 'Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*, ed. by Alex Davis, Lee M. Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p.199.

⁶⁰ Despite his best attempts to select positive roles, Robeson would later denounce his involvement in the film *Sanders of the River* (1935). Lindsey R. Swindall states, 'In 1934, Robeson signed on to a film project with African themes that was called *Sanders of the River*. He hoped this would fulfill [sic.] his intention of making a film that introduced audiences to the African music and culture that he had been exploring so passionately. Though the film had some promising elements, these were ultimately overshadowed by its imperialistic message.', *Paul Robeson: A Life of Activism and Art* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), p.69.

⁶¹ Lindsey R. Swindall, *Paul Robeson: A Life of Activism and Art* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), p.6.

went to a wonderful 1st night. Paul Robeson in Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*'.⁶² They also saw the first London production of *Show Boat* on Monday 14 May 1928. Although Una's diary indicates that they enjoyed the musical, describing it as a 'perfectly pitched show', there is no mention of Robeson.⁶³ Whilst he was in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s Robeson would have moved in similar social circles to Hall and Una and he did meet and befriend one of Hall's literary mentors, Rebecca West.⁶⁴ Robeson's popularity in London and his friendship with people whom she knew may have influenced the party scene in *The Well of Loneliness*, where Stephen Gordon's friend, Jamie, 'had persuaded a couple of negroes who were studying at the Conservatoire to come in and sing that evening – they had promised to sing Negro Spirituals, old slavery songs of the Southern plantations'.⁶⁵ However, Jean Walton suggests that the party scene was more than likely 'a fictionalization of the evening of spirituals hosted by Hall and Troubridge in the summer of 1927'.⁶⁶ The party was to celebrate Hall's success at winning the Prix Femina for *Adam's Breed* and performing for the guests were the African-American singers Taylor Gordon and J. Rosamond Johnson. The scene in the novel suggests the mixing of cultures, which Robeson, Gordon and Johnson were engineering in their own careers, bringing together America and Europe, popular song and classical music; slave labour and leisured entertainment; and black and white. It also demonstrates how Hall was interacting with, responding to and reflecting popular culture in her work. The black characters in the party scene from *The Well of Loneliness* are the only ones to appear in any of Hall's published work and they, like Robeson, Gordon and Johnson are educated and musical.⁶⁷

The once-transient quality of the spoken or singing voice was completely revolutionised through sound recordings and the development of records in the late nineteenth century. The concept that the voice can cross artistic, technological and sensory

⁶² Una Troubridge, diary entry on Thursday 10 September 1925 in Lovat Dickson fonds: H-1196, image 24 <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1196/1917?r=0&s=3> [accessed 13 November 2015].

⁶³ See Una Troubridge, diary entry on Monday 14 May 1928 in Lovat Dickson fonds: H-1197, image 527 <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1197/527?r=0&s=1> [accessed 3 July 2016].

⁶⁴ Cline states 'In later years when her literary mentor-friends included the writers Violet Hunt, Ida Wylie, May Sinclair and Rebecca West', p. 29. Writing about his father, Paul Robeson Jr, describes how letters were found in his Mother's and Father's personal effects from 'Jawaharlal Nehru, George Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, Helen Hayes, Rebecca West, Sergei Eisenstein, Emma Goldman and many other historical figures' Paul Robeson Jr, *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: Quest for Freedom 1939-1976*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), p.363.

⁶⁵ Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, (London: Virago, 1990) [1928], p.365.

⁶⁶ Jean Walton, "'I Want to Cross Over into Camp Ground': Race and Inversion in *The Well of Loneliness*", in *Palatable Poison: Critical Perspectives on The Well of Loneliness*, ed. by Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.282.

⁶⁷ In Hall's unpublished short story 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' (circa 1915) published in *'The World' and other Unpublished works of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. by Jana Funke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), Hall tells the story of an educated Black man who becomes a lawyer, but then rapes his white client and commits suicide.

boundaries and that it can also be reproduced is a factor that Hall would have associated with her own poetry. The Robeson version of 'The Blind Ploughman' offers a completely different take on the meaning of the lyrics – a meaning that the words on the page alone would not have immediately suggested.⁶⁸ While the parlour-music association of Hall's poetry has been detrimental to her reputation as a poet, she was actually tapping into a modern commercial market and pushing the boundaries of her own artistic voice from the page and into the homes and concert halls of people who may never have come into contact with her written work. Music was broadening her audience and composers were interpreting her words in a different medium and adding meaning that transcends the written or spoken word. The emphasis that Coningsby Clarke's music places on key words reinforces the primary message of the song. Yet, those who truly were listening would hear and recognise the ambiguous masculinity of the spiritually sensitive Ploughman. In much the same way that the Ploughman has true vision, the song shifts the poem into a different sensory experience: rather than being read, the words are heard. The audience can hear a message about believing in the power of faith and that blindness affords true vision so that the soul can see God. However, disguised in the conventions of commercial parlour music Hall is also telling a non-conventional story for those who recognise it and are willing to hear it.

⁶⁸ A number of different recordings of 'The Blind Ploughman' were made during Hall's lifetime, including Robeson's version of the song.

1.5 'The Blind Ploughman' and War Blindness

The events of the First World War undoubtedly influenced the interpretation of 'The Blind Ploughman', but Hall would not have been able to anticipate the significance of her subject matter when writing the poem in 1913. Blindness was not as prevalent then as it was during and after the war. The estimated number of English soldiers who lost their sight in service was approximately 3,000 and most of these converged on London for treatment and recovery.⁶⁹ National awareness and funds to support the blinded men was a critical objective of the war years and 'The Blind Ploughman' became culturally associated with this effort.

'The Blind Ploughman' was performed regularly at local concerts, such as the one described by the *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*:

With a view to helping the splendid work now being undertaken for our blinded soldiers and sailors, and arousing public interest in the sad and irreparable, if uncomplaining lot which is the outcome of their heroic devotion to the great Motherland, a concert party calling themselves simply "The Blind Musicians" came to the Assembly Rooms, Bath on Tuesday evening. The tour is undertaken under the auspices of the National Institute for the Blind, and the first concert was fixed for Bath, probably because this city has done so handsomely in the past, for all great and noble causes arising out of the war of the nations. ... Madame Colbourne delighted the audience with "The Blind Ploughman" (Clark) [sic.].⁷⁰

Confirmation of the association between the blinded soldiers and 'The Blind Ploughman' was established at one of the most significant wartime performances of the song, which occurred at a concert in 1916 organised by the Grenadier Guards for St Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors. Queen Alexandra, Princess Victoria and the Duchess of Connaught attended the concert at the Queen's Hall, London, and Robert Radford sang the song.⁷¹ The performance is important, because it demonstrates how Hall's poem/song quickly became connected with the blinded soldiers, that it was performed at an event organised by one of the most senior regiments in the British Army for the Royal Family. A poster for the event

⁶⁹ See Gabriel Farrell, *The Story of Blindness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956): 'England's programme for its war blinded, of whom there were nearly 3000, was not a government undertaking, but was promoted and supported by a voluntary agency which continues to the present time, under the name of St. Dunstan's. A large factor in the success of the programme was the fortunate choice of its founder, Arthur Pearson, a prominent journalist who had to leave Fleet Street because of failing sight. He had become associated with the National Institute for the Blind when the war came on and wounded soldiers began to reach London.' p. 177.

⁷⁰ *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 27 November 1915.

⁷¹ See *Daily Mirror*, 29 November 1916.

(see Figure 3) features Septimus E Scott's *Blinded* (circa 1916) and promotes its connection to the work of St. Dunstan's.⁷²



Figure 3: Poster for the St. Dunstan's concert on 29 November 1916. The image is by Septimus E Scott (circa 1916) and the text reads: BLINDED AN AFTERNOON CONCERT in aid of ST. DUNSTAN'S under patronage of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra at QUEEN'S HALL on FRIDAY, NOV 29, at 3 p.m. Doors Open at 2.30. by the BLIND MUSICIANS Organised by Lady Pearson. SIR ARTHUR PEARSON Bart. G.B.E. will say a few words about St. DUNSTAN'S. TICKETS (including tax) 22s. 6d., 12s., 5s. 9d. and unreserved 2s. 6d., may be obtained from the Booking Office, Queen's Hall; the usual Agents; Lady Pearson, national Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland St., W. 1. (Telephone: Mayfair 4102); Messrs. CHAPPELL AND CO., 50, NEW BOND STREET, W.1. (Telephone: Mayfair 3940, 4 lines) Issued by the BLINDED SOLDIER AND SAILORS CARE COMMITTEE (Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916)

Source: Imperial War Museum, Catalogue number, Art.IWM PST 10809

<<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/24059>> [accessed 30 July 2016]

⁷² Hall and Una were in London during this period, as they were involved in *séances* with Gladys Leonard. However, Una destroyed her diaries for 1915 and 1916, because according to her biographer, Richard Ormrod, 'they would have shown dates and places of their lovemaking before Ladye's [Mabel] death'. *Una Troubridge: The Friend of Radclyffe Hall*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p.71. Therefore, there is no record of them attending the concert, but Hall may have been aware of it because her publisher Chappell and Co were involved in promoting the concert or she could have seen the poster. However, by coincidence 29 November 1916 would have marked Hall's and Una's first anniversary of their sexual relationship: a date that Una would record in later diary entries and that the couple would celebrate during their relationship.



Figure 4: St. Dunstan postcard depicting a blinded soldier in public, who has caught the attention of a couple dressed for dinner or the theatre. The text reads: "BLINDED FOR YOU - Sold in aid of St Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors. Price one penny." (circa. 1915)

Source: Tony Allen, *Picture Postcards from the Great War 1914-1918*, 'St. Dunstan's WW1 Postcards (The House of Miracles)' (2012) <<https://www.worldwar1postcards.com/dunstans.php>> [accessed 30 July 2016]



Figure 5: St Dunstan postcard depicting a soldier in darkness, as society continues in full Technicolor. The text reads: "BLINDED FOR YOU - Sold in aid of St Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors. Price one penny." (circa. 1915)

Source: Allen, 'St. Dunstan's WW1 Postcards (The House of Miracles)' [accessed 30 July 2016]

Sir Arthur Pearson created a Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Hostel in 1915 to help support men who were returning home from the war blinded. Due to the numbers of men requiring help, the organisation moved from Bayswater Road to St Dunstan's Lodge in Regent's Park, London, where they rehabilitated the men and raised public awareness and funds.

In addition to concerts, St. Dunstan's also produced postcards which depicted the individual struggles of the blinded soldiers, emphasising their sacrifice for the public and the need for donations. The images are generally melodramatic and represent the social ostracism of the soldiers. The postcards in Figures 4 and 5 are typical of the isolation and struggle of the blinded soldiers portrayed by St. Dunstan's. In Figure 4, the blinded soldier is disfigured and has a slightly ghoulish face, which is visible to the viewer, but has only just been noticed by the society woman and man as they pass by him. The soldier in Figure 4 is not aware of the attention he has attracted; instead, he is cautiously feeling his way forward with a tentatively outstretched hand. It is a powerful image, which shows how the ordinary



Figure 6: St. Dunstan postcard, a blinded soldier is being led by a monk figure towards a pastoral/country setting. The caption reads 'ST. DUNSTAN'S VICTORY OVER BLINDNESS', (Circa, 1916)

Source: Allen, 'St. Dunstan's WW1 Postcards (The House of Miracles)' [accessed 30 July 2016]

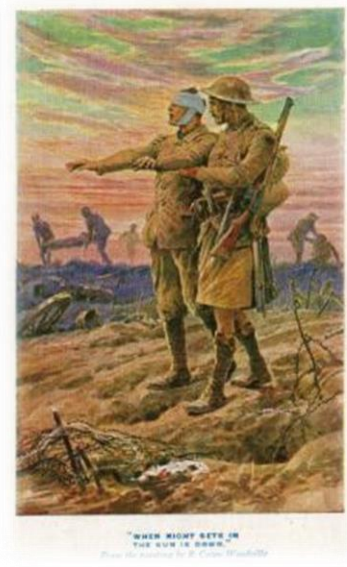


Figure 7: St. Dunstan postcard of a soldier being led away from the battlefield, the caption reads: "WHEN NIGHT SETS IN THE SUN IS DOWN." From the painting by R Caton Woodville. (Circa, 1916)

Source: Allen, 'St. Dunstan's WW1 Postcards (The House of Miracles)' [accessed 30 July 2016]

frivolous pleasures of life continue, while the struggle to exist is never far away. In Figure 5, the blinded soldier hides his face, with his head tilted downwards, while his arm covers any view of his injuries. The act of hiding his face hints at his shame, while the shrouded darkness around him alludes to the view from the grave, suggesting that although he is alive, his life is over. Above him is a beautiful idyllic country scene, replete with a rainbow, which he cannot appreciate. The image is unlike that of the Ploughman, who has accepted his fate and has a sense of the natural world around him; the blinded soldier in the postcard is only aware of the darkness and his desire to hide from society.

One of the reasons why 'The Blind Ploughman' may have appealed to the wartime audience is that Hall depicts a blinded man who is still able to do productive work within his community. The poem illustrates that blindness is not the end of someone's usefulness or their role within society and St. Dunstan's were keen to promote similar messages of hope. In one postcard (Figure 6), a blinded soldier is being led by a monk figure (presumably a representation of Saint Dunstan) to a pastoral future, with the message 'St. Dunstan's victory over blindness'. It is unclear what the blinded soldier's future will be, but it symbolically looks brighter and has overtly religious connotations. What is notable about this postcard is the



Figure 8: St. Dunstan postcard showing a soldier being offered a drink by a British orderly. The text reads: "By kind permission of the Ministry of Information – "Blinded"" (circa. 1916)

Source: Allen, 'St. Dunstan's WW1 Postcards (The House of Miracles)' [accessed 30 July 2016]

fact that it is one of the few St. Dunstan's postcards to show touch between men, beyond the distress of the battlefields. While touch is a necessary aspect of supporting those who are blind, it inadvertently diminishes society's concept of masculine strength and independence. In Figure 6, the monk's habit and his spiritual presence are feminised, particularly when compared to the accentuated masculinity of the soldier who is portrayed in full uniform and is displaying no obvious distress or injury, even though he is blind.

By contrast, the postcards in Figures 7 and 8 show soldiers who, one presumes, have recently been blinded in battle and are being led to safety with the support and touch of other men. Both of these images play with gender stereotypes to evoke an emotional response in the viewer - after all,

the objective of the postcards was to gain donations from the public. In Figure 7, which reproduces R Caton Woodville's painting, *When the Night Sets in the Sun is Down* (circa 1916), the blinded soldier retains an air of dignity and determination despite his condition. This effect is achieved through the pose and his clothes because he is wearing trousers. The sighted soldier, who is guiding the blinded soldier, is wearing a kilt that suggests that he is from a Scottish regiment, but it also slightly feminises him in contrast to the blinded soldier. The scenario is reversed in Figure 8 (the same image used for the St. Dunstan's concert on 29 November 1916 – see Figure 3), because it is the blinded soldier who is wearing the kilt and is being offered a drink by a British orderly wearing trousers. The blinded soldier appears traumatised, physically worn out and injured, but he is being supported, if not held up, by the orderly. The image is powerful because it shows that the blinded soldier is a broken man and this difference is signalled by his injury and clothing, particularly when compared to the man holding him.

In addition to the work that St. Dunstan's was doing to raise public awareness about blinded soldiers, the media also ensured that powerful images, like the famous photograph

of British soldiers blinded by tear gas during the Battle of Estaires on 10 April 1918 (see Figure 9), were circulated in the press. The photograph illustrates a combination of hope, as the men have survived, but also hopelessness as their sight has been either lost or damaged. The men in the photograph, rather like the soldier in Figure 5, have their faces hidden or obscured. The photographer may not have wanted to disturb the viewers of the photograph, but as pitiful as the image is, it also implies some degree of shame on the part of the men. The physically strong young men, who were once able to demonstrate their military masculinity, have now been reduced to holding onto each other for support, echoing the Biblical metaphor of 'the blind leading the blind'.⁷³



Figure 9: British 55th (West Lancashire) Division troops blinded by tear gas await treatment at an Advanced Dressing Station near Bethune during the Battle of Estaires, 10 April 1918, part of the German offensive in Flanders

Source: Thomas Keith Aitken (Photographer), Imperial War Museum, Catalogue number, Q 11586, < <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205193875> > [accessed 7 August 2016]

⁷³ Matthew 15:14.

The artist John Singer Sargent, in his now iconic painting *Gassed* (1919; see Figure 10), depicted a similar scene to the Estaires photograph. Commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee to paint an image for a planned Hall of Remembrance, Sargent travelled to the Western Front in July 1918. He initially struggled to find a suitably epic subject, but the suffering and aftermath of the gas attacks caught his attention. In a letter to Evan Charteris, Sargent recounted the 'harrowing sight, a field full of gassed and blindfolded men'.⁷⁴ Inspired, Sargent started sketching drafts, but he completed the painting at his studio in Fulham. Displayed to great acclaim by the Royal Academy in London in 1919, it was subsequently voted the painting of the year.⁷⁵



Figure 10: John Singer Sargent, *Gassed* (1919)

Source: Imperial War Museum, Catalogue number, Art.IWM ART 1460

< <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/23722> > [accessed 7 August 2016]

Despite its popularity, *Gassed* was not universally liked. Both Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster objected to the painting's romanticisation of war, as Allen McLaurin observes: 'Virginia Woolf objected to the expressionism, the over-emphasis of the picture; her criticism, like that of Forster, is concerned with the subject matter of the painting'.⁷⁶ It was not the blindness *per se* that Forster and Woolf objected to, but the sentimentalisation of the horrors of war. Although it is an imposing work, *Gassed* offers nothing of the abstract darkness or commentary on the folly of war which can be found in iconic modernist paintings

⁷⁴ John Singer Sargent letter to Evan Charteris, 11 September 1918 quotation by Santanu Das, 'An Ecstasy of Fumbling' Gas Warfare, 1914-18 and the Uses of Affect' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-century British and American War Literature*, ed. by Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.400.

⁷⁵ Marion Girard, *A Strange and Formidable Weapon: British Responses to World War I Poison Gas* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 'Sargent's painting became famous when it won the prize as the "Picture of the Year" during an exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1919'. p.178.

⁷⁶ Allen McLaurin, *Virginia Woolf: the Echoes Enslaved*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.27.

such as Roger Fry's *German General Staff* (1915), Mark Gertler's *Merry-Go-Round* (1916) and Paul Nash's *We are Making a New World* (1918). In contrast to the highbrow tastes of Woolf and Forster, Hall unashamedly appreciated the popular, the sentimental and the kitsch. She had attended Max Reinhardt's production of *The Miracle* at Olympia in 1912. Cline states that, 'The piece was stickily religious and undeniably sentimental. But its theme of suffering and salvation brought sobs from the audience, and provoked an immediate response from John [Hall], as suffering and salvation always would'.⁷⁷ High and low art appeared indistinguishable to Hall; as long as it moved or triggered some emotional response, she was receptive and open to art that appealed to both the educated elite and the masses. Hall's affection for populist art and entertainment illustrates a degree of fluidity within her own class, as art for her was not just the preserve of the intellectuals or those with money who could attend the theatre and opera houses, but something that had the power to touch the lives of everyone. Hall would not have been troubled by the fact that her poem/song 'The Blind Ploughman' was associated with the St. Dunstan's charity (which would also use Sargent's *Gassed* on a postcard) and she would have responded positively to the types of sentimental images they used on their postcards.

One of the reasons why Woolf and Forster objected so strongly to *Gassed* was its melodramatic composition, particularly when compared to the Estaires photograph. The soldiers in *Gassed* appear to be elevated as noble. This is partly to do with their position, as the viewer is placed slightly lower than the subjects, but it is also to do with how proportionally they have been placed within the canvas: they are slightly off-centre and as the eye moves across the line, we are drawn to the setting sun and another line of blinded soldiers in the distance. Both the photograph and the painting suggest the fragility of man and how debilitating blindness is, because the men are no longer able to fight. In addition, both images also compound the notion of helplessness, as the men's military masculinity appears damaged, because of their reliance on physical touch. In the line of men, Sargent depicts one soldier who is raising his leg far too high to cross over onto a wooden walkway (presumably, the walkway leads into the tent, whose ropes are visible to the right of the painting). The action gives a sense of the man's recent predicament, but it is capitalising on the drama of the situation. The soldier would have been familiar with the walkways and would have known that the step was not that high - indeed very few steps would be as high as the soldier is raising his foot. Sargent also exaggerates the number of injured men. The row of blinded men walks through a field of countless men lying on the ground, some with

⁷⁷ Cline, p.82.

bandages on their face and eyes, with no blood; we can only assume that the men have all been blinded. The green uniforms of the men give a sense of a field of men who have been mown down and damaged. The vista of carnage is emphasised by the panoramic sweep of the field and the vastness of the sky; had the men been standing, the sky and sun would largely be excluded from view, but instead the men are weakened and those who are standing are relying on other men. The second row of blinded men to the right are also being led away from the field and it looks like the two rows of men will converge at the tent. The fate of the men lies away from the battlefield and their future is out of the viewers' sight. Sargent has captured their final walk as soldiers into a future that exists beyond the darkness of the frame. In the distance, the careful viewer will detect men playing football, which suggests that life continues and shows how easy it would be to turn our backs on these blinded men.

Sargent died in 1925 and in recognition of his significance as a great British artist, the Royal Academy of Arts organised a memorial exhibition of his works in the following year. Hall, who had inherited Sargent's portrait of *Mrs George Batten Singing* (see Figure 1) when Mabel died in 1916, lent the portrait (and the sketch of the portrait which Una had bought for her as a gift) to the exhibition.⁷⁸ *The Times* gave some details and photographs of the paintings shown in the exhibition, including *Gassed*.⁷⁹ However, Mabel's portrait was neither mentioned nor photographed by the newspaper. This could have been a form of censorship for a portrait that now had lesbian associations. Una's diaries reveal that they attended the same private viewing session as the correspondence from *The Times*. Her diary for Wednesday 13 January 1926 reads as follows: 'John [Hall] and I breakfasted in our room early and to Mrs Leonard [their preferred spiritualist]. Home and Viola [Una's sister] to luncheon and we took her to Sargent Private view – Ladyes [sic] portraits very well hung'.⁸⁰ This connection between the two portraits, one of which had personal significance and the other with national significance, has not been made in Hall scholarship, but it appears to be a catalytic moment in understanding the development and influence on her writing. Standing in the same space as both *Mrs George Batten Singing* and *Gassed*, Hall, in loaning the portrait to the Royal Academy of Arts, was able to bring together the homosexual and the

⁷⁸ See Cline, '... somewhat cheered by Una's birthday present – the Sargent drawing of Ladye made in advance of Sargent's portrait', p.179.

⁷⁹ See *The Times*, 13 January 1926.

⁸⁰ Una Troubridge, diary entry on Wednesday 13 January 1926 in Lovat Dickson fonds: H-1197, image 24 < http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1197/24?r=0&s=3 > [accessed 1 November 2015]. Hall also discusses the exhibition in her interview in the *Scotsman*, when the Glasgow Art Gallery purchased the Batten portrait: "I am glad that the picture [*Mrs George Batten Singing*] has been bought for the public, and will not leave Britain. After Sargent's death it was included in the exhibition of his works at the Royal Academy and Tate Gallery, but it has not been shown before outside London", *The Scotsman*, 1 February 1929.

blinded/wounded soldier for the exhibition. The association between these two groups would have been physically in front of her at a critical stage in her writing career. Hall had finished *Adam's Breed*, but in July 1926, she would start working on *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), a novel, which explores the relationship between the wounded/blinded and the homosexual and it also deals with the horrors of gas warfare.

In *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall describes how Stephen and Mary Llewellyn, whilst working for the Ambulance Corps in France, come across wounded and gassed men:

Twice lately, while they had been driving together, they had come upon sights that Stephen would have spared her [Mary]. There had been that shattered German gun-carriage with its stiff, dead horses and its three dead gunners – horrible death, the men's faces had been black like the faces of negroes, black and swollen from gas, or was it from putrefaction?⁸¹

The scene is far more disturbing and dark than Sargent's *Gassed*, as Hall is depicting the men who were killed by mustard gas, rather than those who survived. In his painting, Sargent is illustrating the nobility of the men blinded by gas, while the purpose of the gas scene in *The Well of Loneliness* is to demonstrate Stephen's nobility in the face of the horrors of war and her chivalrous instincts to protect Mary from the sights. Thematically, both Sargent and Hall are using a contrasting landscape of destruction, carnage and pain to illustrate human compassion and decency at a time of war. Whereas Sargent's scene creates a sense of hope that life will continue, the central theme in *The Well of Loneliness* emphasises society's condemnation of homosexuals, and, as such, the death that Stephen and Mary witness together is symbolic of their future relationship. Stephen's nobility during the war years is a hopeless attribute, because just as she was unable to protect Mary from the sights of the battlefield, so she will never be able to protect her from society's expectation that one should take up a heterosexual lifestyle. The realisation that Stephen is fighting a losing battle comes as her friend, Martin Hallam, conspires to offer Mary a choice of marriage and normality:

At first she [Stephen] had blinded herself to the truth, sustained by the passionate stress of the battle, by her power to hold in spite of the man, by the eager response that she had awakened. Yet the day came when she was no longer blind, when nothing counted in all the world except this grievous unhappiness that was being silently borne by Mary.⁸²

⁸¹ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.294.

⁸² *ibid.*, p.438.

Stephen's clarity of vision, her realisation about the real cruelties of men, comes not as she looks at the war dead, but as she attempts to sustain a relationship with a woman during peacetime. Metaphorically, Hall is playing with the themes of blindness/vision, which are associated with fighting/battles and in turn connected to homosexuality. Stephen's wealth and her success as a writer, along with her wartime bravery may have given the illusion of social acceptance, but in the end it was just a degree of tolerance, which can be easily rescinded whenever she attempts to challenge the status quo. Stephen's blindness has been to believe that society would ever accept her and allow her to enter into a relationship with a woman.

In *The Well of Loneliness*, the devastation of gas warfare is used to illustrate the hopelessness of the homosexual, but Hall returned to the subject matter in her next novel, *The Master of the House* to reflect on damaged masculine identities. Initially, this is at a more national level as the war wounded pass through the village, some of them affected by the use of gas:

In the streets of the town might be seen the wounded, who had wandered along from a neighbouring château; the château was now a convalescent home being run by a patriotic lady. And quite often these wounded would stop and gaze at the ancient church and picturesque houses, or exclaim with delight at a group of palms, or point to the tall eucalyptus trees, for many of them were clerks from the north who had passed their lives upon office stools which had only been left for the mud of Flanders. Now they limped, supporting their weight upon sticks or swings a shattered leg between crutches, or trying to light a cigarette with a brown-gloved hand, palpably artificial. Some wheeled themselves in invalid chairs, manipulating the wheels with much skill as they eased them over uneven cobbles; while others coughed carefully, having been gassed and sent to Provence because of its climate.⁸³

One of the villagers, Beauvais, returns from the war 'with a lung that a swallow of gas had injured, with a leg so shattered and badly repaired that never again would France need his service'.⁸⁴ Gas has altered Beauvais in the same way that it has marked or changed the strange men in the village. The novel's protagonist, Christophe, has always sensed his own difference, but the injured men (the strangers and Beauvais) now cause him to realise that masculinity can be fractured and damaged. More alarming for Christophe is the fact that this difference is publicly visible, suggesting that his own difference is similarly identifiable and recognisable to others.

⁸³ Radclyffe Hall, *The Master of the House* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), p.357.

⁸⁴ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.402.

The representation of gas warfare in Hall's work, following the Sargent exhibition, suggests how the portrait inspired her and intensified her interest in the relationship between wartime blindness and masculine identities.⁸⁵ Before the war, literary blindness was often symbolic of a punishment to remove men's power, usually because of some sexual transgression. Cunninghame Grahame reminds the reader of this association by mentioning Oedipus in his introduction to *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems*, which is one of the most famous literary examples of blindness. Yet, Hall never informs the reader how the (pre-War) Ploughman has become blind; it is only the wartime adoption of the song that created an association between his blindness and war. In her book, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (2015), Brittany E. Wilson states that 'From Plato and Aristotle onward, sight is typically considered the most important of all senses, and numerous texts stress the power of sight and assume that men are the ones who exercise this power'.⁸⁶ Although his job requires physical strength, the Ploughman has lost the power of his independence, because he is reliant upon someone else placing his hands on the plough and setting him in the right direction. The poem contains a positive message of hope about blindness, which aided its wartime popularity, but it also stresses the dependency and the help required by those who are blind. War challenged the ways in which male literary blindness was presented and Hall was not alone in re-evaluating the impact of blindness on men in her fiction.

D. H. Lawrence's short story 'The Blind Man' (written in November 1918) is an example of how writers were exploring the impact of war-blindness on masculinity.⁸⁷ The story concerns Maurice Pervin, a landowner who returns from the war blinded and facially disfigured. His wife Isabel, although contented and in love with him, struggles with how other people now perceive him and their relationship. The story concludes in a dark barn, as Maurice lays his hands on the face of his wife's cousin, Bertie Reid. The intimacy of the touch between the two men reveals the weakness of Bertie, a successful barrister who has rebuffed

⁸⁵ Hall's work was influenced by wartime stories and ideologies. The inclusion of the women-only ambulance unit in both *The Well of Loneliness* and the short story, 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' indicates how she reacted and interacted with external sources in her fiction. Hall drew inspiration for the ambulance units from her friendships with Gabrielle Enthoven and Barbara 'Toupie' Lowther and their wartime work. Cline describes **Gabrielle Enthoven** as working 'first with the War Refugee Committee, then with Red Cross on the welfare of British Prisoners-of-war in Germany', p.74; and **Barbara 'Toupie' Lowther** 'formed a spectacular, women-only ambulance unit which despite opposition from the authorities eventually drove alongside the French army on the Compiègne battlefield', p.74.

⁸⁶ Brittany E. Wilson's *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.163-4.

⁸⁷ The short story was written in 1918 and published 1920 in the *English Review*; it later formed part of the collection of short stories in *England, My England* (1922).

personal connections with women. Maurice's blindness legitimises his request for the two men to touch one another, but in doing so, he enforces a palpable intimacy between them. In the darkness, Maurice's sense of touch is more powerful than Bertie's intellectualism, and Bertie is unable to cope with the imposition, leaving him deeply uncomfortable and broken.

Written during a time when images of touch between wounded and blinded soldiers were significantly increasing in the public domain, 'The Blind Man' can be interpreted as a response to wartime blindness, but ultimately it explores the power of touch, and more specifically the discomfort that touch between men can provoke. The act of touching Bertie has revealed more about him than Maurice ever saw with his eyes and as such seeing is not always believing or understanding. In 'The Blind Man', touch is the key to understanding the truth, instead of the façade that someone presents. In her doctoral thesis, *Seeing Blindness: The Visual and the Great War in Literary Modernism* (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2014) Rachel Dworsky examines how modernist writers were exploring the concept of intersubjective vision. Dworsky states that 'Joyce's *Ulysses* [1922] along with other modernist novels, labor to engage with complexities surrounding the intersubjectivity of vision, as they make seeing and blindness visible'.⁸⁸ Dworsky argues that modernist fiction manipulated the viewpoint of the reader beyond a single narrative perspective and within the narrative sphere to such extent that characters are able to envisage the perspectives of other characters that are both sighted and blind.

Lawrence's 'The Blind Man' is an example where touch is the instigator of this shift in perspective and understanding. Another more widely discussed example is found in *Ulysses* (1922) when Leopold Bloom helps a blind young man across the street. Dworsky argues that 'Bloom's interaction with the stripling reflects a genuine empathy, as his thoughts move from looking *at* the blind man to imaginatively perceiving the world *through* the stripling's blind eyes'.⁸⁹ Joyce describes Bloom helping the stripling: 'He touched the thin elbow gently: then took the limp seeing hand to guide it forward'.⁹⁰ The language and imagery used to describe the blind man suggest his frailty and weakness, which reinforces the assumption that male blindness affects masculine power, strength and independence. However, the stripling's hand is described as 'seeing', inferring that his touch has a sensory

⁸⁸ Rachael Dworsky, 'Seeing Blindness: The Visual and the Great War in Literary Modernism' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Massachusetts- Amherst, 2014), p.173. In a study that focuses on Modernist texts and writers, it is unsurprising there is no mention of 'The Blind Ploughman' in Dworsky's research. However, the poem/song certainly captured the contemporary cultural interest in blindness/seeing, which is such a key element of Dworsky's argument. Inclusion or reference to 'The Blind Ploughman' could have demonstrated how popular cultural was also exploring the theme of blindness/seeing as a comparative discourse to the Modernist texts.

⁸⁹ Dworsky, p. 173.

⁹⁰ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) [1922], p.172.

power, which is reflected in the transition of Bloom's attitude from condescension to empathy. While Bloom reflects on the difficulties faced by the stripling he compares the blind man's condition/masculinity to that of a 'Bloodless pious face like a fellow going in to be a priest'.⁹¹ It is a rather telling comparison, because it relates the emasculation and desexualisation of blind men to some spiritual being (similar to the state of the Ploughman). Despite his empathy for their situation, Bloom is aware of how society ultimately views blind men.

Both Lawrence and Joyce illustrate the ways in which modernist writers were engaging with masculine blindness in the early part of the twentieth century. Lawrence's approach addresses and reacts to the reality of war blindness by attempting to shift the perception of the emasculated blind man. Maurice is empowered in the story, because his blindness along with his reliance on touch enables him to have a greater insight into those around him. By contrast, Joyce invokes the stereotypical perception of blindness in men to chart a shift in Bloom's perspective and understanding of blindness. Touch is central in both stories as the men experience the intersubjectivity of vision.

Hall was not a modernist writer, but her pre-war fascination with the links between masculinity and blindness touched a nerve with war-time audiences. Blindness and its relationship to masculinity and vision are themes that she would subsequently explore in both her public and private writing.

⁹¹ Joyce, p.173.

1.6 Blindness, Insight, Disfigurement and Difference in Hall's Writing

In *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems*, 'The Blind Ploughman' is the final poem in a section that celebrates the natural beauty of the English countryside and acts as a reminder to readers to enjoy the beauty of the world around them. However, 'The Blind Ploughman' also serves as a warning that seeing is not always believing, because many of the poems in the collection are expressions of love where the gender of the narrator is not identified or the object of affection remains gender neutral. The pastoral poems in *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* offer queer readings beyond the assumed heteronormative interpretation, but only if the reader sees and recognises Hall's use of language and motifs. Indeed, it is possible to view the blindness of the Ploughman as a commentary on homosexuality, particularly at a time when male homosexuality was illegal. The physical blindness of the Ploughman could be interpreted as a punishment for his homosexuality, because in the Bible angels blind the men who threaten to rape Lot, which indicates that God will punish men who engage in or threaten to commit acts of homosexuality.⁹² Yet, throughout the poem the blindness the Ploughman experiences is not a penalty for sin, even if the world may view it differently as something which has weakened his masculinity. Instead, the poem aims to convince the reader that the Ploughman's blindness is a *gift*, which enables him to feel and experience God's love and to appreciate the world in a different way. Blindness in 'The Blind Ploughman' signifies both insight and difference.

One of the most striking features of 'The Blind Ploughman' is the labour-intensive and earthy country setting of the poem. Hall, like many poets before her, romanticises the working-class man and his environment by suggesting his closeness to nature and therefore to God. However, the depiction is also typical of the pastoral homosexual desire of upper-class male homosexuals towards working-class men. In his book, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulations of Sexuality Since 1800* (1981), Jeffrey Weeks discusses the fascination, desire and lust of upper-class male homosexuals at the turn of the twentieth century for working class men: 'These class and gender interactions (working class = real men = closeness to nature) were to play important roles in the homosexual world affecting in particular the rituals of prostitution'.⁹³ Although Weeks is discussing male prostitution amongst working-class men, his chapter also clearly indicates the desire of educated, wealthy homosexual men, to seek sex or a romanticised relationship with a working-class man. Weeks points to

⁹² Genesis 19:11: And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

⁹³ Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulations of Sexuality Since 1800* (Abingdon: Oxon, 2014) [1981], p.140.

Forster's wish to 'to love a strong young man from the lower classes and to be loved by him and even hurt by him' as a primary example of the desire to cross class lines and to seek love/sex outside the respectable upper classes.⁹⁴ Similarly, in his discussion on Edward Carpenter's epic poem *Towards Democracy* (1883), Scott McCracken states that: 'Part of Carpenter's contribution to late nineteenth-century English socialism was to a more direct exploration of the homoerotics of masculine labour. Much of the original shock value of his work came from his sexualised identification with male workers'.⁹⁵ Hall's intentions were probably not as explicit as Carpenter's, but 'The Blind Ploughman' contributes to the romantic and idealised notion of the strong, albeit damaged, masculinity of the farm labourer and in doing so, it reflects the (male) homosexual desire/gaze towards the strength and earthiness of working class man. While Hall has long been associated with lesbianism, 'The Blind Ploughman' suggests that her work and her depiction of masculinity also contain elements that reflect and comment on contemporary male homosexual desire.⁹⁶ The success of 'The Blind Ploughman' and its association with wartime blindness created a link for Hall between blindness, insight, disfigurement and difference in relation to masculine identities and sexuality. The development of these themes can be traced throughout Hall's writing career.

Hall started to focus on fiction just before the outbreak of the First World War, 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' (1915) being one of her earliest, though unpublished short stories.⁹⁷ Mark Anthony is an African-American who rejects his cultural identity and heritage. Jana Funke describes the character as one who 'cannot identify positively with his own race, and it is the hatred of his own blackness that inspires his mimicry of whiteness'.⁹⁸ In a pivotal scene, Mark Anthony looks at himself in the mirror and is distressed at the reflection:

⁹⁴ Edward Morgan Forster, *The Creator as Critic and Other Writings by E. M. Forster*, ed. by Jeffery M. Heath (Toronto: Dundurn, 2008), p.216.

⁹⁵ Scott McCracken, 'I am the lover and the loved – I have lost and found my identity': Edward Carpenter and *Fin-de-Siècle* Masculinities' in *Signs of Masculinity: Men in Literature 1700 to The Present*, ed. by Antony Rowland, Emma Liggins and Eriks Uskalis (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), p.151.

⁹⁶ In Hall's only openly lesbian novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, the upper-class and wealthy lesbian/invert Stephen falls in love with Mary, a young orphaned woman with little education from a small Welsh village. Despite its lesbian theme, the female masculine Stephen appears to be following a classic upper-class male homosexual pattern of seeking love/sex outside her own class.

⁹⁷ See Cline, 'Early in 1914 she [Hall] had begun a story entitled 'Bonaparte'', p.99.

⁹⁸ Jana Funke, 'Introduction' in *'The World' and other Unpublished works of Radclyffe Hall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.7.

What he saw, was a strong, clean-shaven face, kind and intelligent, with a broad brow and determined chin, but showing the unmistakable mark of the negro in the nose and mouth. And yet he knew he was "white". Perhaps it was this terrible faith in himself that made it all so hard to bear.⁹⁹

The scene pre-emptes the famous mirror incident in *The Well of Loneliness* when Stephen wants to injure her own body, because the reflection fails to correlate to her own perception of herself. Yet, it also builds upon the concept of seeing the truth, which Hall had explored in 'The Blind Ploughman', only in the case of both Mark Anthony and Stephen their vision has been blinded by their own dissatisfaction with the truth of the reflection. 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' demonstrates a transition from the physical blindness of the Ploughman to a more complex development of the psychological alienation, isolation and difference that Hall would continue to explore in her fiction. Mark Anthony's sight and his awareness of how white people see and perceive him affects his sense of identity and internalised racial shame. There is a parallel between Hall's conception of race and homosexuality, but 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' also illustrates how she was beginning to develop a relationship between seeing and difference.

At the start of Hall's first published novel, *The Forge* (1924), the reader is informed that Hilary Brent wears a patch on his eye, due to an injury he sustained in the First World War:

At the moment only one of these queer eyes showed, the other being covered by a black patch. This patch was the only trophy that its wearer had brought back from the war, and curiously enough, it was not unbecoming or so his friends thought.¹⁰⁰

In Hall's light comedy novel, it is perhaps predictable that Hilary's disfigurement and his loss of sight in one eye becomes an appealing feature and only acts to enhance his appearance. The war has left its mark upon Hilary (as it had upon millions of men), but it is not his wife

⁹⁹ Radclyffe Hall, 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' in *'The World' and other Unpublished works of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. by Jana Funke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.48.

¹⁰⁰ Radclyffe Hall, *The Forge* (London: Falcon Press, 1952) [1924], pp.10-11.

Susan who finds the patch attractive, but vague genderless 'friends'.¹⁰¹ Hall also uses the word 'queer' to describe Hilary's eyes; it is a word that she frequently uses in her writing, but one whose meaning is debatable. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the first use of the word queer, in relation to homosexuality, in 1914, but it would have been used in conversation and discourse before being officially recorded.¹⁰² As a lesbian with an interest in developing sexological theories, and as an unmistakably female masculine woman, Hall would have been aware of the connection between queerness and homosexuality. Hall may use the word 'queer' to describe something as strange or peculiar, but there are times when its meaning is open to interpretation. After a group of children in Italy mock and attack Hilary, Susan attempts to justify the assault, as being occasioned by his eye patch:

'But, my dear, if they haven't seen such a thing before, it would look queer.'
'What, never seen a black patch, with all the wounded during the war?'
'But perhaps none of the wounded they've seen happened to have an injured eye. You must be just.'
'Just! Perhaps you think I'm a kind of Guy Fawkes! Perhaps you think I *look* queer!'
'Don't be ridiculous! I merely said that to them you probably *did* look queer.'
'Oh, all right, I'm a freak! Where's the Pond's Extract?'¹⁰³

The exchange between Hilary and Susan reveals the sensitivity around the word 'queer' – no one wants to be queer, even (or especially) if its meaning is related to difference or homosexuality. In these few lines of dialogue, the reader is reminded that Hilary is visibly different from other men and whilst many men were injured in the war, Hall swiftly, but with humour, undermines his military masculinity with the request for Pond's Extract Company's most popular beauty product, vanishing cream. Hall is playing with language here and the concept of masculine identities, but thematically she is linking sight (not only how Hilary looks but how he is seen) to difference and the notion of queerness, whether the meaning is peculiar or gay. Hilary's sexuality is questionable throughout the novel and by associating the word 'queer' with him Hall reinforces an uncertainty regarding his real identity. The

¹⁰¹ In a scene later in the novel, when the couple are in Café de Paris, Hilary and Susan meet one of Hilary's old friends Victor Lumsden. The narrative perspective is from Hilary's point of view and he systematically critiques Victor's clothes and physique. Hilary notes 'His [Victor] clothes had always infuriated Hilary – too obviously new, too obviously well pressed, and invariably of a pale grey colour. Even in the evening he adhered as much as possible to his colour scheme by wearing a grey silk waistcoat, yet one more crime in Hilary's eyes.' *The Forge*, p.89. The commentary illustrates how men or at least certain types of men like Hilary, notice fashion, accessories and hairstyles and pass judgement on them, but it is also an indication of how his own 'friends' may judge his appearance.

¹⁰² See 'Queer, n.².2' *OED Online*. August 2015. Oxford University Press, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156236#eid27444436>> [Accessed: 15 August 2016].

¹⁰³ Radclyffe Hall, *The Forge*, p.141.

ambiguity of its meaning is, therefore, fitting for the development of Hilary's characterisation.

Hilary's life is in stark contrast to the life of the working-class Ploughman, but his wealth fails to deliver the sense of personal contentment that the Ploughman experiences. *The Forge* explores the folly of Hilary's attempt to achieve personal happiness, but his vision is an ideal that he is perpetually chasing and never finding. In many respects, it is the same sense of disillusionment that Mark Anthony and later Stephen experience when confronted by the reality of their visions.¹⁰⁴ The comic pathos comes as the couple venture on a tour of Europe, which presents Hilary with an opportunity to revisit the places he had been to as a single man. The impact of the war has altered Hilary's happy memories of the places he visits and the fact that his wife is with him is spoiling his enjoyment and independence. Whilst in Santa Chiara he witnesses a bird singing in a small cage. The image disturbs him, but it mirrors how Hilary is feeling in his marriage to Susan. At this moment Hilary achieves some clarity when he realises that his own vision is not impaired and hampered by his eye-patch, but by his own symbolic cage.¹⁰⁵ Hilary's personal revelation occurs in Santa Chiara (Italian for Saint Clare). Saint Clare was a follower of Saint Francis of Assisi and is the patron saint for eye diseases. The connection between Saint Clare and eyes is inventive and not immediately obvious to the reader (if at all), but the location is symbolic, as it is becoming increasingly clear to both Hilary and Susan that their marriage and relationship is floundering.

As Hilary reflects on his relationship with Susan, he considers them to be 'Poor, striving, struggling, blind men and women, how little they ever really knew of each other, how little they really penetrated beyond the surface of each other's lives; pathetic creatures!'¹⁰⁶ Although Hilary is aware that they do not truly see or understand each other, they inevitably return to the comfort of their domestic arrangements. In their final scene, Hilary admits, "After all," I said, "I'm free –" "But it didn't work, darling, I couldn't make love, not with the proper conviction. They all saw through me, the women, I mean: I expected they saw you in my eyes'.¹⁰⁷ The confession is both surprising and illuminating, as Hilary talks of his sexual relationships with other women, but unlike the colluded intimacy with Susan, which sustains the charade of their marriage, the women see the real Hilary and recognise his feminisation and/or homosexuality. Hilary may have had a moment where he knew his

¹⁰⁴ Describing his restlessness Hilary states, 'I always seem to be standing at the foot of a mountain, a mountain that I want to climb up and get down the other side of. I feel that if I could only walk over the crest I should find my Eldorado lying at my feet', *ibid.*, p.151.

¹⁰⁵ As the couple prepare to separate Susan tells Hilary, 'Yes, I want you to go,' she replied quietly. 'I've opened your cage door wide'. *Ibid.* p.206.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.203.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.242.

marriage to Susan was a sham, but rather than explore his authentic self, he continues to make the same mistakes. In a novel that explores the chains that bind people together, Hall also examines the ways in which the characters attempt to project their own socially acceptable identities rather than accepting their true selves. In the end, both Hilary and Susan are fooling themselves and the reader who wants to believe their heterosexual façade, but for the reader who sees behind their constructed identities, the ending reinforces the contemporary ways in which gay men and lesbian women had to hide in public.

The ability to see beyond the reality presented is one of the themes that Hall explores in *Adam's Breed*. Claudia Stillman Franks describes the dichotomy between sight/insight and blindness in *Adam's Breed* as one of three central motifs in the novel, the other two being sustenance and service:

The third motif which Radclyffe Hall uses to chart the change in Gian-Luca is sight – perhaps the most crucial single concept in a novel which concerns the movement from spiritual blindness to a vision of truth, from self-deception to self-insight. Eyes are used symbolically, and, though many scenes appeal strongly to the visually concrete imagination, the underlying emphasis is upon those qualities of spirit which shape what the eye perceives. Radclyffe Hall's main vehicles for rendering the spiritual reality behind material appearances are sleeping and half-waking dreams and quasi-hallucinatory visions.¹⁰⁸

Just as the Ploughman's insight is connected with spirituality and truth, so too is Gian-Luca's, but Hall is able to develop this theme over the course of the novel. One of the most significant scenes in *Adam's Breed* is when Gian-Luca encounters a beggar and her blind son. The child's eyes have been removed following a disease, leaving him with hollow sockets. Gian-Luca is initially horrified, but as he continues to stare at the child he feels 'he were suddenly suffering with him, as though in some curious way he belonged to those woe-begone, sightless eyes'.¹⁰⁹ The impact of the scene is similar to Bloom helping the stripling across the street in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In both instances, the protagonist develops an intersubjective sense of empathy and an understanding of how the blind comprehend and understand the world around them. However, in this instance, Hall goes further with the notion of intersubjectivity of vision, as the child physically has no eyes, only emptiness; metaphorically, it is an emptiness that Gian-Luca has felt all of his life. Unaware of his father's identity and made to feel responsible for the death of his mother, Gian-Luca's unknown dual-heritage alienates

¹⁰⁸ Claudia Stillman Franks, *Beyond The Well of Loneliness: The Fiction of Radclyffe Hall* (Wellingborough: Avebury, 1982), p.90.

¹⁰⁹ Hall, *Adam's Breed*, (London: Virago, 1985) [1926], p.282.

him from his family and displaces him within both the Italian and British communities. The eyeless-child is a catalyst, because Gian-Luca's vision will change following the encounter: the child haunts his dreams and awakens his spiritual vision and empathy with the suffering in the world.

In his new state Gian-Luca becomes more aware of the natural world around him, but unlike the Ploughman it is not spiritual beauty that inspires him, but rather the pain and suffering of innocent creatures. As he watches cattle heading to slaughter, the animals look at Gian-Luca:

On they must stumble to Calvary as Another had stumbled before them;
poor, lowly, uncomprehending disciples, following dumbly in the footsteps
of God who had surely created all things for joy, yet had died for the
blindness of the world.¹¹⁰

The intersubjective spiritual vision that Gian-Luca has developed extends to all humanity, sensing the universal vision of God's disappointment that Christ's sacrifice was unable to create a shared vision of hope and happiness for the world. It is a complex but effective narrative position in which Hall places Gian-Luca, because depression and starvation alter his state of mind. His spiritual visions are not only a way for him to understand the world around him but, more importantly, they also allow Gian-Luca the opportunity to see and understand himself. The tragedy is that his understanding of the world and his place in it comes only as he faces death.

Gian-Luca's death is not on the glorious battlefield; instead he starves himself to death, alone, in a forest.¹¹¹ Sharing his pre-war heroic vision with his wife, Gian-Luca states:

'I am ready to go, I am ready to fight side by side with the English. There have been days latterly when I have felt that I must fight. As a woman you may not understand; it is something that lies hidden in all men, I think – a kind of primitive instinct'.¹¹²

Unfortunately, despite his hopes, war only reinforces Gian-Luca's fragile sense of male identity, because rather than fighting he is appointed as a Mess Sergeant and never sees any action. Gian-Luca is not disfigured by the war, but psychologically his male pride is maimed

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.319.

¹¹¹ There is an association between sexual confusion and eating disorders. John F. Morgan, states, 'Starving yourself becomes an apparent solution to the problem' in *The Invisible Man: A Self Help Guide for Men with Eating Disorders, Compulsive Exercise and Bigorexia*, (New York: Routledge, 2008) p.65. Gian Luca's inability to understand and connect to his sexual self, results in the destruction and rejection of his biological self.

¹¹² Hall, *Adam's Breed*, p.219.

and following his encounter with the blind child, his vision is transformed. Although there is a Freudian relationship between metaphoric castration and blindness, Gian-Luca's disillusionment is typical of that which Hall explores in her other characters. Gian-Luca shows the thematic development of blindness from the Ploughman to one where there is complexity associated with masculine vision, spiritual insight and its relationship to sexuality. A review in *The Times Literary Supplement* described Gian-Luca, as 'a man apart, unable to give himself even to Maddalena [his wife] who he loves'.¹¹³ Depicted as a heterosexual man, Gian-Luca was different to other men and his view of the world signalled an ambiguous sexuality.

Just as the war marked Hilary and metaphorically scarred Gian-Luca, Hall continues to develop this theme to identify and reinforce difference and its relationship to homosexuality in *The Well of Loneliness*. Jonathan Brockett is one of Stephen's friends and openly homosexual. When they meet after the war, Stephen notes how Brockett has changed:

Stephen began to study him with interest; they two had not met since before the war. He had thickened, his figure was more robust, there was muscle and flesh on his wide, straight shoulders. And she thought that his face had certainly aged; little bags were showing under his eyes, and rather deep lines at the sides of his mouth – war had left its mark upon Brockett. Only his hands remained unchanged; those white and soft-skinned hands of a woman.¹¹⁴

War and the discipline of military life have changed Brockett's physique and face, factors that Stephen cannot deny, but she has an incessant need to emasculate him, because of his homosexuality and notices that his hands have remained feminine. It is a demeaning and petty observation, yet one that perpetuates the concept of a relationship between homosexuality and femininity. While it may seem that Hall sustains this belief, her point is to demonstrate that even with his feminine hands, Brockett went to war and fought. In *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall is able to explore the contribution of both lesbians and gay men to the war effort through Stephen's and Brockett's war experience.

Stephen's critique of Brockett's masculinity is a reflection on her own sense of difference, a factor that has manifested itself in the games and toys she wanted to play with

¹¹³ *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18 March 1926.

¹¹⁴ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.333. The change in Brockett's body echoes something of Thomas Hughes's description of the ideology behind muscular Christianity, 'that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men'. Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford: A Sequel to School Days at Rugby, Volume 1* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861), p.170.

as a child and in her choice of hairstyles and clothing as an adult. As a child, one of Stephen's fantasy figures was Lord Nelson, a man who lost an arm and his sight in one eye during his career. Stephen reflects on her childhood fascination with Nelson and love for the maid Collins, describing herself as 'a queer little girl dressed up as young Nelson: 'I'd like to be awfully hurt for you, Collins, the way that Jesus was hurt for sinners'.¹¹⁵ For Stephen/Hall, there is a link between nobility, martyrdom, suffering and difference, and the homosexual. Despite her innate sense of difference, Stephen struggles to name it until she discovers the book by Krafft Ebing, presumably *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), and realises that her father knew she was a lesbian (or sexual invert). As she searches for comfort in the Bible, Stephen reads; 'And the Lord set a mark upon Cain'.¹¹⁶ During the war, this psychological and theological mark becomes a reality when Stephen is hit in the face by the splinter of a shell. Hall combines the literal fact of a war injury with a sexual identity, and thereby ratifies the symbolic connection between the injured soldier and homosexuality. As the doctor finishes stitching her face he exclaims, 'Mademoiselle will carry an honourable scar as a mask of her courage'.¹¹⁷ In the post-war part of the novel reference is made to her scar, which becomes a focus of Mary's (Stephen's lover) attention and her love for Stephen. After the war, their relationship falters, because Stephen senses that her difference is preventing Mary from leading a 'normal' heterosexual life and she pushes her into a relationship with her old friend Martin Hallam. Through one of her most important and significant literary characters, Hall creates an association between psychological and physical difference, as well as linking the shame of sexuality to a Biblical story of God vengefully marking a human as different, so others can recognise them and their sin.

Martin's disfigurement is perhaps the most interesting in *The Well of Loneliness*. Whereas the obvious homosexuals, Stephen and Brockett, are marked by their war experience, Martin, who is presented as a heterosexual man, is hit in the face by a bullet. When Stephen and Martin meet, she observes how, 'Just beside the right temple was a deep little scar – it must have been a near thing, that bullet'.¹¹⁸ Not only is Martin's face scarred,

¹¹⁵ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.101. Nelson is a recurring historical figure in Hall's work, not just in *The Well of Loneliness*, but also in *The Unlit Lamp* where his name is repeatedly mentioned, because one of Mrs Ogden's relations was 'Admiral Sir William Routledge said to have been Nelson's darling', Radclyffe Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, (London: Virago, 1989) [1924], p.16. This could be Hall making a slight commentary on the Troubridge's, because one of Nelson's officers included Sir Thomas Troubridge, the grandfather of Ernest Troubridge, Una's husband. There are also a couple of references to Nelson in *The Sixth Beatitude*, in particular when one of the residents in Crofts Lane buys a telescope at a jumble sale she and is described as Nelson 'But to see Mrs Roach swing it up to her eye was to think of the glorious days of Nelson'. Radclyffe Hall, *The Sixth Beatitude* (Kingswood: Windmill Press, 1936), p.104.

¹¹⁶ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.207.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.295.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.420.

but the bullet has also damaged his optic nerve and he was at risk of losing his sight in one eye. Martin has a minor but noticeable disfigurement and problems with vision that could lead to the possibility of blindness. The small scar on his face is symbolic because beneath a relatively minor surface injury there is something more serious happening, the risk that he might lose his sight, which is an indication that Martin's nature is more complex than it initially appears.

Although Martin is apparently a heterosexual character in *The Well of Loneliness*, there are some indications that he could be a man who is suppressing his sexuality. In a discussion of the role of Mary in the novel, Clare Hemmings makes a fleeting reference to Martin's sexuality when discussing Havelock Ellis's theory that a heterosexual man may be able to cure a feminine female invert:

If we think for a moment of Martin Hallam, the man to whom Mary runs at the end of the novel, we can see this ambivalence in action [Ellis's theory]. Martin's status as ideal heterosexual male is cast in doubt in a number of ways throughout *The Well*. First, there is perhaps too gentle a love of trees, and his curious isolation. In terms of desire, Martin has already proved his judgement to be flawed, through his declaration of love for Stephen earlier in the novel. Additionally, when Martin reappears in the novel he suffers from a very particular war wound – a bullet to the head that “affected the optic nerve rather badly”. The very gaze required to structurally seduce a feminine invert away from the masculine woman is damaged.¹¹⁹

Hemmings argues that Mary, based on Ellis's hypothesis, is not the type of woman a heterosexual man would be interested in and therefore for Martin to fall in love with her suggests there is something suspicious about his proclaimed heterosexuality. By identifying factors that undermine the legitimacy of Martin's heterosexual masculinity, his fondness for nature, his initial attraction to the female masculine Stephen and the damage to his vision, which shifts his attention onto Mary, Hemmings suggests that the character is homosexual or bisexual. This is a brief aside in a paper that otherwise focuses on the femme lesbian Mary, but Hemmings's suggestion regarding Martin's sexuality is further discussed by Laura Erickson-Smith and Jennifer Mitchell in their essay, 'Queering Queer Theory, or Why Bisexuality Matters':

¹¹⁹ Clare Hemmings, “All My Life I've Been Waiting for Something ...” Theorizing Femme Narrative in *The Well of Loneliness*, *Palatable Poison: Critical Perspectives on The Well of Loneliness*, ed. by Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.183-4.

Hemmings is right to question the unquestioning ascription of heterosexuality to Martin Hallam. Martin is attracted to the masculinity that Stephen embodies and the femininity that is easily located in Mary; because the gender identities of the two objects of his desire are not the same Martin is, in one way or another, not monosexual. His bisexual tendencies – perhaps less obvious and more complicated than other instances of literary bisexuality – are nonetheless a reality.¹²⁰

Hemmings, Erickson-Smith and Mitchell all recognise that there is something misleading in the concept of Martin's heterosexuality. The legitimacy of Martin's heterosexuality is questionable, because he shares the same physical disfigurement as the other homosexual characters and there is a problem or an issue with his sight. Martin has characteristics that Hall had been using since 'The Blind Ploughman' to indicate difference, homosexuality and/or male sexual ambiguity, which includes disfigurement, issues with vision and an association with the earth/soil.

Hall's response to the controversy surrounding *The Well of Loneliness* was to write the overtly religious novel *The Master of the House*. As a writer who explored the covert within the familiar Hall's style in this novel is deliberate in its meaning and purpose. Cline describes *The Master of the House* as 'simply too heavy and overladen with dull goodness'.¹²¹ *The Master of the House* was Hall's attempt to humanise and modernise the overly familiar religious figure of Christ – to make the reader see Christ as contemporary and human, rather than the revered divinity, which has been created over the centuries. In the novel, Christophe's *déjà vu* does not relate to the spectacular show-stopping Biblical moments of drama from Christ's life, but rather the everyday experiences, the tiny fragments of sensations and feelings that create memories, like trying on a pair of sandals:

It was almost as though it had happened before, even to the minutest personal details – a new pair of sandals given to a boy of eight years by his parents' neighbour, and that boy sitting down to examine the gift in a room which was bare but flooded with sun, and the boy very conscious of idling his time when instead he should have been diligently working.¹²²

This is not Christ the child in the temple conversing with his elders, but Christophe reliving a simple moment, which is too unremarkable and quotidian to be in the Bible. Hall is exploring

¹²⁰ Laura Erickson-Smith and Jennifer Mitchell, 'Queering Queer Theory, or Why Bisexuality Matters' in *Bisexuality and Queer Theory: Intersections, Connections and Challenges*, ed. by Jonathan Alexander, Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p.120.

¹²¹ Cline, p.302.

¹²² Hall, *Adam's Breed*, p.135.

the humanity of Christ, by suggesting that there are parallels in Christophe's contemporary life as well as in the lives of the readers. As a plot device, it is an ambitious experiment with intersubjective vision to keep going to flashbacks from Christ's into Christophe's own life, but the novel's traditional chronological narrative structure hampers the fluidity of the visions, and the connection between the two figures is too obvious when it occurs, which distances rather than engages the reader. Despite the novel's failure, vision, sight and insight are elements that are associated with Christophe's characterisation and his relationship to the figure of Christ.

Christophe develops into a tall, strong and muscular young man, a typical example of the muscular Christianity that was in vogue in the early part of the twentieth century. Although outwardly strong and classically masculine in appearance, like the Ploughman, Christophe's internal thoughts demonstrate his sensitivity and spirituality. Also like the Ploughman, his appearance has a homoerotic appeal of the working-class man. Christophe's initial attraction to Æliana is romanticised to such an extent that he is on the brink of denouncing the visions of his childhood:

Illusions, they began to gather more swiftly, and now they were shining like clouds of glory whose very brightness rendered him blind to his youth, his poverty, his mean situation. He saw himself as one possessed of the earth in possessing the love of the creature he loved, and suddenly he wanted to shout for triumph; to shout till the moon fell out of the sky, till the stars came tumbling down through the roof, till the peaks of the Maures bowed their head and trembled.¹²³

Just as Christ was tempted in the Judean Desert, so Christophe has his own moment of temptation as lust alters his vision. The prospect of sexual intimacy changes Christophe's insight and his authentic self is temporarily lost to illusions that make him forget his true self. Hall returns to some of the imagery in 'The Blind Ploughman', but instead of making Christophe a part of nature, he reacts against it in his desire to possess the earth and command the natural world around him. While the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would bow down and worship him, for Christophe the prospect of intimacy with Æliana is the equivalent of accepting Satan's temptation.¹²⁴ When they might actually have sex, Christophe is disgusted by Æliana's primitive urges and pushes her away: 'He flung out his arms with a queer wide gesture, and even as he did so he cried aloud, for his hands

¹²³ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.419.

¹²⁴ Matthew 8-9: 'Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'All this I will give you', he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me'. Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only''.

seemed transfixed by shafts of pain'.¹²⁵ Appalled by the physicality of Æliana, Christophe's body punishes him for its sexual urges. Christophe is blind both to the fact that his cousin Jan is in love with him, and to the opportunities that homosexuality might offer him for the expression of his sexuality.

The Master of the House would be the last time that Hall focused on the relationship between masculine identities and the impact of war in order to highlight or reveal difference, gesturing towards ambiguous sexualities.¹²⁶ In her final novel *The Sixth Beatitude*, Hall would continue to formulate a relationship between male vision and homosexuality with the representation of two minor male characters, Watercrease-Bill and Jumping-Jimmie. Although their backstory is a combination of rumours, they are marked by a life of abject poverty on the roads and the fact that Jimmie's 'sight was beginning to fail'.¹²⁷ Depicted as friends, there are indications that they are lovers. As Jimmie is dying and his eyesight is deteriorating, Bill asks:

"Shall I hold your hand? Would it comfort you, Jim?"
"Yes ... hold on to my hand the way ... you used to. Bill ..."
"Yes, Jim?"
"It's so queer, this death ... I feel almost young, I feel light ... so queer. Bill, do you think that God exists?"
"Of course – He must, because you've existed."
"Yes ... and you ... Bill, you won't let go of my hand ..."
"I've never let go of your hand ..."¹²⁸

It is a moment of tenderness and love between two men, who may just be friends, but it can also be seen/read as an exchange between lovers. In *The Well of Loneliness*, Stephen connects her queerness to martyrdom and this motif is repeated here because the word 'queer' is used twice in a sentence that questions the existence of God. The men reassure themselves that God exists because both of them have existed – in other words, God who created man in his own image must also have created men who are capable of loving each other.¹²⁹ Despite their poverty, it is a sympathetic and romantic portrayal of love between two men: an aspect that is hardly ever associated with Hall's fiction.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.423.

¹²⁶ In the unpublished novel *The World* (approximately 1924-25) and the short story 'Paul Colet' (approximately 1936) Hall examined the life of men who were physically or medically unfit to go to war - men who were already viewed differently by the world, because of their fragile masculine physiques.

¹²⁷ Radclyffe Hall, *The Sixth Beatitude*, (Kingswood: Windmill Press, 1936), p.33.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, p.63.

¹²⁹ See Genesis 1:27, 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'.

¹³⁰ At the end of the chapter when Bill dies too, their relationship is viewed as a marriage, 'They had loved each other for better or for worse, in sickness and in health to the end and beyond', *The Sixth Beatitude*, p.67.

The association between blindness, insight, disfigurement and masculine identities is a recurring feature in Hall's writing. However, the figure of the Ploughman also remains an important personal reference point for Hall as an acknowledgement of her early success as a writer. Despite the fact that Hall maintained that *The Well of Loneliness* was not an autobiographical novel, there is a reflection of her own initial literary success, in the fact that Stephen Gordon's first novel is called *The Furrow*.¹³¹ The connection to 'The Blind Ploughman' is relatively straightforward, but what is also revealing is the metaphorical literary importance of the Ploughman in relation to the process of writing (and success) for Hall: a factor that is revealed in Hall's lecture on 'The Writing of Novels' (1933), which she delivered to the English Club Oxford on 27 February 1933 and at the Literary Society University College, London on 2 March 1933. In the lecture, Hall discusses her own reading habits and the skills required in order to write. As an example of how the author must be prepared to research a topic, she discusses ploughing:

Let us take one very simple example – so simple it may strike you as childish. He wants to describe the ploughing of a field, and later wants to describe the sowing. He will take up his pen cheerfully: "Easy, this," he will say, "I've seen lots of ploughing – and sowing." He is thinking of the number of times he has glimpsed a plough as he passed in his motor. But perhaps I am being a little unjust – he may have spared a moment to admire the outline of plough-horses seen against the horizon – I am speaking, of course, of the indolent author. Very well then, this author takes up his pen and begins to try to put into words the impression of power in those brown, guiding hands; the feeling of patient strength in the beasts; he may want to describe their will to serve, the man's will to serve, the soil's will to serve. He may want to tell us at what precise moment the man turns his team to drive a new furrow; may want to write the bedding down of the beasts, their feeding, the adjustment and care of the plough, the man's hours of work, his home occupations, how many times a day he eats meat, what wages he gets, where he keeps his clothes; would they have a cupboard in so small a cottage, or would his clothes be just hung on pegs? And how does one

¹³¹ It is one of great silences in *The Well of Loneliness* that the topic of Stephen's novel is not revealed in the published version of the book. However, Hall's manuscripts for *The Well of Loneliness* provide some detail about *The Furrow*. In the scene where her companion, Puddle, reads the only negative review of *The Furrow* to Stephen, Hall writes the following: 'As one reads one is filled with a strong conviction that this writer has never really lived in the countryside of which she writes at some length—has never really met such a man as 'John Sharp', or such a woman as 'Alice'. Their emotions are less their own than their authors, [sic] and the atmosphere of the real rural England at which she aims, she does not attain. All the same there are one or two fine things in the book, as for instance the description of the old stud groom Pickford who 'gets religion', and of 'Lizzie' his wife who mothers him in his second childhood. But even these descriptions are somewhat marred by the ostentatious style of the writing. However, when this author has had worse experience of life, and has learnt to write simple people simply, she may attain to a fairly high standard.' Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, Holograph notebooks, Vol. III, Ch. 21-30, Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 13, Folder 4, This new evidence was published on The Harry Ransom Center Blog, see Steven Macnamara, 'The silent novel in Radclyffe Hall's ground-breaking *The Well of Loneliness*' 13 June, 2017 in *Ransom Center Magazine*, < <http://sites.utexas.edu/ransomcentermagazine/2017/06/13/the-silent-novel-in-radclyffe-halls-ground-breaking-the-well-of-loneliness/>> [accessed 28 December 2017].

prevent a plough getting rusty – or does one prevent it? Do they give the beasts straw to lie on, or do they give them litter, or what ...? He finds that he knows nothing about it. And the same applies when he comes to sowing. That beautiful gesture of scattering grain is not enough, not nearly enough. He wants to tell us what grain costs in that particular part of the country – there is carriage to consider – or is he wrong? How do these farmers obtain their seeds? Queer how little one knows about other people's lives; queer how little one knows about everything on earth – not so simple as it seems, this novel writing.¹³²

In contextualising her methods of writing and research, Hall turns to the figure of the Ploughman and the task of ploughing and sowing (just as she did with the title of *The Furrow*). Not only is there a metaphorical association for Hall between ploughing and literary output, which is reflective of her own writing career, but she uses the word 'queer' two times to describe the unknown. The Ploughman's task and existence may appear simple, but there is complexity to both, which is not always clear to the casual observer. Queerness is attached to the existence of the Ploughman whether it is *The Furrow* in the queer novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, or in a lecture on 'The Writing of Novels'.

Two decades after the publication of 'The Blind Ploughman', in her lecture Hall comments on the fact that the work of popular or middlebrow writers may be dismissed as superficial, but that nonetheless research is required to achieve a representation that is both artistic and accurate. The speech also confirms there is a complexity and depth to Hall's writing, which suggests that the choices she made and the representation of certain types of characters and themes in her work are not just coincidental or unplanned, but intentional. 'The Blind Ploughman' may appear to be a simple poem, but for Hall, it clearly had a depth of meaning that existed in its creation and the work also gathered meaning with its success and affiliation with the war wounded.

¹³² Radclyffe Hall, 'The Writing of Novels' (1933), Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 22, Folder 3.

1.7 'Ghosts': Disfigurement, Difference and Male Homosexuality in Hall's

Personal Writing

Hall's fiction demonstrates how the figure of the Ploughman and his association with isolation, disfigurement and difference developed in response to the war and to sexually ambiguous masculine identities. Hall would also explore these themes in her personal and political writing. The unpublished talk 'Ghosts' (circa 1930s; see Appendix One) reveals Hall's impassioned concern for the war wounded and their connection to the fate of lesbians and gay men who served in the war.

Hall uses the metaphor of ghosts to suggest figures that only some people can see or are willing to see. The talk starts with Hall declaring that some of those who survived the war would, in fact, have been better off dead. The now middle-aged survivors rarely speak of the war, although they cannot forget it or the hope that the world would improve because of their efforts. Despite the outcome, the glory of the war cannot feed those who sacrificed their youth, but more shocking to Hall is the fate of those who were injured and disfigured in the war. Willing volunteers had originally supported the injured men, but Hall questions where the volunteers and the men themselves have gone:

Then gradually no more Hospital Blue. To find it [wounded men] one must go farther afield – one must go to certain outlying districts or even into the depths of [the] country – "This farm is run by the gravely wounded ...". One glimpses such words on a noticeboard as one motors past "The gravely wounded" – they are still alive, after all these years – and surely one has heard of unspeakable things that still live – of men so hideously blemished that they must be carefully hidden lest they shock our susceptibilities, lest they reveal the true meaning of war – thus divested of pomp and circumstance, of the beating of drums and the blaring of trumpets – yes, surely one has heard of such things? Of course they are not dinner table topics, nor do we mention them to the young – Our children may one day be in like case, but one does not speak of such things to children.¹³³

The wounded men have been removed from cities and towns, so they cannot offend people or remind them of the war. Those who remain in public seek work, but they are easy to ignore or overlook.

By contrast, there are the gentlemanly gay ghosts, who unlike the wounded and maimed men, largely blend into the surroundings. Nothing distinguishes these men, there is no physical reminder of their war service, and as such, invisibility is an inevitable consequence of their lonely existence. The gay men are not part of the masculine post-war

¹³³ Radclyffe Hall, 'Ghosts', Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 18. Folder 8.

army establishment (which wanted gay men only during the war), nor do they carry any obvious physical reminders of the war. Hall continues to paint a picture of the gay ex-soldier's life by suggesting that at worst, he is shell-shocked and if he talks or writes about the war, then it is interpreted as self-indulgent. Alone, he is haunted by the war and seeks the companionship of younger men, as his 'own youth was blemished and defrauded by the years of fighting and hardship'.¹³⁴ In his need for the company of younger men, he will tolerate cruel behaviour no matter how foolish he makes himself. At parties, he is a 'sorry spectacle' hanging around young men no matter how vicious they are to him.¹³⁵ He will buy these young men drinks, although he knows his company bores them and there is no prospect of them going home with him. Truthfully, he hates them, but he has no option as his desire for company is strong, but he rebels slightly with witty comments or small put-downs. Hall urges him to have the courage, to tell the truth to younger men because he had the courage to fight in the war.

Hall then turns her attention to lesbians who were involved in the war:

Yet one more group of ghosts come into my mind – women this time, if so they must be called. Women then who are sexually inverted. The war was to them something like a Godsend. I might almost dare to say God's justification. For the first time in their lives they were given a chance to justify their abhorred existence, nor were they slow to recognise this chance and to serve the country with skill and courage. But sooner or later wars come to an end. What then my brethren, what happened to you then, did England praise you for what you are? Did England say, "By their fruits have I judged them?" Not at all, England said "Since they did such a good work, it is obvious that they must be quite normal". And to me, who are one of the least of you, since I could not share your fine deeds and your hardships, to me England said: "You have written a foul book – a filthy book about filthy women". And many other things England said at the time of "The Well of Loneliness" brute things that for England's sake, or yours or mine are really little forgotten.¹³⁶

Despite their contribution to the war effort, Hall can see no difference in the way society has treated or rewarded these women after the war. To demonstrate her solidarity, she aligns the risk of writing *The Well of Loneliness* to that of the wartime duty of the inverted woman. Reflecting on *The Well of Loneliness* in 'Ghosts', she realises that her efforts, rather like the efforts of the women who had gone to war, were foolhardy because she lost public credibility as a writer. Despite the controversial nature of the novel, its publication did not significantly improve or change the lives of inverts in society. 'Ghosts' ends with Hall recognising that the

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁵ *ibid.*

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

war offered a certain degree of freedom and acceptance to both lesbians and gay men, but this tolerance was short-lived and that the community must continue to work and fight for a 'normal' life.

'Ghosts' is a politically charged speech, which has attracted the critical attention of both Dellamora and Funke. In his reading Dellamora compares the fight for lesbian equality with that the task of ploughman:

Into the 1930s, she continued to identify herself and other Sapphists with the image of the ploughman as a stricken but blessed worker/activist. In a bitter, unfinished public address to sexual inverters who were also World War I veterans, Hall's manuscript breaks off somewhat incoherently, as follows: "But I say & you say that we must be better. More faithful, more patient, more honest, more courageous. For we have a harder furrow to hoe – a hard, long grewelling [sic] furrow to hoe. And we dare not take our hands from the plough till the furrow is driven home straight & true – We dare not relax our grip for a moment".¹³⁷

Dellamora is slightly misleading the reader, who is more than likely to be unfamiliar with 'Ghosts', because his representation of the text implies that the inverters Hall is addressing are just women. Instead, Hall's plea is for the plight of both lesbians and gay men. In her doctoral thesis, *Sexual Intermediacy and Temporality in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Literature and Culture* (The University of Edinburgh, U.K., 2010), Funke acknowledges that Hall discusses men in 'Ghosts'. However, her focus, like Dellamora's, is more on the role of female inverters who have failed to move on after the war. She states that: 'What connects the different ghosts Hall describes is the experience of anachronism, the feeling of being stuck in a war even though it had officially ended'.¹³⁸ Funke argues that in 'Ghosts' and her fiction writing Hall is attempting to reveal the presence of female inverters, but this is in relationship to a damaged or wounded sense of masculinity. Although Funke is referring to the wounded, shell-shocked, traumatised soldier, Hall also discusses the male homosexual after the war as another form of masculine identity.

In a manuscript where Hall explicitly discusses the life of the post-war homosexual, 'Ghosts' provides refreshing and important evidence that she was concerned with the plight of gay men and that her focus on sexuality was not as restricted as previous critical analyses of her work have indicated. Yet, despite this sympathetic representation of male

¹³⁷ Dellamora, p.48. His note cites the quotation from Hall as the holograph manuscript of her undelivered public address 'Ghosts', which is held at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

¹³⁸ Jana Funke, *Sexual Intermediacy and Temporality in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Literature and Culture* (The University of Edinburgh, U.K., 2010), p.125.

homosexuality, Dellamora and Funke approach the text in a way that perpetuates the lesbian myth that is associated with Hall's literary legacy. Instead, 'Ghosts' offers a new way of reading and reviewing Hall's work, because she clearly was interested in the complexity of male sexual identities.

Jonathan Brockett in *The Well of Loneliness* is Hall's most openly gay male character, yet quite often Stephen is hostile and critical of his blatant homosexuality and effeminate masculinity. His portrayal in the novel is at times disturbingly homophobic, but Hall was limited in the ways in which she could represent the then-illegal male homosexuality and still get the novel published. The manuscript of 'Ghosts' reveals that Hall was indeed sympathetic to homosexual men and it is an important aid to understanding that more often than not Stephen's criticisms of Brockett act as a counterview to highlight the hypocrisy and prejudice of society towards homosexual men. This is the case when Brockett is able to enlist in the army despite being an obvious homosexual, much to the annoyance of Stephen:

Jonathan Brockett, with the soft white hands, and the foolish gestures, the high little laugh – even he could justify his existence for they [the army] had not refused him, when he went to enlist. Stephen had never thought to feel envious of a man like Jonathan Brockett.¹³⁹

Stephen's astonishment reflects the double standards of society, as the army would not accept an effeminate gay man in peacetime, but during the war they were willing to overlook his homosexuality. By contrast, the army rejects the sickly Stephen Winter, in Hall's unpublished novel *The World* (1925-26):

His stupendous bid for courage to ratify his manhood, his moments of spiritual elation, the peace, the sense of having all men now as comrade, the relief of cutting loose from common things – gone, all gone, all utterly wasted; he was where he had been in the first weeks of the war, with the added bitterness of having been rejected as unfit by his country.¹⁴⁰

Winter's ill health prevents him from joining the army and denies him the opportunity to prove his masculinity. Brockett meanwhile, joins the army out of a sense of patriotism rather than a need to validate his masculinity or more specifically to hide his homosexuality.

Brockett's war experience is limited to a few frivolous snippets in letters, with requests for luxurious foods and toiletry products. Yet, Hall places Brockett in Mesopotamia,

¹³⁹ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, pp.270-1.

¹⁴⁰ Hall, *The World* in *'The World' and other Unpublished works of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. by Jana Funke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.118.

a campaign that had '100,000 casualties amongst the British and Indian troops during the four years it had lasted. It was seen by many to have been a huge and pointless waste of life'.¹⁴¹ Brockett masks the harsh realities of war with his camp humour and sensibilities, by appearing to sustain the illusion of decadence and beauty during his service. Brockett's reluctance to commit his experiences to paper quite possibly is his way of dealing with the trauma of war, which helps to sustain his socially expected role with both Stephen and the reader (that of the camp theatrical gay man). By contrast, Hall describes the silent experiences of gay male soldiers in 'Ghosts':

Such ghosts are sometimes a trifle shell-shocked, frequently inclined to be scared. If they write of the war and the horrors of war, as one reads one has the uneasy feeling that here is not propaganda for peace, but rather some form of self-indulgence a kind of spiritual and mental masturbation.¹⁴²

Although gay men fought in the same war as their heterosexual counterparts, according to Hall the homosexual ex-soldier is less inclined to write about his war experience, because it may appear disloyal to his country and act as a commentary on his masculinity. The limited narrative focus on Brockett's war experiences is not necessarily a reflection of Stephen's disinterest in him as a friend, but instead an indication of how Hall viewed the war for gay male soldiers.

¹⁴¹ Kate Clements, 'Podcast 18: Mesopotamia', *Imperial War Museum*, <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/podcasts/voices-of-the-first-world-war/podcast-18-mesopotamia>> [accessed: 4 March 2016].

¹⁴² Hall, 'Ghosts'.

1.8 Conclusion

As a result of its adaptation into a successful song, 'The Blind Ploughman' remains one of Hall's best-known poems. The philosophical message of the poem and its folk-like quality are open to interpretation, with Robeson's version of the song suggesting an alternative reading for what is essentially a pastoral English poem. When she wrote the poem Hall would never have been able to anticipate how pertinent the topic of blindness would become during the war, nor indeed how soon blindness/vision would become a concern for artists of the period. While previous studies have acknowledged the poem's success, its content and themes have not been fully explored in relation to Hall's later work. This chapter has focused on Hall's depiction of masculinity within the poem by exploring the themes of disfigurement, blindness, vision and inner-vision that appear throughout her work and which she explored with greater candour in 'Ghosts'. Blindness or insight emasculates men, suggesting their feminisation, but in terms of Hall's work this has not previously been linked to male sexual ambiguity. The presence of disfigurement, blindness, vision and inner-visions and their association to a particular type of masculine identity is a theme that Hall explores and develops throughout her writing career.

Chapter Two: Sexualising the Figure of Christ: Radclyffe Hall and D. H. Lawrence

2.1 Introduction

Sex and censorship have long been recognised as issues which shaped the work of Radclyffe Hall and D. H. Lawrence; by contrast, Christianity and religion have typically been seen as purely thematic concerns in their writing. Although Lawrence had rejected Christianity in his youth, theology and iconographies connected to religion are significantly present in his writing, paintings and his fashioning of a public image. By contrast, Hall gives the impression of being more orthodox in her faith, having converted to Catholicism in 1912, but her interest in spiritualism and her sexuality suggest that there was a conflict between her personal beliefs and the teachings of the Church. The tension between Christian ideologies and progressive expressions of sex and sexuality is evident in Lawrence's novella 'The Escaped Cock' (1929) and Hall's *The Master of the House* (1932). In both these works, Lawrence and Hall reimagine a Christ figure who navigates the awakening and realisation of his sexuality.

This chapter will discuss the remarkably similar set of events that led to the production of *The Master of the House* and 'The Escaped Cock'. *The Master of the House* marked a change in Hall's narrative style: the novel lacked her usual (dark) humour and the Christian motif was more obvious than in her previous works. The chapter presents evidence that the novel was conceived as a form of retribution against her critics, to prove to the world that she was a moral and religious woman and not a writer of sensational fiction. A contemporary review of *The Master of the House* by Gerald Gould in *The Observer* indicates that he connected the theme of the sexualisation of Christ (or, more accurately, Hall's suppression of her Christ-figure's sexuality) to a theme that Lawrence had previously explored in his works. Hall may have wanted *The Master of the House* to be presented as a Christ fable, but it is also a story of unrequited gay male love. By contrast, Lawrence presented a sexualised heterosexual Christ-figure, also risking censorship and outrage, but his character is free to love a woman (who also happens to be a Goddess) while Hall could not openly express male homosexual love or sexuality in *The Master of the House*. This chapter explores how Hall presented her Christ figure as actively heterosexual, while implying his homosexuality through her use of Christian mythology (a point which is confirmed by the homoromantic content of the unpublished manuscript and typescript). Extending the work of Claudia Stillman Franks, whose 1982 study is still the last to directly address *The Master of the House*, this chapter makes the case for the significance of Hall's

novel.¹ Although it is flawed, *The Master of the House* has an important place in Hall's *oeuvre* because of its representation of gay male love; it demonstrates the ways in which Hall's exploration of human sexuality extended beyond the lesbian subject matter with which she is commonly associated.

¹ See Claudia Stillman Franks 'The Master of the House and Radclyffe Hall's Religious Motifs' in *Beyond the Well of Loneliness: The Fiction of Radclyffe Hall* (Wellingborough: Avebury Publishing Company), pp.115-121.

2.2 Radclyffe Hall and D. H. Lawrence: Censorship and Crucifixion

Emboldened by the critical success and popularity of *Adam's Breed* (1926), Hall had the courage and confidence to write the lesbian-themed novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), but she was aware that the subject matter was controversial.² Her long-term partner, Lady Una Troubridge, explains that Hall understood she was risking her status, because 'the publication of such a book might mean the shipwreck of her whole career, she was fully prepared to make any sacrifice except – the sacrifice of my peace of mind'.³ The initial reviews of *The Well of Loneliness* were positive, until James Douglas, editor of the *Sunday Express*, launched a savage attack against the novel, demanding it be suppressed and famously declaring, 'I would rather give a healthy boy or girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel'.⁴ Douglas was no stranger to inciting public campaigns for the censorship of novels; a negative review he wrote of D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915) had been cited in an action successfully brought against that novel under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. *The Rainbow* included a lesbian relationship between Ursula Brangwen and her teacher Winifred Inger. Douglas' review called the novel, 'a greater menace to our public health than any of the epidemic diseases which we pay our medical officers to fight inch by inch wheresoever they appear'.⁵ The analogies Douglas employed in his reviews of both *The Well of Loneliness* and *The Rainbow* reinforce the social prejudice that homosexuality is diseased and poisonous. Douglas was not concerned with the artistic merits of the works, but instead used his position to damagingly express bigoted and homophobic opinions.

In a misguided attempt to defend Hall against the Douglas article, her publisher, Jonathan Cape, sent a copy of *The Well of Loneliness*, without her knowledge or consent, to the Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks (also known as Jix), for his consideration. Joynson-Hicks was a well-known Christian fundamentalist and zealous moralist. On receipt of *The Well of Loneliness*, Joynson-Hicks took less than two days to demand the immediate withdrawal of the novel from sale and warned that criminal proceedings would be instigated if the novel remained in circulation. The publicity generated by the ban only increased public awareness of *The Well of Loneliness* and its subject matter, and this, in turn, led to increased demand for the book. *The Graphic* parodied this demand in a cartoon that shows

² Hall won both the 1927 Prix Femina Vie Heureuse and James Tait awards for *Adam's Breed*, the same literary prizes awarded to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). In addition, *Adam's Breed* would win the 1930 American Eichelberger Gold Medal for outstanding achievement in the field of humane work. For further information on Hall's literary awards for *Adam's Breed* see Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997), p.221.

³ Una Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond and Hammond, 1965), p.82.

⁴ James Douglas, *Sunday Express*, 19 August 1928.

⁵ James Douglas, *The Star*, 22 October 1915.

Joynson-Hicks with a copy of *The Well of Loneliness*, consulting with Lord Hailsham as to the order in which the Cabinet could borrow the book (see Figure 11). In response to the public demand, British booksellers attempted to import the novel from Paris, but in October 1928, only two months after the Home Secretary's ban, a large consignment of copies of *The Well of Loneliness* was impounded at Dover. Under the Obscene Publications Act a warrant was

issued for the publisher, Jonathan Cape, to appear in Court.

Lawrence was also targeted by Joynson-Hicks. Copies of the privately-printed *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) which were circulated through the regular mail alerted the authorities to Lawrence's attempts to circumvent censorship. In 1929, on instructions from Joynson-Hicks, two typescripts of Lawrence's poetry collection *Pansies* (1929) were intercepted in the post, despite the fact that they were sent in the registered mail and so were exempt from the random checks that the Home Office could make on packages. Lawrence was infuriated by the confiscation of his work, but he did not bow to censorship: he subsequently issued separate versions of *Pansies* through trade and private publication.⁶ In angry response to the Government's censorship of art, Lawrence wrote the long essay 'Pornography and Obscenity' (1929) in which he describes Joynson-Hicks as a

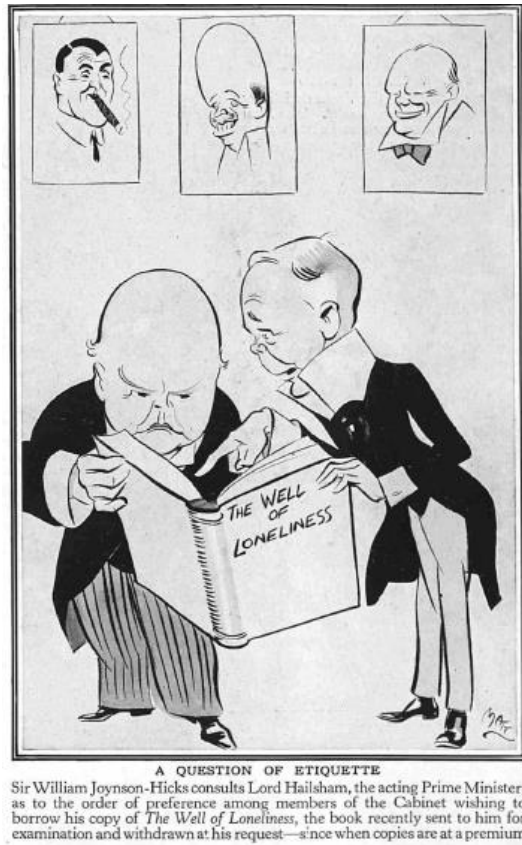


Figure 11: A cartoon from *The Graphic*, 8 September 1928. The text reads: A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE Sir William Joynson-Hicks consults Lord Hailsham, the acting Prime Minister as to the order of preference among members of the Cabinet wishing to borrow his copy of *The Well of Loneliness*, the book recently sent to him for examination and withdrawn at his request – since when copies are at a premium.

Source: British Newspaper Archive
<<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000057/19280908/006/0005?browse=true>> [accessed 29 April 2017]

⁶ See Christopher Pollnitz, 'Keeping His Flag Flying: Censorship and Lawrence's Poetry', in *Windows to the Sun: D. H. Lawrence's "Thought-Adventures"* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), pp. 165-86.

'British Home Secretary, who prides himself on being a very sincere Puritan, grey, grey in every fibre' and questions the decision to suppress *The Well of Loneliness*:⁷

How do we know, at this moment, that public opinion would really support the suppression of *The Well of Loneliness*? Was public opinion ever really asked? Was it consulted? Or did the Secretary of State and a few of his grey ones decide for a moment that they were public opinion in *propria persona*?⁸

Arguing that the Government was not acting on behalf of the public interest, but was instead pushing its own prejudiced and discriminatory agenda, Lawrence questioned the basis on which the authorities censored literary work. The release of Home Office papers into the Public Records Office in the late twentieth century has revealed that there was indeed a Government campaign against Lawrence and Hall. Diana Souhami's biography, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* (1998), uncovered evidence that the Government was intent on securing a ban on *The Well of Loneliness*.⁹ Souhami draws on papers released by the Public Records Office to show that the Government manipulated the law to secure the ban on *The Well of Loneliness*. Consequently, the outcome of *The Well of Loneliness* trial was inevitable, despite the support Hall received from fellow writers and members of the public.¹⁰ Similarly, the Home Office papers concerning the seizure of the typescripts of *Pansies* reveal that Joynson-Hicks manipulated the truth to conceal a regime of postal censorship which targeted Lawrence's mail.¹¹

⁷ D. H. Lawrence, 'Pornography and Obscenity' [1929], in *D. H. Lawrence: Late Essays and Articles*, ed. by James T. Boulton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.240.

⁸ *ibid.* p.252.

⁹ See Diana Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1998). The evidence that Souhami procured from the Public Record Office is presented in Chapters 20 -25 of her biography (pp.176-230). Although it was seventy years after the ban on *The Well of Loneliness*, the records were not readily available and Souhami had to petition Jack Straw, the Home Secretary at the time, with support from the Campaign for Freedom of Information and Stonewall, to have sight of the papers. Souhami was eventually given access to the papers of 'Sir William Joynson-Hicks, the Lord Chancellor Lord Hailsham, the Director of Public Prosecutions Sir Archibald Bodkin, his deputy Sir George Stephenson, the Chef Magistrate Sir Chartres Biron, [and] the Attorney General Sir Thomas Inskip.', xi.

¹⁰ Cline lists the authors and influential persons who supported Hall as: 'Arnold Bennett, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Leonard Woolf, Bernard Shaw, T. S. Eliot, Lytton Strachey, Lascelles Abercrombie, James Agate, Laurence Binyon, Vera Brittain, Ivor Brown, John Buchan MP, Robert Cust JP, John Drinkwater, Gerald Duckworth, Ashley Dukes, Edward Garnett, Victor Gollancz, Harley Granville-Baker, H. D. Henderson, A. P. Herbert, Laurence Housman, Professor Julian Huxley, Storm Jameson, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Rose Macaulay, Desmond MacCarthy, Violet Markham, John Middleton Murry, Eden Phillpotts, Sir Nigel Playfair, Logan Persall Smith, Dame Ethel Smyth and Hugh Walpole'. p.248. In addition, Cline also states: 'Since *The Well's* publication she [Hall] had received over 5,000 letters of which only five were abusive', p.270. There is a typed selection of these letters at the Harry Ransom Centre. See 'Material related to court case', Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 17., Folder 3. Hall also received public support from the South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen; see Cline, p.258.

¹¹ See James T. Boulton, 'D. H. Lawrence's *Pansies* and the State, 1929' in *Journal of the D. H. Lawrence Society*, (2000); and Christopher Pollnitz, 'The Censorship and Transmission of D. H. Lawrence's "*Pansies*": The Home Office and the "Foul-Mouthed Fellow"' in *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Spring, 2005) for further information on the Home Office papers in relation to Lawrence.

The notoriety and scandal surrounding *The Well of Loneliness* and its trial raised Hall's profile so that she became the subject of widespread social commentary and mockery in the newspapers and other media. Describing this period, Hall's biographer Sally Cline states:

In the late summer of 1928, Hermes Press published an anonymous but biting satire of the trial of *The Well of Loneliness* called 'The Sink of Solitude'. A mock-heroic poem accompanied by caustic cartoons by Beresford Egan [see Figure 12], it lampooned James Douglas and Jix for their high-handed hypocrisy, and chicken-hearted Cape for his moral cravenness. One cartoon savaged Stephen Gordon and John [Hall] herself. Egan drew Radclyffe Hall nailed to a cross like Christ, wearing her black Spanish sombrero, her body touching that of a naked woman dancing around the cross. In the bottom right corner Jix looks disgustedly away from Hall while in the top left corner a baby cupid makes a rude gesture at John. Watching this lewd scene with cold distaste is another Eton-cropped woman.

John was outraged. Egan felt that as lesbians, unlike male homosexuals, could not be prosecuted, John's anguish on the subject of their sexuality was unjustified. That she never considered her lesbian identity as in conflict with her Catholic practice was most evident over this issue. In deep spiritual pain she saw Egan's cartoon as nothing less than blasphemy. ... Now he had taken a crack at it, at her, at her God. Terrible guilt, neither necessary nor rational, swept over her. She felt she had been exploited in order to offend her Maker.

This feeling was the strongest motive for her decision to write a new novel that would make 'amends for that insult to her Lord and her Faith' [Una Troubridge's *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, p.104]. In the moment she viewed Egan's cartoon, the idea for *The Carpenter's Son* took root.¹²

The Sink of Solitude was as much an attack on Douglas, Joynson-Hicks and Cape as it was on Hall's writing and sexuality. P. R. Stephensen wrote the preface to *The Sink of Solitude*, in which he declares:

The mind reels before a catalogue of the foolish and inadequate persons and institutions involved in it. The pathetic post-war lesbians with their "mannish" modes and poses; the sentimental scientificity of psychopaths like Havelock Ellis who ponderously "explain" them; the feebleness of the *Well of Loneliness* either as a work of art or moral argument; the quite uncritical criticism of Douglas and the morbidity of the journalism he represents; the simplicity of a Cabinet Minister who could be persuaded that such rhetoric is at any point related to actuality; the spinelessness of a publisher who could first deliberately issue such a book and then withdraw it upon representations (made irregularly because privately) from a public character of so little character: the despicable precedent which such an episode sets up in the land of the *Areopagitica*.¹³

¹² Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997), pp.278-280.

¹³ P. R. Stephensen, 'Preface' in *The Sink of Solitude* (London: Hermes Press, 1928).

While Hall's work is at the heart of the satirical parody, Stephensen is flippantly suggesting that she is only one part of a chain of people to blame for the novel being withdrawn from sale. Stephensen and Lawrence would meet in December 1928 (after the publication of *The Sink of Solitude*).¹⁴ Stephensen subsequently did the typography for the Mandrake Press Edition of *The Paintings of D. H. Lawrence* and allowed his name to appear as printer on a special definitive edition of *Pansies* (limited to 500 copies for subscribers) produced by Charles Lahr. Stephensen's link to *The Sink of Solitude* and his involvement in the printing of the paintings and *Pansies* is further evidence of a contemporary connection between Hall's and Lawrence's work. However, Stephensen clearly admired Lawrence, whereas Hall's literary ability was mocked in *The Sink of Solitude*. Although he was critical of Hall's abilities as a writer, the point Stephensen makes is that the timid and inoffensive lesbian subject matter of *The Well of Loneliness* did not deserve the reaction and treatment that both the novel and its author received. Stephensen's words aside, Beresford Egan's depiction of Hall on a crucifix in *The Sink of Solitude*, emulating the figure of Christ, crossed a religious, ethical and moral line that deeply affected her. Una describes Hall's reaction to the caricature:

At the time of James Douglas's attack upon *The Well of Loneliness*, together with many splendid evidences of sympathy, admiration and respect, there had been published a peculiarly vile, obscene and blasphemous caricature of the author which had not only disgusted and horrified us both but which had caused her such deep spiritual pain that throughout the remaining years of her life she could scarcely bear to speak of it, even to me. Once she did say: 'To think that I should have been used as a means of disrespect to Him ...', nor did her complete helplessness and innocence in the matter seem to afford her any consolation.¹⁵

Hall had a tendency to view herself as a martyr, but this never correlated directly with the figure of Christ, because for her this would have been blasphemous and sacrilegious.

¹⁴ In a letter to his mother-in-law Frau Baronin von Richthofen, dated 19 December 1928, D. H. Lawrence wrote: 'We also had a young Australian [P. R. Stephensen] here for two days, this afternoon, he left for Nice. He makes those beautiful expensive books that people collect nowadays – he says he will make a book next year of my paintings – of all my paintings, with a foreword by me, to be sold at ten guineas each. It seems madness to me, but it's his money and he will pay me well – if he does it. But how mad people are – there is quite a large vogue in editions de lux that cost two or five or even twenty-five pounds. I hate it'. *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, Volume Three, 1925-1930*, ed. by Edward Nehls (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977) [1959], p. 270.

¹⁵ Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond and Hammond, 1965), p.104.

By contrast, Keith Sagar writes of Lawrence that 'Again and again from 1915 onwards, Lawrence was driven by his extremity to compare himself, directly or by implication with Christ'.¹⁶ Reflecting on Lawrence's appearance, his friend Achsah Brewster commented:

His mouth was curiously unmodelled like those the Greeks assigned to Pan and the satyrs. A trick of drooping the head pensively; his gentle expression; the dignity of his pose; the way the beard grew from his delicate, high cheek-bones; the fall of his hair over the forehead; all made him look like the Christ figure on many a carved crucifix.¹⁷

While stopping with the Brewsters on Capri in 1925, Dorothy Brett, a friend, artist and confidant of Lawrence, worked on a painting that depicted him as both Christ and Pan. Lawrence, who had recently been ill, decided to join the Brewsters and Brett in Capri. Brett had informed Lawrence that she was working on a Christ painting, but had not revealed that he was the inspiration for her Christ and Pan figures. Brett's memoir recounts Lawrence's reaction to the painting when she finally showed it to him:

You [Lawrence] look at it in astonishment, then you laugh and say quickly; "It's a good idea, but it's too much like me – much too like."
"I know," I reply, "but I took the heads half from you and half from John the Baptist."
"It's too like me," you repeat abruptly. "You will have to change it. Also put a little more pink in the sunset: it's too golden. Just a touch of pink would help. But wherever did you get the idea from?"
"I don't know – it just came. It seemed to come from you, to be you."
The picture is of a crucifixion. The pale yellow Christ hangs on the Cross, against an orange sunset. With that final spurt of strength before death, he is staring at the vision of the figure in front of him. His eyes are visionary, his figure tense and aware. Before him, straddled across a rock, half-curious, half-smiling, is the figure of Pan, holding up a bunch of grapes to the dying Christ: a dark, reddish-gold figure with horns and hoofs. The heads of Pan and Christ are both your head.¹⁸

In contrast to the Hall caricature, Brett's painting does not mock Lawrence, but instead presents him as a hybrid combination of Christ, John the Baptist and Pan. Despite his conscious association with the figure of Christ/Pan, Lawrence was troubled by the image,

¹⁶ Keith Sagar, *D. H. Lawrence: Life into Art* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985), p.298.

¹⁷ Earl and Achsah Brewster, *D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence* (London: Secker, 1934), p.241.

¹⁸ Dorothy Brett, *Lawrence and Brett: A Friendship* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2006) [1933] p.287-8. Brett's description of the dying Christ shares a similarity with Hall's account of Christophe's final moments in *The Master of the House*: 'But presently he [Christophe] became very still and his dying eyes gazed out to the east – to the east where the flaming, majestic dawn rose over the world like a resurrection', Radclyffe Hall, *The Master of the House* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), p.490.

which presented him as both Christian/Pagan and spiritual/sensual. Something in the reflection of the self on the crucifix, mimicking Christ's death, was taboo and disturbing for both Hall and Lawrence. Brett consequently destroyed the painting, stating 'Alas, that the laughter and criticism of others made me cut the picture up in a rage! I have only the heads that I rescued.'¹⁹ Nevertheless, the image continued to haunt her, such that later in her life, Brett returned to it and repainted it in 1963 (see Figure 13).



Figure 12: Beresford Egan, *St. Stephen*, in *The Sink of Solitude* (1928)
Source: Wikipedia, < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beresford_Egan >
[accessed 17 March 2017]

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.288.

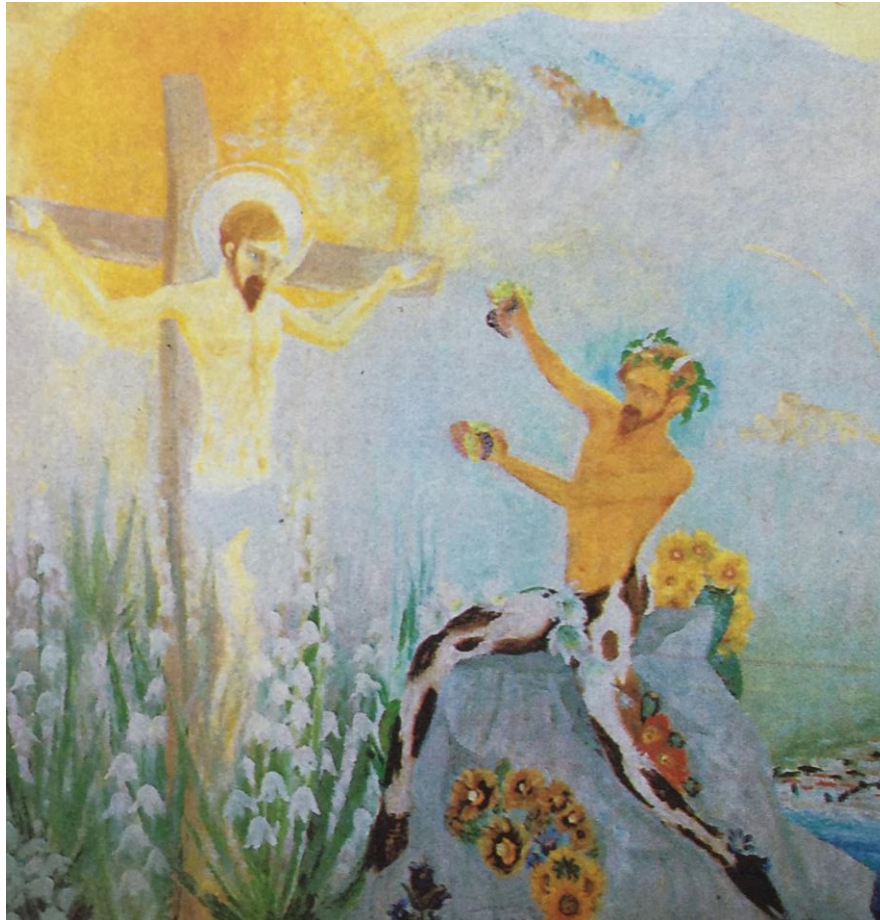


Figure 13: Dorothy Brett, *The Man Who Died* (1963). Double portrait of D. H. Lawrence, a reworking of the Capri crucifixion of 1926. The original was destroyed by Brett

Source: Keith Sagar *The Life of D. H. Lawrence: An Illustrated Biography* (London: Chaucer Press, 2003), p.2.

The crucified Hall and Lawrence figures perpetuate Christian martyrdom iconography, but an intriguing factor in both images is the inclusion of mythical figures alongside the Christ-like ones. Cupid mocks Hall with a ‘cock a snook’ gesture while a naked nymph-like woman jumps across the crucifix.²⁰ In Brett’s painting Pan is watching Christ, but his limbs, like the nymph in the Hall caricature, express freedom and the possibility of movement. Pan and the nymph also articulate the pleasure of the senses. In the Hall image,

²⁰ Nymphs had appeared in the following Hall poems: ‘The May Tree’, ‘In the Hardt Wald’ and ‘An Interlude’ in *A Sheaf of Verses* (1908); and verse III of *The Forgotten Island* (1915). Considering her reaction to the Beresford caricature, it is interesting that Hall uses nymphs for the first time in her fictional writing in *The Master of the House*. Eusèbe tells the young Christophe, Jan and Loup the story of Bacchus: ‘There were ladies who brought him his wine,’ said Eusèbe; ‘they were not at all like the ladies we know – although many of these are certainly pretty – but the ladies who brought Bacchus his marvellous wine were called nymphs because they were more than human; and so beautiful they were that people went blind if by accident they should happen to see them. Yes, nymphs they were called, and they much liked sweet things, so that those who were wise always left them honey’. Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.96. While the novel is a modern day Christ story, legends and fantasies are also present in *The Master of the House*, which suggests a degree of commonality between Biblical stories and folklore and mythology.

the nymph blatantly suggests sexuality and eroticism, because the scene plays with the fetishisation of lesbianism. Although Joynton-Hicks has turned his back on the scene, he cannot help but look back, his halo and heart suggesting the hypocrisy of heterosexual men who protest against homosexuality, but secretly fantasise about lesbianism. Pan, in the Brett painting, shows the duality of Man, representing the indulgence of the senses as he holds out the grapes and sits amongst multi-coloured flowers. He is tanned and colourful, compared to the pale Christ surrounded by white lilies of the valley. Pan, Cupid and the nymphs have a complex history of cultural use, but they also share an association with sex, sexuality and sexual desire. The Egan cartoon sexualises the Hall/Christ-like figure, mocking both her sexuality and her faith, while Pan's presence acts to remind the viewer that Christ was not just a religious deity, but also a man and as such a sexual being.²¹ Therefore, it is entirely significant that Hall's response was to write her Christ story, *The Master of the House*, as a form of retribution in order to demonstrate her Christian integrity to the world; and while Lawrence's Christ story, 'The Escaped Cock', is said to have been written in response to his viewing of a toy in a shop window in Volterra on 17 April 1927, it was arguably also prompted by his long-standing (sometimes bitter and ironic) identification with Christ's martyrdom and resurrection.²²

²¹ Lawrence was fascinated by the figure of Pan and wrote about him in the essay 'Pan in America' (1924). Pan is also mentioned in the following Hall poems: 'In the Hardt Wald' in *A Sheaf of Verses* (1908); 'The Old Gods' and 'Thou Art Risen, My Beloved' in *Poems of the Past and Present* (1910); and verse XXXI of *The Forgotten Island* (1915). In her fiction, Pan appears in *Adam's Breed*, where he is mentioned as part of the post-war celebrations in the restaurant: 'The craze for dancing was on the increase, and now there was no age limit; the white-haired, the portly, the withered, the ailing, young or old, maid or matron, they must get up and dance; while a decadent Pan – discarding his reed pipe – turned sobriety to bidding and dignity to folly with the help of a water-whistle'. Radclyffe Hall, *Adam's Breed* (London: Virago 1985), p.247.

²² Lawrence's and his friend Earl Brewster's accounts of the toy differ. In the holograph manuscript of the novel, Lawrence wrote on 20 May 1929 that the toy was 'a little Easter toy of a cock escaping from a man', while Brewster writing in 1934 stated that the toy was a 'white rooster escaping from an egg'. Both quotations are taken from Gerald M. Lacy's 'Commentary' in D. H. Lawrence, *The Escaped Cock* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1973), p.136.

2.3 *The Master of the House: Hall's Retribution novel*

In 1930, Hall and Una moved to Rye, Sussex, to escape the pressures of London after the trial of *The Well of Loneliness*. During this period, Hall started working on *The Master of the House*. Cline describes the move, by stating:

In Rye John [Hall] would atone for the Egan blasphemous cartoon, for Mackenzie's outrages, for the world's injustice to invert. Hall and her book *The Well* had in some dreadful way been used to insult God but through her writing would come some absolution. She felt safe and at peace in Rye. She believed that in this small town with its cobbled streets, 'where you can get away from this hideous age of progress' (quotation from a letter from Una Troubridge to Jacqueline Hope-Nicholson, 22 April 1930), she was about to create her greatest novel, *The Master of the House*.²³



Figure 14: Rood screen of Christ the King, large red and gold Byzantine cross, St Anthony of Padua, Rye, Sussex
Source: Steven Macnamara, June 2017

Hall atoned for the Egan cartoon not only through writing *The Master of the House*, but also through her involvement with the Catholic Church in Rye, the church of St Anthony of Padua. The church was newly constructed but unfinished; Hall paid for its roof and pews, as well as donating a rood screen of Christ the King (see Figure 14). The rood was hung from the sanctuary beams and beneath it, engraved on a brass plate in the floor is a tribute to Mabel with the words: 'Of your charity pray for the soul of Mabel Veronica Batten/In memory of whom this rood was given. 1930' (see Figure 15). According to Souhami, Hall also 'paid off all the outstanding debts of the

²³ Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997), p. 285. Cline is referring to Compton Mackenzie's lesbian novel *Extraordinary Women* (1928), which was published in the same year as *The Well of Loneliness*, but was not subjected to any legal action. In Mackenzie's novel, he mocks Hall and Una with the characters Madame Hermina de Randan and Madame Anastasia Sarbecoff. Hall was not amused by the depiction nor with how the novel ridiculed lesbians in general.

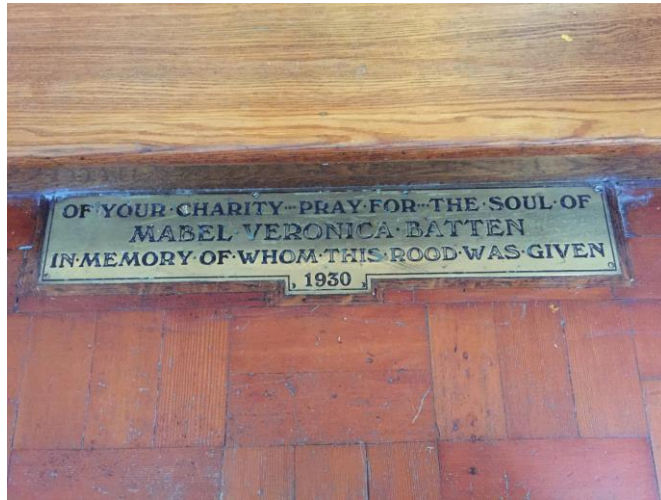


Figure 15: Brass plate, which reads: 'Of your charity pray for the soul of Mabel Veronica Batten', St Anthony of Padua, Rye, Sussex

Source: Steven Macnamara, June 2017

church. It was as if she was buying her way to the right hand of God'.²⁴ Hall's distress at the Egan caricature created in her a need to demonstrate her commitment to God in financial terms and through an artistic expression of her faith. The rood can be understood as part of her combative response to the disrespectful and blasphemous Egan cartoon. However, by placing a memorial plaque to Mabel underneath the cross and at the foot of the altar, Hall is also politicising the gesture by including the homosexual within the church in the most prominent place where the congregation will receive Holy Communion. Whilst Egan had sardonically mocked the connection between religion and sexuality, Hall by her generous donations had integrated the homosexual within the structure and ceremony of the Church – an institution that rejected homosexuality, but readily accepted money from one of the most famous lesbians in the world (at that point in time). By her actions, Hall is implicitly highlighting what she saw as the hypocrisy of the Roman Catholic Church and its congregation, which she felt rarely observed the significance of the religious tropes around them, while they were at mass.

In *The Master of the House*, Christophe is about to receive his First Holy Communion when a crucifix transfixes him:

But Christophe was clutching the back of the chair upon which he knelt, and his staring eyes were not on the priest but were turned to the wall against which stood a life-like Crucifixion – a large agony fashioned from wood and paint with much skill by the hands of some bygone craftsman. And although he had seen the thing many times and had thought of it only as a symbol of

²⁴ Souhami, p.238.

salvation, he now saw it as the crucified body of a man, of a man who was very terribly human – the outraged and bleeding body of a man dying slowly as he hung there in torment; while in some incomprehensible and terrifying way this fearful perception seemed to link itself up with him and his approaching Communion.²⁵

Unlike those about to receive communion (the body of Christ), who view the crucifix as just another religious symbol within the Church, Christophe recognises the human suffering of Christ on the cross. The scene also points to Christophe's own future, but at this moment Hall reminds the reader that either physically or metaphorically every human can be crucified for his or her beliefs.

Cline and Souhami interpret Hall's generosity to St Anthony of Padua as atonement, but one could argue that her intentions were not entirely altruistic; they contain an element of subterfuge that was not immediately obvious to either the church or its congregation. Consequently, while *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) has been interpreted as Hall's statement novel, *The Master of the House* can undoubtedly be understood as her retribution novel.²⁶ The published version of *The Master of the House* concludes with Christophe dying on the cross:

His head moved quickly from side to side as though he were trying to see those hands, to comprehend the cause of suffering. Then it drooped as though he would see his feet and look on the rood they had nailed beneath them. But presently he became very still and his dying eyes gazed out to the east – to the east where the flaming, majestic dawn rose over the world like a resurrection.²⁷

This conclusion reinforces the Christian message of resurrection and the eternal life of the soul.²⁸ However, in one of her preliminary notebooks for the working novel *The Carpenter's Son*, which would later become *The Master of the House*, Hall wrote an alternative ending to the novel:

²⁵ Radclyffe Hall, *The Master of the House* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), p.226.

²⁶ Discussing the difference between *The Unlit Lamp* (1924) and *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) Zoë Fairbairns writes: 'Radclyffe Hall wrote *The Well of Loneliness* because she wanted to put a case, and for all its power, courage and passion, it shows many of the unresolved problems of using a novel for that purpose. She wrote *The Unlit Lamp* because she was moved, as a novelist, by a glimpse of a human predicament; and because in it she was not deliberately setting out to make a statement, the statement is powerfully made'. 'Introduction' in *The Unlit Lamp* (London: Virago, 1980), p.7.

²⁷ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.490.

²⁸ John 17:3, 'Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent'.

Dropping to his knees in the crimsoning dust, he [Jan] laid his cheek against the torn feet, striking his breast and speaking wildly:

‘Oh, my Lord, my God, my brother my friend ... we have crucified you again, yet again. How many times must we crucify you!’ for he did not realise what he was saying.

But the troops who had seen this thing swept past, their eyes sombre with thoughts of retribution.²⁹

At this planning stage, when Hall was plotting characters, researching the war in Palestine and doodling pairs of sandals (presumably like the ones Christophe receives in the novel), the formative word that she envisaged to conclude her modern-day Christ story was ‘retribution’. The word has negative, hateful and spiteful connotations; it is associated with acts of revenge, punishment and retaliation, disregarding Christ’s Sermon on the Mount.³⁰ ‘Retribution’ is not a word that is typically part of Hall’s vocabulary: she uses it only once in all of her published works, when in the novel *The Unlit Lamp* (1924) she writes that

Mrs. Ogden grew much more affectionate to her younger daughter, and caressed her frequently; but these caresses irritated rather than soothed, and sometimes Milly shrank perceptibly. When this happened Mrs. Ogden eyes would fill with tears, and her working face would instinctively turn in Joan’s direction for sympathy. ‘Oh, my God!’ Joan once caught herself thinking, ‘will neither of them ever stop crying!’ But this thought brought a swift retribution, for she was tormented for the rest of the day over what she felt to have been her heartlessness.³¹

In this instance, Hall is using the word ‘retribution’ in a darkly humorous manner to punish Joan for her unchristian thoughts about her mother and sister, whereas in the alternative ending of *The Master of the House* the word connotes bitter and angry vengeance, perhaps suggesting that others will die for crucifying Christophe/Christ. The use of the word

²⁹ Radclyffe Hall, ‘Notes’, with additional inserted notes and correspondence with Harry Treacher. Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 4, Folder 4. In the same notebook there is an earlier version of the ending in which Hall writes:

Jan sank to his knees in the crimsoning dust, and he pressed his cheek against the torn feet, beating his breast and speaking wildly: ‘Oh, my Lord, my God; my brother my friend ... we have crucified you again, yet again!’ for he did not realise what he was saying.

But the troops who had seen this thing swept past, their eyes sombre with thoughts of retribution.

The difference between the two endings is slight, but the version quoted in this chapter is part of a longer piece of writing in which Jan thinks Christophe has run away from the fighting, but then discovers the crucified body of his cousin. The text in the footnote is an isolated piece of writing which appears earlier in her notebook. Significantly, both of these alternative endings conclude with the word ‘retribution’.

³⁰ Luke, 27:29, ‘But to those of you who will listen, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also’.

³¹ Radclyffe Hall, *The Unlit Lamp* (London: Virago, 1981) [1924], p.232.

'retribution' in this alternative ending was not arbitrary, but calculated and planned even before Hall had completed the rest of the novel. During the writing process, Hall obviously changed her mind about the ending of the novel, perhaps sensing that its message was unchristian and in contrast to the spirit of a book which aimed to retell Christ's story.

Hall had previously been inspired to rewrite the stories of others, but on this occasion, her motives for writing *The Master of the House* were more personal.³² Una recalls that '*The Master of the House* was, in any case, the product of a profound and painful spiritual reaction'.³³ Hall's mental state altered in the period when she was contemplating and writing *The Master of the House*. Her focus was not singularly on the artistic message of the novel because Hall was angry, hurt and determined to prove that she was a righteous and moral woman. The overriding aim was to right a wrong, but doing so shifted Hall's attention from storytelling to writing a grand-scale retribution novel.³⁴

The physical process of writing *The Master of the House* was painful and self-destructive. Michael Baker's biography, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (1985), describes the impact that *The Master of the House* had on both Hall and Una:

After the trials and tribulations of *The Well*, she did not find it easy to get back into the rhythm of writing. There were frequent and disheartening periods of 'block' and to Una's concern she increasingly went on working into the night, often till the small hours. The days when they would breakfast together every morning were long over, for John would still be sleeping, exhausted from her labours.

But the book proved an ordeal for John [Hall] in another way, too. Because it has been consciously planned as an act of penitence, she wrote it in a spirit of deliberate austerity. Driving herself to work for over twelve hours at a stretch was part of this, as was ignoring her own health and comfort. [...] It seems also that she kept herself celibate, if not for the whole two years, at least for long periods.³⁵

³² In an undated letter to the editor of *America*, Hall writes about *The Unlit Lamp*, 'For a long time I have felt that the Joan Ogden type never came before the public, never claimed attention of the writers, never voiced its grievances, and was therefore never championed', (quoted in Sally Cline's, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, pp.158-9). In an undated article entitled, 'Why I wrote "Adam's Breed"', Hall states: 'I had often looked at the people who served me silently in various capacities, and had speculated as to what they really felt and thought about me and my doings and about life in general – what their lives were like. I felt this especially in the case of waiters and all those connected with the preparation and serving of food ... to me a hateful service'. Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 22, Folder 3.

³³ Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond and Hammond, 1965), p.104.

³⁴ Una Troubridge's diary entry on 19 January 1931 records how exhausted Hall was while writing *The Carpenter's Son* and whilst this was not an uncommon observation for Hall's lover to make the diary states: 'This time there is of course the complex that the persecution of 'The Well' was designed (as it undeniably was) to break her down and that enemies hoped and friends feared she would not write again'. Vol. 1, Dec. 27, 1930--Feb. 24, 1931, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 26, Folder 1.

³⁵ Michael Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (London: GMP Publishers, 1985), pp.272-273.

The adoption of this strict working regime and the consequences it had on Hall's relationship were symbolically realised by the fact that she reportedly suffered from stigmata whilst writing *The Master of the House*. Cline states:

She had written the first four chapters when she was struck by continual pain first in the palm of her right hand, then in her left. When an angry red stain appeared in the centre of each palm she consulted a distinguished radiologist. Deep ray treatment did nothing. Una believed the stains were stigmata. John, sure that they were, simply endured the pain until the book was finished, whereupon the blemishes vanished.³⁶

Hall's stigmata was probably psychosomatic: a combination of her reaction to the Egan caricature, the intense working conditions in which she produced *The Master of the House*, and her close identification with Christ's suffering. Prior to the Egan cartoon, Hall had linked stigmata with the suffering homosexual (and specifically the lesbian writer). In *The Well of Loneliness*, when Stephen meets Valérie Seymour for the first time, Hall writes:

Valérie Seymour was secretly approving, not because her guest was a decent human being with a will to work, with a well-trained brain, with what might some day become a fine talent, but rather she was seeing before her all the outward stigmata of the abnormal – verily the wounds of One nailed to a cross – that was why Valérie sat there approving.³⁷

Hall is seeking sympathy for the homosexual, by suggesting that no matter how brilliant Stephen is she will always be marked as different (later in the novel this difference is physically realised when Stephen's face is scarred during her war service). Egan may have mocked the earnestness of *The Well of Loneliness*, but in the Christian faith the markings associated with stigmata are not a punishment but a blessing, an outward display of the individual's compassion for the suffering of Christ. As a reminder of this fact, in *The Master of the House* Hall describes Saint Francis of Assisi as a 'merciful saint whose hands and feet bore the blessed stigmata'.³⁸ While the reality of Hall's own stigmata is questionable, it is nevertheless testament to her belief in the gravity of her subject matter and writing practice. The caricature may have intensified her own sense of herself as the suffering writer and homosexual, but this was already part of her consciousness before Egan portrayed her on the cross. Hall, like Lawrence, was ultimately disturbed to see an aspect of her personality so accurately visualised (and in her case mocked) by another artist.

³⁶ Cline, p.295.

³⁷ Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago, 1990) [1928], p.247.

³⁸ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.153.

The Master of the House, more than any of Hall's other novels, was written in a period when her physical and mental health were under pressure and her relationship with Una was strained. The impact on her health and the self-destructive practices she adopted to produce *The Master of the House* are factors that inevitably contribute to the novel's tone. *The Master of the House* is serious, sincere and devoid of humour. Aware of the novel's stylistic and thematic difference from her earlier work Hall wrote in a letter to her English and American publishers:

I am particularly anxious, in fact I consider it essential, that no synopsis or "blurb" should be employed in connection with this new book, either in its introduction to booksellers, or in Publishers' advertising, or in Press Publicity of any description, or upon the dustwrapper of the volume itself. There are several reasons for this, which I feel sure will appeal to your firm both from the literary and the business angle. Mr. Cape has read the manuscript so far as it is completed and he knows that the thesis of the book is a very subtle one which might be quite disastrously misconveyed by an attempt at synopsis.³⁹

Hall was mindful of the fact that her retelling of the Christ story presented a particular set of problems and challenges: she particularly objected to the redaction of *The Master of the House*, and to its reduction to a summary or a strapline. *The Master of the House* is a modern-day Christ story, set in France, but this type of precis would have undermined Hall's artistic vision. In retelling Christ's story, Hall takes the spectacular and epic elements in the Bible and uses them to explore the ordinariness of his life. Hall may start and finish *The Master of the House* with familiar Biblical scenarios, but between these obvious tropes, she aims to draw a parallel between Christ's day-to-day existence and that of the reader. Hall takes one of the most familiar stories in the Western World and shifts the focus to examine the importance of normality, triviality and mundaneness. The premise here is that Christ was extraordinary, but he was also human and he would have experienced ordinariness as part of his life and personal development. Thematically this is a challenging idea, since as a commercial writer Hall must have realised the difficulty of documenting in an engaging manner the minutiae of Christ's life across nearly five-hundred pages. Sensing that the public, who had eagerly purchased copies of her controversial lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness*, would be interested in her next novel, Hall revealed her aspirations for *The Master of the House* to her publishers:

³⁹ Harry Ransom Centre, letter from Radclyffe Hall to the publishers Jonathan Cape and Harrison-Smith Inc., 10 October 1931, 'Contracts, novels and short stories, together with related correspondence', The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 24, Folder 4.

No chance must be given for anyone to think this book is merely a follower upon the heels of "The Unlit Lamp", "Adam's Breed", and "A Saturday Life". For one thing I do not need to tell you that this would jeopardise the large sales which I feel we have every right to expect, sales due to the immediate successor of "The Well of Loneliness", a book which by now has sold well over 150,000 in different parts of the world'.⁴⁰

Hall deduced that the public would not be expecting such a Christian-centric novel; this may explain her caution at including a summary in advertising the novel, because ultimately it would affect sales.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

2.4 Gerald Gould's Reviews of *The Master of the House* and 'The Escaped Cock'

One of the first reviews of *The Master of the House* appeared in *The Observer* on 28 February 1932. Gerald Gould wrote of the novel:

Miss Radclyffe Hall has many qualities as a writer: sympathy, a quick and thorough apprehension of atmosphere, an easy and melodious style, the poise and separate personality of the artist. All these qualities are apparent in "The Master of the House"; and they make it a rich and touching story, fit companion (I should fancy) for a long period of leisure. But to say that it succeeds would be absurd – and that for two reasons. The design (if I understand the design aright) is entirely beyond the compass of narrative skill. "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh ..." The hero of this novel is meant to interpret such as a coming. Not, of course, in the full sense of ultimate revelation; but certainly in a form recognisable as embodying special sanctity. (For why otherwise, the unmistakable symbolism?) And the thing simply cannot be done! If Miss Radclyffe Hall were Shakespeare and Tolstoy together she could not do it. In the second place, even the materials at her hand are laid out disproportionately. The main merit in most of a very, very long book is its quiet and local charm; we are taken, perhaps at too great length, but certainly with humour, with courage, with sensitiveness and a flattering sense of intimacy, into the household bosom of a little community in Provence: we watch its scandals, hear its rumours, are expected to condole with it in troubles trivial as well as great. Its politics, businesses, prospects, rivalries, schemes or ideals of building and development, are related with a fullness which will fascinate some and weary others; and then at the end the key is startlingly changed, and we close amid the smoke and wounds of war. "Well," it may be argued, "why not? Is not that precisely what happens in life? The long littleness, the sudden tragedy?" To which I can only answer that life makes its own laws as it goes along, and can change its key without fear of aesthetic criticism. There is one law of experience, another of the art that interprets experience. When we have followed Christophe, Marie Bénédicte through the minute adventures of his childhood and early youth, for some four hundred closely printed pages, we do not feel in the mood for a last wild protest of suffering humanity, against untold agonies. The change of scale, of style, is too complete. It is true that we have been, in one way, carefully prepared. Always Christophe has had moments of revelation: always he has felt in himself a basic, controlling hatred of cruelty and pain: always he has been haunted by fear that, at some supreme moment, the truth will be too strong for him, and he will have to testify and perish. Nor indeed, within the compass of ordinary literary achievement, is the rising tide of excitement ill described. As a war-story, the story of a soldier kindled to refusal and protest and consequent martyrdom by his hatred of war, the closing chapters would rank high, if they had not been pitched too high; but a hero who can murmur, near the end "I am the Indestructible Compassion," needs a different annunciation; and the final implication of the "unendurable pain in his hands, in his feet," leaves the reader rather startled than subdued. The thing, I repeat, was bound to be in that sense a failure; but it is a fine, a faithful and a magnanimous one.⁴¹

⁴¹ Gerald Gould, 'The South and the Sun', *The Observer*, 28 February 1932.

Gould was a journalist, writer, academic and supporter of the suffragette movement, but despite the influence he exerted as a reviewer, he was not highly regarded by authors. In his autobiography and memoir, *A Sort of Life* (1971), Graham Greene is dismissive of Gould and the *Sunday Times* critic Ralph Straus:

The reviewing of novels at the beginning of the thirties was at a far lower critical level than it ever has been since. Gerald Gould, a bad poet and, Ralph Strauss (*sic*), a bad novelist, divided the Sunday forum between them. One was not elated by their praise nor cast down by their criticism.⁴²

Despite Greene's criticism, both Gould and Straus could affect sales of new novels.⁴³ Quotations from their reviews were used in advertisements for *The Master of the House* to emphasise the novel's appeal and literary merit (see Figure 16).



Figure 16: Advertisement for *The Master of the House* with selected reviews from the London Press
Source: *The Observer*, 8 May 1932

⁴² Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life* (London: Vintage, 2002) [1971], p. 145.

⁴³ Alec Waugh describes Gerald Gould as 'enthusiastic and romantic. He was criticized for being over ready to praise, but that is a fault on the credit side. He looked for the merits in a book and readers of his column felt on a Sunday morning that a week of enjoyment lay ahead of them. Next day they hurried expectantly to their branch of Boot's or Smith's.' See *My Brother Evelyn & Other Profiles* (London: Cassell, 1967), p.102.

Overall, Gould is charitable in his review of *The Master of the House*, but he argues that by taking on the task of retelling the Christ story Hall committed herself to a project doomed to failure. Hall succeeds, in Gould's opinion, in her recounting of the small everyday details, but fails in the final section of the novel when Christophe goes to war. The melodramatic ending is too much for Gould.

Significantly, in the same article Gould reviews D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). In his review, Gould implies that it is Lawrence himself and not Lady Chatterley who declares:

The human body is only just coming to real life. With the Greeks it gave a lovely flicker, then Plato and Aristotle killed it, and Jesus finished it off. But now the body is coming really to life, it is really rising from the tomb. And it will be a lovely, lovely life in the lovely universe, the life of the human body.⁴⁴

His review of *the Master of the House* and the quotation from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* point to Gould making a thematic connection between Hall's and Lawrence's work and their relationship to Christ. The quotation from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is particularly pertinent, because it suggests that Christ (read the passionless Christophe) was responsible for ensuring the death of the body and its senses. The quotation from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* conveys the sense that *The Master of the House* failed because it presented a tedious Christ; it acts to remind Gould of the hypothesis Lawrence explored in *The Man Who Died* (the late novella which Lawrence originally entitled 'The Escaped Cock').⁴⁵ Christophe's perfection made him a dull representation of Christ when Hall, like Lawrence, had had the artistic opportunity to create an alternative version.

Within a year, Gould had reviewed two representations of Christ by authors associated with obscenity. Gould's review of *The Man Who Died* appeared in *The Observer* on 26 April 1931:

It seems that it was inevitable for D. H. Lawrence to try and re-write the world's greatest story, and to re-write it in terms of his own pre-occupation. The result will be painful to those who regard the subject as too sacred for such approach; but nobody will doubt the reverence, the sincerity and the austerity with which Lawrence approached it. He believed himself a man

⁴⁴ D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* quoted by Gerald Gould in *The Observer*, 28 February 1931.

⁴⁵ See T. R. Wright, *D. H. Lawrence and the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), who asserts that '*Lady Chatterley's Lover* too can be read, at least on one level, as a continuation of the theme of *The Escaped Cock*'. (p.129). Gould's review recognises this link between Lawrence's novel and novella and is using them to discuss how Christ can be reimagined in his review of *The Master of the House*.

with a message; and though he lacked the intellectual clarity to know what the message was, he was all the more feverishly intent to preach it. For that task, he had to attempt the re-interpretation of everything that challenged his imagination. The personality of Christ, as he conceived it, had to be brought into contact with the mystery of sexual love.

The result is a reverent book, a sincere book, an austere one: but it is not a good book. For one thing, the author, against his will, was evidently intimidated by his subject. He keeps his style, which at its best was beautiful with volcanic energy and at its worst was incoherent and nonsensical, at a level of gentle gravity which does not suit it: his mannerisms have become almost pretty. For another thing, his inability to think is unusually troublesome. In many of his other works, even in some of the silliest, he could escape at moments from sheer muddle into the splendour of lyrical description; but here he had to say what he meant, and did not know what it was.

Briefly, the risen Christ – risen in no supernatural sense, but simply discovering himself to be not dead – wanders until he meets a priestess of Isis. They love each other, and when she is with child, and danger threatens, he departs from her, but promises to return. His former life, we are to understand, his ministry, his teaching with regard to human relationships, were all wrong! “He was virgin, in recoil from the little, greedy life of the body. But now he knew that virginity is a form of greed.” ... And again:

It was fear, the ultimate fear of death, that made men mad. So always he must move on, for if he stayed, his neighbours would strangle him of their fear and bullying round him. There was nothing he could touch, for all, in a mad assertion of the ego, wanted to put a compulsion on him, and violate his intrinsic solitude. It was the mania of cities and societies and hosts, to lay a compulsion upon a man, upon all men. For men and women alike were made with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness. And he thought of his own mission, how he tried to lay the compulsion of love on all men. And the old nausea came back on him.

Then, later still:

He had come back to life, but not the same life that he had left, the life of little people and little day. Re-born, he was in the other life, the greater day of the human consciousness. And he was alone and apart from the little day, and out of contact with the daily people. Not yet had he accepted the irrevocable *noli me tangere* which separates the re-born from the vulgar.

Suddenly, when the woman woos him, he thinks: “I asked them all to serve me with the corpse of their love. And in the end I offered them only the corpse of my love”. More strangely still, when he departs from danger: “Not twice! They shall not now profane the touch in me. My wits against theirs.” Yet when did anybody escape the profanation of the world by pitting mortal wits against mortal wills? And what is the sense of despising the daily people, if all we have is our little day?

The book in that sense, is typical Lawrence. It has some beauty, and its intention is honest; but it is a dreadful muddle.⁴⁶

As with *The Master of the House*, Gould acknowledges that Christ is a problematic character to represent and that Lawrence's version may not be to everyone's taste. Just as Gould commented on Hall's inability as a writer to retell the story of Christ, he similarly suggests that Lawrence is uncertain about the message he wants to share with his readers. Lawrence, according to Gould, reverts to his archetypal theme of 'sexual love' in order to explore the life of the resurrected Christ.

Neither *The Master of the House* nor 'The Man Who Died' depicted a version of Christ that Gould could fully relate to as a character. While this may tell us more about Gould than the authors, it also highlights one of the fundamental problems in representing a Christ-like character, because Hall and Lawrence are challenging both the collective and personal concept of Christ as a deity and a man. Gould may not have fully engaged with Lawrence's depiction of a Christ figure, but in reading *The Master of House* he recognises that there is something lacking in Christophe's portrayal and as such feels that Hall has not fully developed the character. Whereas Lawrence may have written to type in presenting a sexualised Christ figure, Hall (who was now infamous for *The Well of Loneliness*) attempts to depict an asexual heterosexual man as her main protagonist. Gould does not explicitly suggest that Christophe is concealing his sexuality, but he notes how 'always he has been haunted by fear that, at some supreme moment, the truth will be too strong for him'.⁴⁷ Ostensibly the statement refers to Christophe's association with Christ and the inevitability of his painful death, but Gould's observation also allows for the fact that the character's true sexual identity is hidden.

⁴⁶ Gerald Gould, 'A Lawrence Myth "The Man who Died." By D. H. Lawrence', *The Observer*, 26 April 1931.

⁴⁷ Gould, 'The South and the Sun', *The Observer*, 28 February 1932.

2.5 Christophe: An Effeminate Invert

In addition to Gould's response, contemporary reviewers were generally unimpressed with *The Master of the House* and in particular were critical of Hall's representation of a modern-day Christ. Christophe's characterisation as a man who embodied spiritual perfection, was regarded as the overall weakness in *The Master of the House*. Cline suggests that *The Master of the House* fails as a novel due to the central character:

In terms of a novel, the problem with perfection is that it is boring, and Bénédict is as near to perfect as an ordinary man can be. So overwhelmed was Hall with the idea of creating a boy in the image of Christ that she failed to draw on her greatest talent: that of psychological exploration. In *The Master of the House* Hall engaged her heart, even her soul, but not her sharp critical imagination.⁴⁸

Despite her previous skill in using Catholicism as a source of inspiration for both plot and character development, Hall struggled to portray a believable Christ figure in *The Master of the House*. In her deference to Christ, Hall presented Christophe as too perfect; he appears dull, unlike the Biblical Christ. The expectation that Hall would deliver something equally sensational as *The Well of Loneliness* would have accounted for the initially brisk sales of 9,000 copies in the first two weeks, but one month later *The Master of the House* had not yet achieved 10,000 sales.⁴⁹ The novel's reception, its modest sales (for Hall) and the subsequent lack of interest in the novel, even among Hall scholars, has resulted in *The Master of the House* being one of Hall's most neglected texts.

Richard Dellamora's critical re-evaluation of Hall's writing, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (2011), barely touches upon *The Master of the House*, but like Cline, he suggests that Christophe is at the heart of the novel's failure:

Christophe is another of Hall's inverted protagonists, but libido in this novel is thoroughly sublimated into a sacrificial humanism. A virginal, feminine male, the great love of Christophe's life is his cousin Jan (in terms of Christian allegory, read John the Baptist).⁵⁰

The lack of critical attention paid to *The Master of the House* in Dellamora's book is curious, particularly given that a substantial portion of his research examines the role of Catholicism in Hall's writing and its significance in understanding her response to sexuality, gender

⁴⁸ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, p.301.

⁴⁹ See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*: 'Two weeks after publication, total sales reached 9,000 and the book was top of the *Observer* best-seller list', p.301. 'By April sales barely touched 10,000, and the book was no longer on the best-seller lists', p.303.

⁵⁰ Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in Writing* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p.204.

identity and the notion of the self. The rather obvious association between Christophe's character and that of Christ may not have warranted further explanation for Dellamora, or maybe, like the contemporary reviewers, there is a sense of uncertainty about how to comment on *The Master of the House* because of the limited psychological depth associated with the novel's protagonist. However, the lack of attention which Dellamora pays to the novel reflects a wider trend to dismiss effeminate men within critical debates. In *The Wilde Century* (1994), Alan Sinfield describes how 'Effeminacy is founded in misogyny. Certain manners and behaviours are stigmatized by associating them with 'the feminine' – which is perceived as weak, ineffectual and unsuited for world affairs'.⁵¹ In part, this may explain why some contemporary critics failed to believe in Christophe's character, because Christ was a leader who engaged and motivated his followers. There are no pivotal scenes in *The Master of the House* in which Christophe demonstrates or asserts his leadership skills. The only potential opportunity for Christophe to do so is when he tries to convince his enemies to put their weapons down, but they ignore and crucify him. The lack of critical attention to Christophe suggests a difficulty not only with his association with Christ, but also with his feminisation. While Dellamora acknowledges Christophe's identity as a 'feminine man', he fails to engage with the character or indeed the novel in his examination of Hall's works.

Dellamora is not the first to read Christophe as an invert and a feminine man. As early as 1936 (during Hall's own lifetime), Margaret Lawrence claimed in her book *The School of Femininity* (1936) that *The Master of the House* explored inversion:

The Master of the House, like *The Well of Loneliness*, deals with inversion. While the heroine in the one book lives the life of a man within the body of a woman, the man in the other book lives the life of a Christ within the body of a mortal. Neither of them has any concern with normal experience. They are part of the same mysterious saga. Some process was started which had to be fulfilled in crucifixion. Radclyffe Hall in her studies has come to the edge of something that is not as yet comprehended. She put her observations into parables because parables suggest rather than proclaim. These things happen, she believes. A woman gets tangled biologically with the being of a man, and maybe also spiritually. She loves women instead of men. A man gets attached spiritually to the being of a Master, and maybe also biologically. He loves mankind instead of an individual. The woman begins to look like a man. She wears the clothes of a man. She acts like a man. The man begins to look like the Master. He wears in his flesh the marks of the Master's suffering. He takes upon himself to live in his mortal flesh the life of the Master. Both of them are under some impulse neither they nor anyone else can understand. Yet both are sane; and both in their way are great. The woman was great artistically; the man was great in spirit.⁵²

⁵¹ Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* (London: Cassell, 1994), p.26.

⁵² Margaret Lawrence, *The School of Femininity* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1972) [1936], p. 329.

Margaret Lawrence argues that Hall was interested in particular character types and compares Christophe to Hall's most famous character Stephen Gordon, suggesting that their identities are fluid, going beyond their physical selves, and able to adopt different personae. Stephen adopts the persona of a man and Christophe the persona of Christ.⁵³ This difference singles them out from those around them, and makes them difficult for their communities to understand. Stephen, who might be identified as a butch-lesbian female masculine woman, has been the subject of debates for decades, but ultimately there has been no successful resolution in understanding her character within the context of theoretical sexual and gender studies. By contrast, the absence of interest in Christophe hints at some uncertainty about how to comment on his characterisation/feminisation, a factor that is evident in contemporary reviews. He is recognisable as a Christ-figure, but beyond the allegory there is little attempt to understand him and his role within the novel. As such, Christophe's Christ-like spirituality has been interpreted as asexuality or, in the case of Dellamora, an effeminacy that equates to homosexuality. Margaret Lawrence's position is a more positive interpretation of Christophe as an invert. Whilst Stephen's sexuality is realised within *The Well of Loneliness*, the focus of *The Master of the House* is different. The trajectory of Christophe's characterisation is not about finding love, which ultimately is Stephen's goal in *The Well of Loneliness*; instead, *The Master of the House* is exploring the reality of living a pure Christian life within contemporary society. Consequently, Christophe cannot contemplate sex with Æliana outside marriage:

'When we two are married, mon amour, I will show you how a man can care for a woman – how strong but how kind a thing love can be.'
'When we two are married?' she queried in amazement.
'Yes,' he smiled, not hearing that incredulous tone.⁵⁴

Similarly, Christophe is too naïve to realise that his relationship with his cousin, Jan, has the ability to develop into anything sexual. Margaret Lawrence is thus unique in arguing that Christophe's spirituality does not detract from his sexuality. In other words, Christophe is not asexual, as Dellamora suggests, but spiritual. Christophe's purpose as a character is not the discovery and exploration of sexual relationships because he is Hall's way of delivering a Christian message to her readers that demonstrates high moral integrity. However, for the

⁵³ This fluidity of character/gender is present in Hall's other novels *A Saturday Life* (1925), *Adam's Breed* (1926), and in the short stories 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' (1934), 'Miles' (1925) and 'The Scarecrow' (1924-25).

⁵⁴ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.420.

majority of its first readers this would have been an alien concept because Christophe discards a basic need for sex and love for a much wider and more altruistic compassionate belief in the good of society. In Margaret Lawrence's reading, Christophe's homosexuality is an integral part of his characterisation, because he shares with Stephen a fluidity of the soul that can inhabit the spirit of others.

Margaret Lawrence's reading of *The Master of the House* offers an alternative and positive interpretation. Contextualising *The Well of Loneliness* and *The Master of the House* within a global literary framework, Margaret Lawrence writes:

The works of Radclyffe Hall, including these two books [*The Well of Loneliness* and *The Master of the House*] and two others which also touch upon the spiritual mystery, *Saturday's Child* [sic: *A Saturday Life*] and *Adam's Breed*, is serious, profound and beautiful work, in no way doctrinaire, yet thoroughly indoctrinated. Her emotion is still yet deep. She is like a quiet pool of great depth. She is ageless. It is the work that might have come out of Greece. It is the work that might have come from India. It seems to have nothing to do with the modern Western world and the flair of the world for the nonchalant, the bizarre and the funny. It has nothing to do with Victorian sentiment. It has nothing to do with Elizabethan delight in living; neither has it anything to do with eighteenth-century sophistication; nor yet anything to do with the romance that belongs to all centuries. She is preoccupied with the mysteries, as the priestesses were, and she pities the human race as it passes them by for things that can be added up and multiplied and subtracted and divided.⁵⁵

Margaret Lawrence contends that Hall's work has a quality that could exist within another time and culture and that it contains an empathetic understanding of the complexity of human nature, which is a timeless quality. It is a view of Hall's literary achievement that is contrary to the negative criticism often levelled at her work.

Because so little generally has been written on *The Master of the House* as a queer text, it is remarkable that during Hall's own lifetime a critic such as Margaret Lawrence was able to recognise and comment upon its gay content. The desire to perceive Hall as a lesbian writer who was only interested in lesbian sexuality and female identities has limited the interpretation and scope of her work. *The Master of the House* is a homoromantic story which uses the figure of Christ to disguise or distract us from its homosexual subtext.

⁵⁵ Margaret Lawrence, pp. 329-330.

2.6 Hall and Lawrence: Catholic Mythology and Modernism

The Master of the House and 'The Escaped Cock' were written during the modernist period when fellow writers were disregarding devout belief as a topic or theme within literature. In *The Oxford Handbook of Modernism*, Roger Luckhurst states that 'One central way of defining modernity is to emphasize its rejection of religion'.⁵⁶ While this is one rule of thumb that can be applied to fiction written during the modernist period, a developing school of thought argues that modernism and religion are intrinsically linked. Anthony Domestico's article 'Modernism and Religion' questions the limits of modernism by suggesting that:

Moving beyond the Woolf/Eliot/Joyce nexus, critics now see modernism as a description of all literature, experimental and traditional, written roughly between 1890 and 1945; or of all literature that reflects upon the crises of modernity; or, of literature exhibiting certain stylistic characteristics – fragmentation and juxtaposition, namely – regardless of time period; or, of literature that more generally calls into question representational norms, whether or not this literature does so by the specific means of fragmentation and juxtaposition.⁵⁷

Expanding the modernist framework enables Domestico to consider the role of religion within the literature of this era. He suggests that writers such as James Joyce and Marcel Proust were reconfiguring religion into a new form to understand its influence on art. Writers were turning to non-Christian and non-Western religions as a way of exploring modern culture. In 'The Escaped Cock', Lawrence experiments with both of these approaches in order to reimagine and refocus attention on the resurrection of Christ. In an essay entitled 'The Risen Lord', Lawrence notes that 'The Churches loudly assert: We preach Christ crucified! – But in so doing, they preach only half of the Passion, and do only half their duty'.⁵⁸ The religious and artistic fascination with the crucifixion of Christ (which undoubtedly influenced Hall) is, according to Lawrence, only part of the passion story, because Jesus rose from the dead. Lawrence argues that once the sacrifice is over and salvation is attained, 'Now comes the true life, man living his full life on earth, as flowers live their full life, without rhyme

⁵⁶ Roger Luckhurst, 'Religion, Psychical Research, Spiritualism, and The Occult' in *The Oxford Handbook of Modernism*, ed. by Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Deborah Longworth and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.249.

⁵⁷ Anthony Domestico 'Modernism and Religion' in *The Routledge Companion of Literature and Religion*, ed. by Mark Knight (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p.38.

⁵⁸ D. H. Lawrence, "The Risen Lord", October 1929, in *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works*, ed. by Warren Robert and Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1968), p.571. In a letter written to her lover Evgenia Souline on Easter Sunday 1935, Hall begins with the Paschal greeting: "'Christ is risen ---' / 'He is risen indeed'". Letter from Radclyffe Hall to Evgenia Souline, dated 21 April 1935, in *The Love Letters of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. by Joanne Glasgow (New York, New York University Press, 1997), p.120. In this same letter, Hall informs Souline about her new novel, which would later become *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936), stating that she was 'possessed by inspiration', *ibid.*

or reason except the magnificence of coming forth into fullness'.⁵⁹ The aim of the first part of 'The Escaped Cock' is to move attention beyond the death of Christ on the cross and to celebrate and acknowledge the risen Lord. The story gives a sense of hope that death is not the end but instead the beginning of a renewed life.⁶⁰ In the second part of the story, Lawrence links the concept of a risen Christ with the tale of the Egyptian God Osiris and his wife Isis.⁶¹ Lawrence illustrates parallels between Christian and non-Christian elements to reveal an ancient cultural universality in the hope of resurrection. Although Hall was not a modernist, like other writers of her era she engaged with similar themes and deployed similar techniques in her own writing.

Hall is typically seen as a writer who was heavily influenced by Christianity and the Bible, but she had experimented with the concept of Buddhist reincarnation in the theosophical comedy novel *A Saturday Life* (1925) and in the tragic short story 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' (1934).⁶² In both of these texts, Hall uses the idea that the self is reborn and migrates from one life to another, which makes it possible for her to explore the fluidity of gender and sexuality, and its connection to an individual's sense of identity. The short story 'Miles' (1924) develops this theme further as its protagonist is able to inhabit both the present time and a Greek mythological world. Miles's ability to travel between different times and places makes it possible for him to avoid establishing an intimate relationship with a woman in the contemporary world, while in his ancient world he is more familiar and comfortable with a male shepherd.⁶³ In addition, Hall's poetry, particularly the Sappho-inspired *The Forgotten Island* (1915), had used mythological worlds to explore homosexuality, but these poems were not deeply religious. Hall is conforming to the

⁵⁹ Lawrence, "The Risen Lord", p.575.

⁶⁰ The resurrection of Christ is not a prominent feature in Hall's writing, but in *The Master of the House* there is a moment when the Curé is preaching to the men of the town about enlisting in the war and Hall writes 'He is leading us on to Jerusalem: "Follow me!" He commands, as He shows us the way through devastation and death to life, "Follow Me, die for Me! Yes, if needs be die that you may be one with My resurrection"' Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.430.

⁶¹ Murdered by his brother, Set, Osiris's body is dismembered and scattered across Egypt. Osiris's wife, Isis, searches for the parts and restores his body, with the exception of his genitals, which she replaces with magic. Osiris is then able to rise from the dead.

⁶² Although it was published in 1934, Hall had started working on 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' around 1925.

⁶³ 'Miles' (1924) was thought to have been one of Hall's unpublished short stories, but it was published in *The Smart Set: A Magazine of Cleverness* Volume 74, Part 4 (New York: Ess Ess Pub. Co., 1924), pp.311-316.

homosexual Arcadian tradition of a mythological land where same-sex love is accepted.⁶⁴ The mythological themed poetry, *A Saturday Life*, 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' and 'Miles' all illustrate a mystical connection between present and past lives, which is also connected to a fluidity of sexual and gender identity.

The Master of the House may appear overtly Christian in its theme and plot, but there is an element of Provençal folklore that is interwoven throughout the novel to illustrate the connectivity between legends and Christian mythology. Eusèbe (who is blind in one eye) tells the young Christophe, Jan and le tout petit Loup stories and legends from the region. When they are walking through vineyards, Eusèbe informs the children about Bacchus and the nymphs who will blind you if you catch a glimpse of them.⁶⁵ Bacchus is one of the most frequently mentioned mythological figures in *The Master of the House*, but his name is mainly used in connection with Eusèbe and his fondness for wine. However, there are parallels between the Greek God and Christ, which Hall could be alluding to in order to subtly reinforce the connection between mythology and religion.⁶⁶ Eusèbe's tales then start to become more sinister as he shares stories that include caves with monstrous bats that will consume human blood, yellow-eyed witches and an imp who sticks pins in the pillows of unsuspecting

⁶⁴ See Byrne R. S. Fone, 'This Other Eden: Arcadia and the Homosexual Imagination': 'I would like to suggest that the Arcadian ideal has been used in the homosexual literary tradition in a fashion that speaks directly to the gay sensibility. The homosexual imagination finds a special value and a particular use for this ideal, employing it in three major ways: 1) to suggest a place where it is safe to be gay: where gay men can be free from the outlaw status society confers upon us, where homosexuality can be revealed and spoken of without reprisal, and where homosexual love can be consummated without concern for the punishment or scorn of the world; 2) to imply the presence of gay love and sensibility in the text that otherwise makes no explicit statement about homosexuality; and 3) to establish a metaphor for certain spiritual values and myths prevalent in homosexual literature and life, namely that homosexuality is superior to heterosexuality and is a divinely sanctioned means to understanding the good and the beautiful, and that the search for the Ideal Friend is one of the major undertakings of the homosexual life'. In *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8:3/4 (1982-3), p.13-14.

⁶⁵ See Note 20.

⁶⁶ In total, Bacchus is named fourteen times in *The Master of the House*. By comparison, Christ is named fifty-eight times in the novel, but on many of these occasions his name is repeated more than once as part of a prayer or a song. For additional information on the similarities between Bacchus and Christ, see Alf H. Walle, *Pagans and Practitioners: Expanding Biblical Scholarship* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing 2010). Walle writes: 'Bacchus shares important similarities with Jesus that could have provided a rationale for merging of the two Gods. Although these similarities seem to be coincidental and do not appear to be the result of cultural diffusion (or stem from any common origin), parallels exist, nonetheless. Thus: Like Jesus, Dionysus is a God in human form, who dies and is resurrected, born of a mortal mother by a divine father. Like Jesus, Dionysus is a god whose tragic passion is re-enacted by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Like Jesus, Dionysus is a miraculous god associated with immortality of the soul. Like Christianity, the religion of Dionysus spread like wildfire'. p. 101. Bacchus has also been associated with homosexuality and effeminacy. See *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, Volume 1*, ed. by Wayne R. Dynes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016) [1990]: 'Dionysus, called Bacchus in Latin, was the son of Zeus and a mortal Semele. When his mother unwisely besought Zeus to reveal himself in his true form, she was incinerated, but the embryo of her son escaped destruction. Zeus then inserted it into his own thigh and carried the child to term. This quality of being "twice born", once from a woman and once from a man, points to the ambiguity of the god, who though male had effeminate traits. In literature and artistic representations he sometimes served as a vehicle for questioning sex roles, otherwise strongly polarized in ancient Greece', pp.318-319.

people.⁶⁷ Intriguingly, some of the legends that Eusèbe describes establish a link between local places and the reality of the Devil and Hell:

And then there was the Pas de l'Agneu Negre, that hoof print of the little black lamb of Satan — it was not a great distance from the Oulo di Set Cat where the seven unholy felines made merry. And if you should chance to be off your guard, you might find yourself drowning in the Gourgarèu Infernau, which, Eusèbe explained, was an aqueduct of hell, and so placed that it constantly trapped pious Christians.⁶⁸

After Christophe's Mother, Marie, discovers that Eusèbe has been telling the children stories, she counters these scary tales with kinder legends of Saints, angels and good Christians. The stories include the Penitence of Mary Magdalene; the tale of three Holy Marys-of-the-sea (Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome and Mary of Clopas) who were joined by Joseph of Arimathea and Saint Sara and how they arrived in Saintes-Maries-sur-la-Mer after a voyage from the Holy Land; and the story of Saint Francis of Assisi and the wolf of Gubbio.⁶⁹

In her research notebook for the novel, Hall categorises these legends as 'bad' and 'kinder', but also notes that they 'are told to C when he is between 5 & 6. Even up to 8, the bad legends make him feel uneasy'.⁷⁰ At a suitably impressionable age, when Christophe and Jan are being exposed to both Biblical and folk tales, Hall illustrates an intertextual and, more importantly, an interchangeable association between Biblical and mythological stories. Hall, in her own fashion, just like Lawrence with the story of Isis and Osiris, draws attention to the universality and commonality of allegorical tales and the themes they explore, whether they be Bible stories or folktales/legends. In fact, the stories that Marie opts to tell Christophe are in part legends. Larissa Juliet Taylor describes the cult of Mary Magdalene in her article 'Apostle to Apostles: The Complexity of Medieval Preaching about Mary Magdalene' (2014) as being 'most popular in France, for it was believed that Mary had played a fundamental

⁶⁷ See Hall, *The Master of the House*, pp.97-99.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.98.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.100-102.

⁷⁰ Hall, 'Notes', with additional inserted notes and correspondence with Harry Treacher, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 4, Folder 4. In addition, in the published version of *The Master of the House*, when Jan is seven years old, he confides to the Curé that he wants to become a priest and describes how he would like to go on a ship like Saint Paul. Hall describes the Curé's reaction: 'The Curé was no fool, and he realized that the Saint [Paul] had but ousted Robinson Crusoe, and that all this fine talk about shipwrecks and gaols sprang in part from a youthful desire for adventure'. Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.72. Whilst *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) conveys a Christian message about man's deliverance, Hall is reinforcing how narratives are intertextual and influence the imagination.

role in converting pagan Gaul to Christianity'.⁷¹ Mary did set out on a pilgrimage, but the details of her time in France are more fiction than fact. In addition, Saint Sara (who is venerated by the Romani community) is also believed to be a version of the Hindu divinity Kali.⁷² As Marie tells her children that Saint Sara was black, an exchange occurs which demonstrates the association between stories and legends:

Then one evening she remembered that those saints had brought with them a devoted female slave, by name Sara, and that Sara had not been white skinned but black:

'Which shows you, my children,' said Marie gravely, 'that we are all equal in the sight of heaven, for that faithful black slave is now also sainted.'

But at this le tout petit Loup clapped his hands: 'And Saint Sara had a lamb,' he broke in with animation, 'and its coat was quite black to match her skin!'

'No,' said Christophe, 'you are thinking of the little black lamb that Eusèbe told us belonged to Satan!'.⁷³

The exchange may project an antiquated notion of racial equality, but it illustrates how there is a fluidity of interpretation between stories and it suggests how easily mythology can evolve through storytelling. This is evidenced in stories about Saint Francis of Assisi, such as the wolf of Gubbio, which is widely regarded as more legend than reality: they are myths rather than factual or historical accounts of the life of the saint. These stories convey an allegorical message that strengthens the principles of Christianity. The type of Christian mythology that Marie shares with the children is ultimately similar to the more fantastical stories of Eusèbe. While the children start to differentiate these stories, Eusèbe continues to interpret situations in the novel through mythological fantasies, which suggests that there is more than

⁷¹ Larissa Juliet Taylor, 'Apostle to Apostles: The Complexity of Medieval Preaching about Mary Magdalene' in *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture: Conflicted Roles*, ed. by Peter Loewen, Robin Waugh, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p.37. Taylor also states of Mary Magdalene: 'By the late Middle Ages her cult had spread throughout Europe and Britain, but it remained most popular in France, where, not surprisingly, the richest portrayals are found'. *ibid.*, p.37.

⁷² See Malgorzata Oleszkienicz-Peralba, 'Saint Sara-La-Kâli: The Romani Black Madonna' in *She Is Everywhere!: An Anthology of Writings in Womanist/Feminist Spirituality: Volume 3*, ed. by Mary Saracino, Mary Beth Moser, (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2005), p.133. Hall's notebook also comments: 'Important Note: In the town of Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, is the church in the crypt of which is buried St. Sara the black hand maiden of the Maries. The same crypt contains an altar to Martha of the Sun. This church was built on the ruins of an oratory [?] by the Maries in honour of the Virgin; the oratory was built on the ruins of a pagan temple. This is a great pilgrimage place; the gypsies congregate there in great numbers and worship at the shrine of St. Sara. After the fate there are great bull fights. The population of Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer are fishers people', Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 4, Folder 4.

⁷³ Hall, *The Master of the House*, pp.100-101.

one way to view the world and its spirituality.⁷⁴ Although Hall was a devout Roman Catholic, her work shows that she was not averse to drawing attention to the fine line separating folklore from Biblical mythology.

Hall's work also questions some intrinsic Christian teachings. In one of her unpublished short stories, 'The Recording Angel' (undated), Hall combines traditional Christian tropes with an unorthodox view of the judgement at the gates of heaven. In the story, an angel reviews the lives of the souls before him, denying entry into heaven to a woman for her vanity. The angel informs her that rather than being sent to Hell, she must return to earth to live another life:

'Someday' replied the angel, 'You will be reborn into the world in order that you may learn compassion. You will suffer many things in your new life. And through suffering grow wise and merciful. You will know pain, poverty, disappointment and old age'.⁷⁵

This judgement is contrary to the Biblical belief that 'man is appointed to die once, and after that to face judgment'.⁷⁶ The Catholic faith rejects the notion of reincarnation, because individuals must live their one life as Christians and not believe that they have multiple opportunities to resolve any moral laxity. Despite the dogmas of her faith, however, Hall believed in spiritualism and regularly attended *séances* to make contact with her first significant lover, Mabel Batten.⁷⁷ 'The Recording Angel' is a fantasy tale rather than an attempt to tackle theological and philosophical questions concerning Christianity, spirituality and reincarnation. It acts as a straightforward morality story with no alternative homosexual reading. Goodness, kindness and charity find themselves rewarded with entry into heaven, but the bad must return to earth to learn humility. Whilst this is a simple premise, the story combines both Catholic and Buddhist values and reveals the conflict between Hall's religion and her belief in spiritualism and reincarnation.

⁷⁴ When business is initially slow for the new shopkeeper, Anatole Khan, Eusèbe suspects that 'Possibly our watchful dragon, la Tarasque, objected to so much insolent browsing; in spite of that Marthe and her holy water!', Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.299. Eusèbe is referring to Saint Martha who tamed a dragon with holy water. Hall's notebook, documents the detail of this legend; see Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 4, Folder 4. Interestingly, towards the end of the twentieth century LGBT theologians started to read the relationship between Saint Martha and Saint Mary of Bethany not as sisterly but erotic; see Nancy L. Wilson, *Our Tribe: Queer Folks, God, Jesus, and the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995).

⁷⁵ Radclyffe Hall, "'The Rechording Angle" [The Recording Angel], holograph notebook 'The Recording Angel', 'Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 20, Folder 6.

⁷⁶ Hebrews 9:27.

⁷⁷ 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.' Leviticus 19:31. See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, p.143. Cline describes how Hall and Una attempted to find catholic priests that would accept their belief in spiritualism and reincarnation.

The Master of the House can be interpreted as one of Hall's most ambitious and controversial examinations of reincarnation, because Christophe's *déjà vu* is linked to the memory of Christ. The novel continues to develop her fascination with the eternal life of the soul, but Hall is directly challenging the values of her faith by suggesting that Christ has been reincarnated – which is a blasphemous idea for a devout Roman Catholic to entertain. Although the Bible predicts the Second Coming of Christ, he will not be reborn but instead will return from Heaven.⁷⁸ As a regular attendee at church, Hall would have heard and recited the Nicene Creed hundreds of times. The creed is a profession of faith affirming Christ's resurrection and his Second Coming:

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered died and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.⁷⁹

The Church maintains that the same Christ who died was resurrected and ascended to Heaven and that the same Christ will return to earth. However, the expression 'He will come again' is ambiguous since it could also suggest that Christ will be reborn. Lawrence recognised and accentuated incongruity between the Church and the Gospels, arguing that the Church focused on the crucifixion of Christ while the scriptures tell of his resurrection. *The Master of the House* offers an alternative examination of Christ's Second Coming, since Hall questions what would happen if Christ (or a Christ-like figure) was born into contemporary society. Just like Lawrence in 'The Escaped Cock', Hall forces readers to review and question their own thoughts on, and assumptions about, the Bible. Hall never explicitly states that Christophe is Christ and as such he could be interpreted as suffering from the Messiah complex. The overriding Christian theme of *The Master of the House* disguises the fact that Hall is presenting a version of Christ's Second Coming that incorporates a form of reincarnation, which was (and is) an accepted belief in other religions and cultures. Hall's hypothesis is that

⁷⁸ 'For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever'. Thessalonians 4:16-17.

⁷⁹ The Nicene Creed, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part One, the Profession of Faith <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm> [accessed: 10 March 2018]

reincarnation is one possible way that Christ may return to earth. Despite this radical take on Christ's Second Coming, *The Master of the House* was criticised for its overtly Biblical style. Yet *The Master of the House* is arguably a fable: it is a warning to contemporary society to be ready for the return of Christ and not to make the same mistakes just because a man appears different to those around him. Christophe's difference is expressed not only through his Christ-like personality, but also by the sexually ambiguous terms of his portrayal.

2.7 Hall and Lawrence: The Sexualisation of Christ

Due to the scandals surrounding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Well of Loneliness*, Lawrence and Hall have gained literary reputations as outspoken novelists primarily concerned with sex and sexuality. In *Love and Sex in D. H. Lawrence* (2015), David Ellis writes:

Ask any reasonably literate members of the general public about Lawrence and they will tell you that his chief interest was in sex. The first thing to say is that this is not a mistake. Sex, or perhaps rather more broadly sex as it interacts with love, was a major concern for Lawrence from the beginning of his writing career.⁸⁰

Whereas Lawrence's reputation rests on a wide body of work, the perception of Hall as a writer about sex and sexuality is based solely on *The Well of Loneliness*. Dellamora states that 'Since the 1970s, the memory of Radclyffe Hall has depended for the most part upon one novel and its place in her work as an activist on behalf of the social rights of women with sexual and emotional ties to other women'.⁸¹ This narrow focus on Hall is one of the reasons why there has been so little critical attention paid to her male characters, and in particular it accounts for the lack of critical interest in the apparently asexual/effeminate Christophe. While generalisations can always be challenged, in this instance they offer an opportunity to explore how Lawrence and Hall consciously depicted the sexuality of their Christ-like characters – with Lawrence focusing on sexual awakening/liberation and Hall writing against her perceived type by exploring the male experience and presenting an asexual/homosexual character.

Lawrence's exploration of a Man (a Christ figure) who has been resurrected in 'The Escaped Cock' primarily follows his sexual awakening. When he meets Madeleine, the Man confesses his relief at no longer being the saviour of millions, because he has realised that his mission prevented him from establishing a more intimate and personal relationship with an individual: 'Yet I would embrace multitudes, I who have never truly embraced even one woman, or one man'.⁸² Lawrence is, as always, attentive to the love between men as well as between men and women, but his story portrays the Man as heteronormative. It is the healing powers of sex with Isis that fully revives the Man's body: 'And his death and his passion of sacrifice were all as nothing to him now, he knew only the crouching fullness of the woman there, the soft white rock of life'.⁸³ Despite the provocative title of the story and

⁸⁰ David Ellis, *Love and Sex in D. H. Lawrence* (Clemson: Clemson University, 2016), xi.

⁸¹ Dellamora, xi.

⁸² D. H. Lawrence, *The Escaped Cock*, (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1973), p.24.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.57.

the representation of a sexualised Christ-like figure, Lawrence is somewhat orthodox in conforming to the Biblical notion that Jesus was celibate during his lifetime since the sexual encounter occurs in the reimagined resurrection. The symbolism of Christ's resurrection affords Lawrence the opportunity to play with the *double entendre* 'I am risen' during the sex scene, but it is also interesting to note that the sex occurs in a mythological Egypt and not in Jerusalem.⁸⁴ Christ's sexualisation happens in a fabular context, rather than in a historically accurate geographical place, which reinforces the fantasy element of Lawrence's story.

One of the challenges facing Hall in her re-telling of the Christ story was how to present a contemporary celibate man without it compromising the credibility of his working-class masculinity. Although Hall's name was associated with obscenity because of *The Well of Loneliness* trial, she had not been sexually explicit (or for that matter particularly obscure) in any of her published writing up to this point in her career.⁸⁵ In fact, her most sexually explicit work would be published after *The Master of the House*. In the short story 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' the Stone Age man (a masculine version of Miss Ogilvy) forces himself upon his female lover:

"No ... no ... " she gasped. For, divining his need, she was weak with the longing to be possessed, yet the terror of love lay heavy upon her. "No ... no ... " she gasped.

But he caught her wrist and she felt the great strength of his rough, gnarled fingers, the great strength of the urge that leapt in his loins, and again she must give that quick gasp of fear, the while she clung close to him lest he should spare her.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p.57.

⁸⁵ At the end of Hall's first published novel, *The Forge* (1924), Hilary Brent confesses to his wife that during their separation: 'I tried to make love to all kinds of women. "After all," I said, "I'm free—" But it didn't work, darling, I couldn't make love, not with the proper conviction. They all saw through me, the women, I mean: I expected they saw you in my eyes'. Radclyffe Hall, *The Forge* (London: Falcon Press, 1952) [1924] p.242. While this has a modern sexual interpretation, Hilary's use of the phrase is probably more old-fashioned in the sense that he paid amorous attention to the women he dated. *The Forge* shares some of its sensibilities and style with the work of Noël Coward. According to Terry Castle, Hall and Coward would have met in the early 1920s: 'If Hall and Coward had not already met through Gabriella Enthoven, they were almost certainly introduced by [Teddie] Gerard in the winter of 1923-24'. Terry Castle, *Noël Coward & Radclyffe Hall: Kindred Spirits* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.20. Hilary's confession within this context suggests a more old-fashioned use of the expression 'make love'. Hilary can be read as a hybrid version of Hall and Coward. Castle argues: 'And each was given, if surreptitiously, to a kind of literary "gesturing" towards the other. ... However covertly or incongruously, "Radclyffe Hall" inhabits the work of Noël Coward, and "Noël Coward" the work of Radclyffe Hall'. *ibid.*, pp.10-11.

⁸⁶ Radclyffe Hall, *Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself* (London: William Heinemann, 1934), p.33. In the unpublished version of 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' Miss Ogilvy is transformed into the body of a young woman. In this version, the sex scene is not as detailed, the focus being on the couple's love and their union as a family: 'she told him softly, "since I have found you it matters nothing, for you are my father, my mother and my lover."/He answered: "I am you – you are me"'. Radclyffe Hall, 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' in *The World and Other Unpublished Works of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. Jana Funke, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.180.

In this instance, Hall describes heterosexual sex as rough and forceful. The woman passively submits, while the Stone Age man (a version of Mrs Ogilvy) dominates. The animalistic sense of sex is further developed in her final novel, *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936), where Hall describes sex between Hannah Bullen and her married lover Michael Pain as fiercely passionate: 'Unmerciful they were the one to the other. Their mating was harsh and unmerciful – a scourge, a relentless combat of bodies. When at last they parted they did not embrace, because neither felt the need to embrace'.⁸⁷ Hall is less explicit than Lawrence in the language she uses to describe sex, but these scenes do contain an anti-romantic element of aggression and dominance. Following on from *The Master of the House*, these scenes demonstrate how progressive Hall's writing became in the 1930s, but one could also argue that she was responding to the expectations placed on her as a writer. In her account of the revisions to 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself', Jana Funke writes:

Hall's decision to revise 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' and to present it as a companion piece to *The Well of Loneliness* when it was first published in 1934 was at least partly a marketing ploy. After the scandal and publicity surrounding the obscenity trials, Hall faced an audience that was eager to read more from the author of the infamous novel about sexual inversion. *The Master of the House* (1932), Hall's first novel to appear after *The Well of Loneliness*, a fable inspired by the life of Christ, was not received well. When it came to publishing the *Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself* collection two years later, Hall catered to her readers' wishes: the prominently placed author's note in which Hall introduced the titular short story as a text about sexual inversion ensured that her audience's expectations were met.⁸⁸

'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself' and *The Sixth Beatitude* both have sex scenes, which might simply have been written to fulfil readers' expectations, but *The Master of the House* contains evidence that Hall's narrative was evolving to integrate the passion and physicality of sex into her work. While *The Well of Loneliness* had included same-sex kisses and the infamous 'and that night they were not divided' metaphor it was not a sexual novel, even though it explored

⁸⁷ Radclyffe Hall, *The Sixth Beatitude* (London: Windmill Press, 1936), p.100. There is a second and a more complex sex scene when Hannah has attracted the attention of Edmund, one of the farm hands who is weak and ill and who is picking hops with her. Edmund forces himself upon her; Hannah initially resists, but out of pity concedes to having sex with him, 'but even as she spoke she was shattered, dissolved, undone, for something had torn at her heart and twisted her very bowels – it was pity', *ibid.*, p.174. The next morning Edmund is found dead having suffered a haemorrhage during the night. In the unpublished short story 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' (1914-15), there is a rape scene between Mark Anthony and his client Rose Robins: 'She tried to scream, but he choked back her cries. She struggled, fighting widely, but he held her in an iron grip. There was blood on her face; he felt it trickle slowly. It reached her mouth. And then – quite suddenly he pushed her from him. She lay there panting, her dress torn, her eyes straining, her body limp and exhausted'. 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' in *The World and Other Unpublished Works of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. Jana Funke, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.53.

⁸⁸ Jana Funke 'Introduction' in *The World and Other Unpublished Works of Radclyffe Hall*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.32.

sexuality.⁸⁹ By contrast, *The Master of the House*, a novel that presents a man trying to live a pure Christian life in contemporary society, marks a fundamental change in Hall's representation of sexual desire and sexuality in her novels.

Christophe's heterosexual temptation comes in the form of Eusèbe's granddaughter, Æliana, who is described as looking like Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, grain, crops, fertility and motherly relationships.⁹⁰ Dismissed from her job, because of a sexual indiscretion with her employer's married son, Æliana arrives at her Grandfather's house to stay with him. Hall's description of Æliana is her most sensual and sexually charged portrayal of any of her female characters:

Tall and deep-bosomed she stood before him, making the shop seem even more squalid, making her own humble clothes look strange in conjunction with so superb a body. The curves of her breasts were generous and firm as though fashioned to soothe and sustain creation, the long lines of her limbs were supple yet strong, her head small and well poised, her lips full and ardent, her dark eyes flecked with elusive lights that at times made the eyes themselves appear golden. For the rest her glossy black hair waved low on a wide and unusually placid brow — the brow and the mouth were a contradiction. But Eusèbe saw the girl as a whole, saw only a creature who seemed to belong to an age when men carved the lovely immortals, and the blood throbbed with pride through his aged veins, since was he not in part her begetter?

'My seed she has sprung from, my seed!' he thought, continuing to peer at Æliana.⁹¹

The description has a Freudian Madonna-Whore quality, in which Æliana is both a sexual 'creature' and a goddess. Eusèbe is momentarily suspicious of Æliana's version of the events that led to her dismissal: 'Was there something that she was hiding from him? Some matter that she did not wish him to sift? Then he shrugged the unwelcome suspicion away'.⁹² In awe of Æliana's beauty, Eusèbe reminds himself that she exists because of his role in creating a family. The euphemism of Eusèbe's 'seed'/semen is quite *risqué* for Hall, but its meaning also

⁸⁹ Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago, 1990) [1968], p.316.

⁹⁰ Hall, *The Master of the House*, 'Tell me, what does Æliana look like?' she [Marie] once asked, for she knew that he had been to Arles to see her.' 'She resembles Ceres,' Eusèbe replied, so that naturally Marie was none the wiser', p.392. For a comprehensive study of Ceres, see Barbette Stanley Spaeth, *The Roman Goddess Ceres* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

⁹¹ Hall, *The Master of the House*, pp.394-5.

⁹² *ibid.*, p.395.

relates to Æliana's association with Ceres.⁹³ The connection to fertility is further emphasised by Æliana's arrival in May:

Thus it happened that Æliana arrived at Saint Loup in the month of plentiful cherries, in the month when green almonds swell on their boughs, in the month when the sea is perhaps at its bluest, in the month when the mingled scents of the maquis on the hills most strangely disturb the senses. In this month of our Lady, Æliana arrived, more akin to the pagan things of the earth than she was to the gentle-faced Christian Virgin.⁹⁴

The season reinforces the impression that it is a time of natural transient beauty and fruitful reproduction, which is symbolic of Æliana's earthiness and paganism; she is the antithesis of the Virgin Mary.⁹⁵ In 'The Escaped Cock', Lawrence evokes a similar association between Isis, nature and the senses:

Plum blossom blew from the trees, the time of the narcissus was past, anemones lit up the ground and were gone, the perfume of bean-field was in the air. All changed, the blossom of the universe changed its petals and swung round to look another way. The spring was fulfilled, a contact was established, the man and the woman were fulfilled of one another, and departure was in the air.⁹⁶

The connection between pagan female sexuality and fleeting natural beauty is remarkably similar for both Lawrence and Hall in their depictions of the seduction/temptation of their Christ-like figures. Whereas Isis recognises an equal in the Man (she initially assumes he is

⁹³ Hall had not used the seed/semen metaphor before in her writing, but it is repeated a number of times in *The Master of the House*. When Christophe is born: 'Towards dusk Marie Bénédit gave birth to a son; and after the midwife had cleansed his limbs and swathed him in flannel she took him to his mother, while Jôusè stood gaping at this sacrament of life which he had raised up through the seed of his loins —too confounded for speech he must just stand gaping'. Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.18. The metaphor is used again when Goundran, the fisherman, has a daughter: 'There she was, an actual bit of his body, yet a creature whose beauty he thought so amazing that whenever he touched her soft white limbs he could scarcely believe that his crude seed had made her, and must worship this transfiguration of himself, for when all was said and done Goundran was human'. *ibid.*, p.288. The coastal, rural working-class men that Hall portrays in *The Master of the House* have a primitive view of their role in conception, but they each view fatherhood (and grand-parenting) in miraculous/religious terms. Æliana is an immortal goddess, while Jôusè and Goundran use the words 'sacrament' and 'transfiguration' to describe their children, words which have Christian meanings that relate to the visible presence of God. Marital sex that results in a baby is viewed positively in the novel.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp.395-396.

⁹⁵ See David W. Machacek, Melissa M. Wilcox, *Sexuality and the World's Religions* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003) 'Sexuality permeates Paganism in two main ways: first by redefining gender roles through promoting feminist ideals and sexual freedom and second by embodying these attitudes in lifestyle decisions that lie outside the social mainstream. The definition of gender roles is a crucial part of the Pagan view of sexuality. The struggle to break out of gender-based societal roles intertwined with the struggle to break free of limiting and sometimes repressive sexual norms. Many Pagans feel that their religion offers a safe haven for the expression of their innate sexuality, which many majority religions censure and condemn'. p.299.

⁹⁶ Lawrence, *The Escaped Cock*, p.59.

the spirit of her dead husband), Æliana only wants to seduce Christophe out of boredom.⁹⁷ Surveying both Christophe and Jan, Æliana notes 'How unusual they were, so virginal, so simple, and then so fiercely loyal to each other'.⁹⁸ In a novel whose plot is predetermined by the life of Christ, the expectation would be that Æliana is a Mary Magdalene figure, a woman whom Christophe would save from her sinful ways/tendencies. However, Hall takes a different approach with Æliana since she acts as a sexual predator and a temptation for Christophe.

Uniquely in Hall's writing of women, Æliana embodies an archetypal *femme fatale* style of femininity. The nature of Æliana's character type and her entrance into the novel ensure that she is immediately recognisable to the reader as a woman whose purpose is to corrupt men with her beauty and sensuality. She is one of Hall's most unusual portrayals of femininity, since she represents a kind of female sexuality that stereotypically is associated with heterosexual masculine desires. Hall had written about beautiful and pretty women before (Susan Brent in *The Forge* and Angela Crossby in *The Well of Loneliness*), but these were women who had married upper-class wealthy men and who had refined their natural beauty. Æliana is young, working-class and has an erotic sexuality, which is a significant departure from the women that Hall had previously written about in her novels. Hall would return to this earthy passionate working-class woman in *The Sixth Beatitude*, but that novel's protagonist, Hannah, is more compassionate and vulnerable than Æliana.

The fundamental purpose of Æliana in the novel is to demonstrate that Christophe is a sexual being, with the emphasis being placed on his heterosexuality. Yet Hall the writer is at odds with Hall the Catholic when it comes to sexualising her Christ figure. Having successfully built up a degree of sexual tension and frustration as Christophe falls for Æliana's charms and games, Hall has the dilemma of writing a potential sex scene in Chapter XXXVII of the novel. The manuscript pages of this chapter have a higher number of alterations and rewritings compared to Hall's other chapters. Hall's struggle with this scene is recorded in Una's diary of 11 August 1931:

John [Hall] worked till nearly four o'clock and came down disheartened, completely blocked at the place where Christophe goes to meet Æliana. She went off to bed exhausted and I prayed to Our Lady that before morning my mind should receive some guide as to where she was wrong and what she should do, and by six this morning the whole thing seemed perfectly clear to

⁹⁷ On a number of occasions, Isis queries if the Man is Osiris: *ibid*, 'But the woman was pondering, that this was the lost Osiris. She felt it in the quick of soul. And her agitation was intense'. p.45; "'Stay! I am sure you are Osiris!" she said'. p.46.; and "'And art thou not Osiris?" she asked'. p.47.

⁹⁸ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.397.

me and I found on going into her room at nine that it had come to her exactly the same, so that mine was merely a reassuring confirmation.⁹⁹

The reliance upon divine intervention was never too far away from either Una's or Hall's consciousness and the account documents how faith was an integral part of their lives, but it also captures Hall's uncertainty at depicting the scene between Æliana and Christophe in Chapter XXXVII. The chapter contains one of the pivotal scenes in the novel, since it demonstrates that Christophe is an adult: he appears heterosexual, but he is able to reject sexual temptation. However, the scene raises questions, doubts and hints about Christophe's sexuality and explains why he has been viewed as asexual or homosexual. The published version of the scene has Christophe initially rejecting Æliana's sexual advances:

And now she [Æliana] no longer knew what she was saying, could no longer pause to consider her words for the lash of the primitive impulse that drove her — a creature of rich blood and urgent desires, untamed, unregenerate, and crudely insistent. At that moment something died in his heart. His love for her died, but into its place leapt an impulse as primitive as her own, and he kissed her lips roughly, despairingly.

'Hold me closer... closer, Christophe;' she whispered.

He flung out his arms with a queer wide gesture, and even as he did so he cried aloud, for his hands seemed transfixed by shafts of pain, so that his extended arms remained rigid: 'I cannot;' he said wildly, 'Æliana, I cannot!'¹⁰⁰

In both *The Master of the House* and 'The Escaped Cock' the Christ characters are portrayed as sexually passive when initialising sexual intimacy: Æliana seduces Christophe and Isis massages the Man with oils. Whether intentionally or not, neither Hall nor Lawrence presents a sexually assertive Christ-like figure. Instead, they present Christ's celibacy as something that needs to be breached by another person (in both cases a more sexually experienced woman), suggesting both his virginity and vulnerability.¹⁰¹ There is also a sense that even though Hall and Lawrence are sexualising a Christ figure in their fables, they are still conforming to an idealised notion of Christ the (gentle)man, in as much as his masculinity is not presented as sexually aggressive, dominant or predatory. Where Hall and Lawrence differ is in the outcome of the intimacy. Christ's arousal in 'The Escaped Cock' leads to sexual

⁹⁹ Harry Ransom Center, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, 26.3, Una Troubridge's Diary, Tuesday 11 August 1931, Vol. 5, July 30, 1931-Sept. 17, 1931.

¹⁰⁰ Hall, *The Master of the House*, pp.422-423.

¹⁰¹ In one of the draft versions of the chapter Hall describes Christophe's internal thoughts about Æliana: 'She was stronger than he was despite his great strength — ~~her weakness was~~ the appeal of her ~~weakness~~ beauty was as strong as the life, ~~as the life that~~ she was life, all the years that had gone before were but as dreams years'. Radclyffe Hall, "Vol. VIII," Ch. 35 to Ch. 38, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 2.

intercourse, but the sex is described in a rather perfunctory manner: 'So he knew her, and was at one with her'.¹⁰² The focus of the scene is more on the seduction of Christ by Isis. By contrast, Æliana ignites Christophe's passion for a moment and he becomes 'primitive' with her, but then he experiences pains in his arms and hands.¹⁰³ In Hall's draft manuscript, the language is slightly more sexually suggestive: 'And now she [Æliana] was speaking almost wildly ... telling him of his manly passions of his flame in his blood, pleading on behalf of his body trying to draw his hand on her breast'.¹⁰⁴ Although Hall had written about the physicality of breasts before, most notably in the famous mirror scene in *The Well of Loneliness*, they had not featured in her writing before now as being associated with sex or lust/passion.¹⁰⁵ The reference to Æliana's breast was removed in the final version; this illustrates how Hall was consciously modifying the scene to remove any potential salaciousness or indeed to avoid presenting her Christ-figure in an excessively sexual manner. Christophe's reaction to physical intimacy may appear melodramatic, but in Hall's draft manuscript, she had written that Christophe's hands would bleed: "I cannot, ~~touch you~~ – my hands oh, my hands, my agonised hands" he wailed they are ~~and he screamed~~, then he suddenly ~~[?] sobbing they bleed~~ screamed, my hands they bleed suddenly ~~[?] sobbing my hands are wounded they bleed they are bleeding for you" he said wildly~~.¹⁰⁶ Christophe's reaction to touching a woman suggests that it is unnatural for him and that he is punished for exploring intimacy.

The true relationship at the heart of *The Master of the House* is Jan's unrequited love for his cousin Christophe. Despite the fact that Hall intimates that Jan is also in love/lust with Æliana, his jealousy and attention is, for the most part, focused on Christophe. After Æliana's departure, Jan struggles to ask Christophe if he has lost his virginity:

¹⁰² Lawrence, *The Escaped Cock*, p.58.

¹⁰³ See notes 33, 35 and 36, which document the physical and mental impact of writing *The Master of the House* on Hall.

¹⁰⁴ This text is crossed out in the manuscript Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 2.

¹⁰⁵ See Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*: 'That night she stared at herself in the glass; and even as she did so she hated her body with its muscular shoulders, its small compact breasts, and its slender flanks of an athlete. All her life she must drag this body of hers like a monstrous fetter imposed on her spirit. This strangely ardent yet sterile body that must worship yet never be worshipped in return by the creature of its adoration. She longed to maim it, for it made her feel cruel; it was so white, so strong and so self-sufficient; yet withal so poor and unhappy a thing that her eyes filled with tears and her hate turned to pity. She began to grieve over it, touching her breasts with pitiful fingers, stroking her shoulders, letting her hands slip along her straight thighs — Oh, poor and most desolate body!', pp.187-188. This scene is often cited as one of the reasons why *The Well of Loneliness* can be read as a transsexual novel; see Jay Prosser "'Some Primitive Thing conceived in a Turbulent Age of Transition": The Transsexual Emerging from *The Well in Palatable Poison: Critical Perspectives on The Well of Loneliness* ed. by Laura Doan and Jay Prosser (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp.129-144.

¹⁰⁶ Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 2.

But Christophe and Jan when alone together avoided all mention of Æliana, for their tongues would grow stiff at the thought of her name. And this silence of theirs it was that betrayed them more completely than any words could have done, so that each had divined the other's secret, and having divined it must feel ashamed, as though he had wilfully spied on his brother.

It was Jan who spoke first — from sheer desperation. They were walking towards the vineyards one evening when he stopped abruptly and faced his friend: 'Christophe... it is about Æliana. I cannot help knowing about you two before she went off with Beauvais to Paris. I heard many things but I would not believe... I did not want to believe, because...' He hesitated, flushed and went on, 'because, as I think you have long known, I also... but for me it was a most deadly sin. I have taken a solemn vow to our Lord that I will be pure when I enter His service. You were free and I feared — ah, but how much I feared — that her coming across our path might divide us.'

They stared at each other through the gathering dusk. Then: 'Nothing can ever divide us,' said Christophe.

'But she might have bred hatred between you and me,' Jan persisted, and this thought seemed to him so fearful that he gripped Christophe's hand as once long ago he had gripped it on those same hills in their childhood. And now, even as then, he felt vaguely afraid: 'I do not want to lose you,' he murmured.

After this they turned and walked on more slowly, each engrossed by his thoughts, and when next Jan spoke his voice sounded indifferent: 'Eh bien, she has gone. She will never come back — she has ceased to exist.'

But Christophe was not deceived by those words, divining the trouble that lay beneath them.¹⁰⁷

The purpose of this scene is to clarify that Christophe is still celibate after his meeting with Æliana, but the reader is already aware that they did not have sex, and consequently the exchange acts to confirm Jan's feelings for his cousin. In contrast to the upper-class theatrical homosexuality of Jonathan Brockett in *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall presents a subtle version of working-class male homosexuality in which the unspoken and the covert articulate the feelings of love and desire. In the published version, Christophe is aware that Jan's jealousy towards Æliana is rooted in something far deeper, which he recognises but fails to fully understand or verbalise in his own consciousness.

In the manuscript version of this scene, there is a greater sense of physical and emotional contact between the cousins:

Then one evening when they were alone on the hills Jan ~~turned~~ [?] [?] abruptly and faced his cousin: "I cannot help knowing — because it is you ... I heard many things, but I ~~did not~~ could not believe ... I did not want to believe because ... because I also ... " he hesitated, flushing painfully "~~for him it was~~ sinful "but for me it was a sin ... I ~~have already~~ I have ~~would~~ secretly taken a vow to our ~~Lady~~ Lord that I will enter this priesthood without stain. You were

¹⁰⁷ Hall, *The Master of the House*, pp.428-429.

free – yet I feared, [~~she~~] ah but [?] horribly I feared that Æliana might come between us.”

Christophe looked into his ~~humble~~ tormented eyes: “Nothing ~~could~~ can ever come between us” [?] [?] [?] he said slowly :”For I think that in some [?] queer way that we are ~~one~~ the same – I think

~~For a moment their hands clung strongly together. Thus Jan, had to smile – that I know very well know.~~

Then we have known this from the first ... we ~~belonged to each other~~ when belong to each other ... I do not know why ~~how~~ I do not know ~~why~~ how ... but I feel this we belong. He ~~Christophe~~ held out his hand and Jan grasped it firmly.

~~Jan held out his hand ... and Christophe took it.~~

“Yes Yes – we belong and that is ~~why she [?] had to be spoken about~~ her it is better there should be no secrets between us. Well now she had gone – it is all at an end I have spoken had to tell you speak and now let us ~~try to~~ forget as ~~her~~ she has gone away – she will never return ~~anymore~~ anymore it is over?

Christophe said softly: “My brother and my friend” ~~our love is [?]~~. And Jan answered the love of [?]

~~Jan.~~ But he knew this for Jan it was far from over.¹⁰⁸

In Hall’s draft, the men hold hands and look into each other’s eyes; Christophe acknowledges that they are the same and that they belong together. The word ‘queer’ was clearly removed from the published version, but its use shows a greater insight into the construction of Christophe’s character. In this context, the word ‘queer’ could mean that Christophe and Jan are both celibate young men who share similar Christian ethics, which may seem out of keeping with their working-class origins. However, throughout her work Hall had also attached the word ‘queer’ to homosexuality, following a social trend which was increasingly identifying the inverted as queer.¹⁰⁹ When Christophe rejects Æliana his arms react in a ‘queer’ and involuntary manner as he pushes away a woman for attempting to engage him in sex. The draft version of the scene between Christophe and Jan has a homosexual overtone, which Hall revised in the typed version of the manuscript:

~~It was Jan who spoke first. They were walking on the hills as they constantly did these autumn evenings; and because he was not with embarrassment and selfconscious shame he spoke abruptly.~~

“Christophe ... it is about Æliana. I cannot help knowing about you two before she went off to Paris with Beauvais, ~~because it is you.~~ I heard many things but I would not believe ... I did not want to believe, because ...”

¹⁰⁸ Radclyffe Hall, Ch. 38 to Ch. 39, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

¹⁰⁹ See Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*. As a child, Stephen is called queer: ‘Collins became more affectionate after the incident of the housemaid’s knee; she could not but feel a new interest in the child whom she and the cook had now labelled as ‘queer’, and Stephen basked in much surreptitious petting, and her love for Collins grew daily’. p.20. Stephen’s reaction to Brockett is that ‘she would feel a queer little sense of outrage’. p.227.

he ~~stammered~~ hesitated, and flushed painfully, then continued "because, as I think you have [?] [?] [?] ~~because~~ I also ... but for me it was a most deadly sin. I have taken a solemn vow to Our Lord that I will be ~~with his service~~ quite stainless when I enter his service. ~~be stainless when I enter his priesthood.~~ You were free and I feared, ah, but ~~horribly~~ how much I feared ... that her coming ~~into our lives~~, across our paths might ~~part~~ divide us."

~~They stood still and faced each other in the dusk, then stared at each other, they were both~~ through the gathering dusk, then Christophe said slowly: "~~And~~ Nothing can ~~part~~ divide us."

"~~But Yet~~ But she might have bred hatred between you and me." Jan persisted ~~who mutter stammered~~, and this/thought ~~was~~ seemed to him so ~~awful~~ fearful, so fearful that he grasped gripped Christophe's hand, ~~holding it tightly~~ as once long ago he had ~~held~~ gripped it on those same hills, ~~he had~~ in their childhood; I remember [?] felt this [?] same way as a child after I had ~~stuck at a couleuvre and then queer red make came~~ and now as then felt he [?] ~~strange~~ vaguely afraid: 'I do not want to lose you.'" He muttered. "~~I sometimes feel sometimes a very terrible thing ...~~" he faltered, "~~I feel that one day I must lose you;~~" he breathed, "~~I remember quite well that I felt it that evening years ago when struck at a couleuvre, with my stick and when that queer mark red mark came on your back ...~~"

Christophe answered: "Yet I now that you cannot lose me."

After this they turned and walked on in silence, each engrossed by this thoughts, and when next Jan spoke his voice sounded dull and almost indifferent: ~~was quite steady calm and free from emotion:~~ "Eh bien, she has gone; she will never come back; it is therefore over, for both of us ~~and done with ... thank God~~ finished."

But Christophe heard far more than those ~~cautious~~ words, and he knew that ~~indeed it was far from over for Jan this thing was not~~ it was far from finished.¹¹⁰

In this heavily corrected typescript, Hall is continuing to edit and remove traces of intimacy between Christophe and Jan. The intensity of the handholding and mutual gazing has been reduced, which in turn has removed some of the homoromanticism from the scene. The conversation always ends with Christophe's awareness that for Jan the matter is not entirely resolved, and that something remains unspoken between the men.

Post-Æliana, the unspoken, the unsaid and the unacknowledged increasingly become part of the on-going relationship between Jan and Christophe. The inner turmoil of the cousins is a combination of denial and revelation as they attempt to comprehend and process their feelings. In Jan's case, he starts to focus on the external devastation and destruction of the war as a means of reconciling his own complex emotions and sexual desires:

But now Jan was growing hourly more restless. He could no longer study, nor eat, nor sleep, as the galling frustrations imposed on his flesh began to find for themselves a new channel. In great bitterness of spirit he passed his days,

¹¹⁰ Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

but his sleepless nights were even more bitter; filled with longings, and with hatreds no less intense, so that when he knelt clasping his crucifix in agonized prayer, it would seem like a weapon.

‘Cleanse me even as by fire,’ he would pray, the while he conjured up visions of war and the flames and the blood and the lusts of war, lest he turn to his lusting for Æliana.

Such nights were leaving their mark upon Jan, his face had grown thin to emaciation. A kind of keen misery burnt in his eyes and shook in his words of fierce condemnation — he could now seldom speak except to condemn, and hearing him Christophe would think of the shadow.¹¹¹

Hall continues to present and maintain the socially accepted notion that Jan’s sexual frustration is directed towards Æliana. However, Jan’s distress and anxiety appear disingenuous, because he is a heterosexual man who is overly concerned that he is attracted to women. Jan’s ambition to become a priest will inevitably include an oath of clerical celibacy, but this will not preclude or prevent his natural sexual attraction to others and his urges. While Christianity becomes a means of suppressing his feelings, rather subversively, Jan’s praying and the ‘clasping [of] his crucifix’ has a phallic quality that suggests his devotions have replaced masturbation. Hall plays with euphemism because the crucifix becomes a weapon which relates to Jan’s craving to go to war, but it could also equally mean something more sexual. This description is not in Hall’s manuscript, but appears in her typescript as she starts to formulate Jan’s obsession with praying:

And now Jan was growing hourly more restless. He could no ~~neither~~ longer study, nor eat, nor sleep as the stern frustrations imposed on his flesh broke loose and found for themselves a new channel. In great bitterness of spirit he passed his days, ~~while~~ but his these sleepless nights were even more bitter, filled with longings and hatreds, that were no less intense, ~~his bronze crucifix became a weapon clasped in hands convulsed by their will to avenge. When he spoke of war in the Holy Land his words were even more violent than the Curé, for the blood ran more fiercely through his veins; and hearing him Christophe would think of the shadow.~~ So that when he knelt clasping his ~~bronze~~ crucifix in ~~his~~ those brown veined hands it would seem like a weapon. “Cleanse me even by fire, as by blood,” he would pray ~~with his thoughts~~ while he conjured up versions of war, ~~of~~ and the flames and the wounds and the lusts of war, lest he turn to ~~lusting the lust~~ his lusting for Æliana.¹¹²

In this version, Jan’s prayer rituals are more prescriptive and descriptive, and this removes the possibility of alternative readings. Most notably the detail of the bronze crucifix becomes

¹¹¹ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.430.

¹¹² Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

autonomous in her final version, allowing the readers to imagine their own crosses and its meaning.

It is unusual in Hall's writing for her not to describe or attach some detail to a crucifix.¹¹³ Jan's obsessive behaviour is a physical and psychological attempt to suppress his sexual desires. The solution to his dilemma is war; this might appear contrary to the ethos of his religion, but war epitomises extreme masculinity and the war-time emphasis on bonding, physical strength and heroism also allows for the expression of homoerotic feeling. Jan cannot envisage his war experience without Christophe and tries to persuade his cousin to join him in the war. The war offers Jan a legitimate space in which the closeness of his relationship with Christophe can develop and intensify. Christophe's concerns about going to war are initially more theological in their foundation:

What would happen if he, Christophe, should refuse to go to the war, should refuse to listen to Jan? Would he then be denying his oneness with God? But surely God was not war but peace... the creator of a peace that man brought to destruction. Why had nobody thought of the misery of God, the pain of God? That was it, God's pain. God was not pain yet he could not escape it because of this terrible suffering oneness. How atrocious then to add to God's pain, to add to God's wounds — God Who could not die.¹¹⁴

War is counterintuitive to the concept of God and Christianity, but ultimately Christophe cannot bring himself to abandon Jan:

Then someone spoke, and he knew that voice. Whose voice was it? Perhaps he himself was speaking: 'You must keep beside Jan for a little while, Christophe, until....' The words blurred and drifted away, as though they were being drawn back into distance.¹¹⁵

The voice of God or Christophe's consciousness/desire coaxes him to go to war with Jan. In Hall's draft manuscript, she is more explicit in detailing Christophe's desire to be with Jan:

"Jan it is Jan, it is Jan I shall need, keep near him. I shall need" the heard voice would begin again. [...] And one the night came when Christophe sprang up heard himself answer this voice amazed confounded because of what he was saying "Where he goes I will go — where he is I am — yes always even [?] the

¹¹³ Hall generally attaches some form of attribute to the description of crucifixes. For example: the material — 'round his neck hung a little gilt crucifix and a medal of the Virgin Mary.' *Adam's Breed*, p.305.; its quality — 'Above a tubular iron stove hung a cheap crucifix, while upon the desk stood a garish statue of the Madonna.' *The Master of the House*, p.65.; and its purpose — 'After all, the crucifixes sold well; quite a number of wounded soldiers bought them.' *ibid.*, p.387.

¹¹⁴ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.434.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.434.

end – and beyond – the end which is the beginning.” ~~Jan it is Jan — it is Jan~~
~~are [?] shall need”.~~¹¹⁶

This proclamation to stay with Jan reveals a far deeper desire than the published version. In Hall’s manuscript, Christophe’s commitment to being with Jan exceeds that of marriage vows, because their attachment will continue after death. In Hall’s manuscripts Christophe is aware that his bond with Jan has started to change. Whilst there is a possibility that this shift in feeling is part of their developing connection as cousins, the unspoken bond between the two men appears to have morphed from affectionate family friendship into a form of unconditional unspoken romantic love. Christophe is acknowledging his need to be with Jan, to have him near and to follow him in this world and the next. Hall is using Christophe’s sexual naivety to enable him to articulate his feelings towards Jan without fully recognising or acknowledging his homosexuality. Although the draft manuscript contains some ambiguity, Hall revises this declaration in the typed version:

He ~~spun~~ sat round for surely someone had spoken; and this was no voice inside his own head, not this time, he felt sure that the voice was external. It was speaking again yet the room was empty; “Christophe Bénédict keep beside Jan. Where he goes you must go, you must keep beside Jan, beside ...” The words drifted into a blur and then ceased. Christophe crept towards the bed shaking from head to foot he lay down covering his eyes. When next he looked up the sun was streaming into the room through the uncurtained attic window ... it was morning.¹¹⁷

In this typed version there is a significant change from Christophe making his own decision to follow Jan to war, to him receiving divine instruction to stay with Jan. The implication is that it is not Christophe’s desire to be with Jan that motivates his choice to go to war, but instead a more celestial force that commands him to stay with Jan. The revision suggests a moral and spiritual guidance from God, in the same way that Joan of Arc received heavenly instructions. Hall revised this section again in her typed version with the handwritten note:

“Jan, it is Jan ... it is Jan;” he prayed. “~~Christ~~ Have [?] pity upon him and heal his boldness.”

Thus someone spoke [?] in a voice he knew, this he recognised as being familiar, and he remembered if he have speaking himself, or if [?] [?] [?] [?] this voice belonged to another; humbled [?] he felt neither puzzled nor afraid, for his mind seemed to soar far beyond all fear, for [?] its own [?] [?] of reasoning.

¹¹⁶ Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 6, Folder 4.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

“You must keep beside Jan” The words sounded quite near yet came
#[-]#[-] where he goes you must follow for a little while, Christophe, because
you also are the love of God”

“Who loves the world” Christophe answered, simply.¹¹⁸

Hall reworked this section to remove or reduce any sense of homoromanticism. The command to follow Jan into war is dutiful, because Christophe is following God’s instructions rather than his heart. These revisions demonstrate an awareness on Hall’s part that the relationship between Christophe and Jan was too obviously homosexual in her written manuscript.

In the published version of *The Master of the House*, Hall includes one scene that enables her to express a legitimate and genuine bond of love between Christophe and Jan. During their military training, Christophe and Jan suddenly realise they might die fighting in the war. It is a moment of revelation, shock and clarity for the pair and Hall describes how: ‘Their eyes met, Christophe’s pale and bright and tormented, Jan’s dark and disturbed by the rising anger. Then a fearful thought stuck like a lash on Jan’s mind – ah, but no, not Christophe, the man he loved’.¹¹⁹ Although she is openly discussing love between men, Hall has made it socially acceptable, because they are cousins who have grown up together.¹²⁰ The love Jan has for Christophe is valid and appropriate, but it also has a homosexual subtext. However, Christophe remains blind to the fact that Jan loves him with such intensity. Christophe is presented as a heterosexual man, but the subtext of the novel suggests that he is homosexual and unable to fully recognise or verbalise his love for Jan.

In contrast to Lawrence who could present an active heterosexual Christ figure (within a fable context), Hall could not portray a sexually active homosexual man, let alone the figure of Christ as a gay man. After the scandal surrounding the homosexual nature of *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall attempted to signify Christophe’s heterosexuality to the reader by including a (failed) sex scene with Æliana. However, Christophe’s rejection of Æliana and the increased intensity of the relationship with Jan points to a queer subtext in the published novel that both Margaret Lawrence and Dellamora identified in their discussions of *The Master of the House*. The manuscript and typescript of *The Master of the House* reveal displays of affection between Christophe and Jan which Hall revised before publication, to ensure that obvious homosexual feelings were not overtly present in the published novel,

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Hall, *The Master of the House*, p.441.

¹²⁰ The concept of love or physical intimacy between cousins was not that far-fetched for Hall, as she had sexual relationships with two of her American female cousins. See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, ‘From her early poems and later letters it seems that her next two relationships with her cousins Jane and Dolly focused on physical passion’. Cline, p.43.

but suggestions of them still remain. *The Master of the House* demonstrates Hall's awareness of the subtleties connected to expressions of suppressed and unspoken male homosexual love.

2.8 Conclusion

The Master of the House has been neglected in Hall's *oeuvre*, but this Chapter has presented evidence that has contextualised the novel's theme within a comparative literary framework and revealed the homoromantic subtext of the novel. The remarkably similar experiences of Hall and Lawrence leading up to the composition of their Christ stories illustrates that a reengagement with Christianity was a feature of both middlebrow and Modernist writing. In both cases, Hall and Lawrence explore the tension between sexuality and spirituality in settings that connect mythology to Catholicism. After *The Well of Loneliness* scandal, *The Master of the House* was a retribution novel for Hall, an opportunity to prove that she was a moral and religious woman and consequently the tone differs from her previous work. Gerald Gould's review of *The Master of the House* senses that Hall is not revealing Christophe's true nature and articulates his difficulty in understanding or relating to the character. It is a response which appears to have remained constant with the continued avoidance in discussing *The Master of the House*. Only Margaret Lawrence and later Dellamora (to a far lesser extent) recognise that Christophe is an invert. Acknowledging Christophe's sexuality raises more troubling questions about the reasons why *The Master of the House* has been neglected: is it because of Christophe's effeminacy or the fact that Hall wrote a gay male homoromantic story that is contrary to the common perception of her as a lesbian writer? My own aim has been to establish Hall as a humanitarian queer writer. Lawrence appeared to have more freedom to depict his Christ-like Man as an active heterosexual male in 'The Escaped Cock', but he does this within a fabular/mythological context and a Goddess seduces his protagonist. The Man's sexual awakening in 'The Escaped Cock' counteracts (or corrects) his previous spirituality. By contrast, Hall tells her story within a contemporary working-class coastal area and attempts to represent a spiritual working-class man who appears to be heterosexual. Hall was criticised for the overtly religious theme of the novel, but there is a mythological presence in *The Master of the House* which offers an alternative reading/interpretation of events and suggests that all is not as it appears in the story. Hall uses the figure of Christ to distract us from the novel's homosexual undertones. The manuscript and typescript of *The Master of the House* offer a unique insight into Hall's writing process and her conscious decision to write out a more explicit homosexual element in Christophe's nature. While Christophe may never understand or act upon his sexual desires (his purpose is more spiritual within the context of the novel), he remains like many of Hall's characters, a man who is different – and it is this difference and the treatment of it which needs to be foregrounded. Accepting *The Master of the House* as a gay male novel is a step towards widening the contexts in which Hall is studied.

Chapter Three: Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the significance of the life and legacy of the fifteenth-century female French military leader and Roman Catholic Saint Joan of Arc on the life and work of Radclyffe Hall. Born in England in 1880, Hall identified her lesbianism by the contemporary sexologist's terminology of congenital invert. Over time she developed and adopted a female masculine persona and renamed herself John. According to Judith Halberstam, Hall's female masculinity was not unusual for a wealthy and independent butch lesbian woman, because she was part of a wide community of female masculine women, some of whom adopted varying degrees of masculine dress, hairstyles and names.¹ In her seminal book *Female Masculinity* (1998), Halberstam contextualises the production of Hall's writing alongside developments and trends in contemporary female masculinity, but despite her thorough examination the resurgence in the popularity of the cross-dressing Joan of Arc as a historical, religious and cultural figure is overlooked in her research. Hall was a devout, educated and cultured Roman Catholic, who would have been aware of Joan of Arc's existence. Yet the connection between Joan of Arc and the work and life of Hall has been almost entirely neglected by literary scholars. Instead, Hall's female masculine identity has largely been explored in relation to the male role models she admired: Oscar Wilde, Noël Coward and Jesus Christ.² Whilst these male role models are useful in understanding the consciously constructed elements of Hall's masculinised identity, they have also perpetuated the assumption that female masculinity is a reflection of social masculinity. Mindful that Halberstam concludes her chapter on Hall with the statement that 'Much work remains to be done on masculine women who lived before the late twentieth century', this chapter will demonstrate that Joan of Arc, who was the best and most formative example of female masculinity available to Hall in her day, was also an influence on her life and work.³

¹ Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004) [1998]. In her Introduction Halberstam, states 'I examine the historical context that produced *The Well of Loneliness* [1928]. Radclyffe Hall, I suggest, was neither unique in her masculinity nor stranded in a 'well of loneliness' because of her gender inversion', pp. 41- 42.

² See Michael Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (London: GMP, 1985); Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997); and Diana Souhami, *The Trials of Radcliffe Hall* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1998) all give biographical examples of Hall's fascination with Oscar Wilde. Terry Castle, *Noël Coward & Radclyffe Hall: Kindred Spirits* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) is a study into the relationship and mutual admiration between Hall and Coward. Richard Dellamora *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) explores Hall's fascination with Jesus Christ and Oscar Wilde.

³ Halberstam, p.109.

One of the main reasons why there has been so little written about the connection between Joan of Arc and Hall is the lack of primary evidence linking the two figures, whereas there are specific examples of her fascination with Wilde, Coward and Christ. This chapter presents newly discovered evidence that connects Joan of Arc, and in particular George Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan* (1924), to Hall. Crucially, this evidence suggests that *Saint Joan* is a text that Hall was familiar with and argues that it influenced the composition of her most famous novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). This evidence helps to contextualise the characterisation of Stephen Gordon and to trace an artistic resonance between *Saint Joan* and *The Well of Loneliness*, which has previously gone unnoticed. A closer examination of Hall's work reveals that Joan of Arc was a female role model, artistic inspiration and thematic emblem throughout her writing career.

3.2 Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Stating the Obvious

There is a degree of obviousness in suggesting that one of history's most famous cross-dressing women would have influenced the life and writing of one of literature's most infamous female masculine lesbian authors of the early twentieth century.⁴ The idea that a connection between Joan of Arc and Hall exists may initially appear somewhat *clichéd* and imply a degree of lazy stereotyping, which may be the very reason why it has not been recognised or fully explored in the past. Hall's masculine style of dress and prominent high-profile sexuality, combined with her religious devotion, has diverted previous critical attention to focus on very specific aspects of her life and to look for affirmation and confirmation of these elements in her work. What the reader might expect to find in Hall's novels and those details of her life that are available would be that she is a positive pro-feminist and lesbian, because of her image, gender, sexuality and the fame surrounding the lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness*. However, Hall's novels and her life offer a complex, difficult and challenging relationship between gender, sexuality and religion, which has frustrated and infuriated readers for decades.⁵ Richard Dellamora's book, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing* (2011) describes the difficulties in examining Hall's work and her life with her long-term partner Lady Una Troubridge:

The position of social and economic privilege occupied by Hall and Troubridge, their Tory sympathies, Roman Catholicism, and eugenicist views are not factors calculated to endear them to members of contemporary lesbian and queer counterpublics. In recent years, Hall's self-identification as a masculine woman drew even more criticism. To some second generation feminists, Hall was felt to have misled generations of young women into believing that, if they desired sexual intimacy with other women, then they must be psychically male.⁶

Hall's life and writing fails to live up to the expectation that she should be a feminist/lesbian activist and sexual and gender revolutionist. Consequently, there has been a backlash against her that has resulted in a way of reading, reacting to and viewing Hall, which has been perpetuated through years of critical debates. The vast majority of these reactions have been

⁴ See Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*. In her discussion of Hall's masculine clothing, she states: 'Some aristocratic inverts, or what we may call 'gentleman inverts' were content to live their lives in masculine clothing and take male names without completely letting go of their claim to femaleness. Radclyffe Hall, as I have said, herself was called John and spent much of her time in men's clothing, but she also did not try to pass herself off as a man and often appeared in skirts', p.88.

⁵ See Rebecca O'Rourke, *Reflecting on The Well of Loneliness* (London: Routledge, 1989) which includes a survey of readers' reactions to *The Well of Loneliness*.

⁶ Richard Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 1.

detrimental to Hall's reputation as a woman and a writer, because she fails to fit within the political or ideological confines of feminist, lesbian, transgendered and religious readings.



Figure 17: Charles Buchel, *Radclyffe Hall* (1918)

Source: The National Portrait Gallery

<<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw02836/Radclyffe-Hall?search=sp&sText=radclyffe+hall&rNo=0>>

[accessed 20 October 2017]

This negativity towards Hall has created a climate that is not always receptive or open to exploring different ways of viewing her as a woman and a writer or for that matter to celebrating the positive aspects of her work and her contribution to English literature. However, the early twenty-first century marks a moment when expectations surrounding Hall are changing. Discussing Charles Buchel's 1918 portrait of Hall (see Figure 17), Laura Doan writes:

A new generation of students in gender and sexuality studies looks askance at the fixity of labels, favouring instead the fluidity of an LGBTQ+ spectrum. I take this as a sign we have come full circle in our growing awareness of the inadequacies of organising sexual knowledge in terms of types. There is nothing wrong in yielding to the urge of reading the queer portrait as an X, but queering British art points in equally captivating ways to a visual encounter with the unknown, a world at once familiar and radically unlike our own.⁷

Doan offers hope that future generations will not be restrained by the confines and expectations of gender and sexual stereotypes and that therefore Hall may be seen and interpreted in different ways as the century progresses. This type of approach will embrace the once negative connotations associated with gender and sexual stereotypes, because it will foster a positive view of queerness in all its diverse combinations. In this gender fluid future, female masculine women, like Joan of Arc and Hall, will be recognised for their influence on all gender and sexual identities.

The challenge to binary gender stereotypes associated with Joan of Arc's female masculinity is currently seen in Lucy Jane Parkinson's play *Joan* (2015), which signals a change in the depiction of the Saint. Discussing the concept of *Joan*, Parkinson, a drag king, explains:

Joan [of Arc] is such an icon of, not just of femininity, but of being a gender warrior. Her whole legacy came from the fact that she wasn't allowed to be who she truly felt that she was, which relates to the wider transgender, non-binary, "fluidity" conversation that's happening right now. The initial idea was to create a drag king play, so who better to begin with than one of history's first drag kings? I think there's a really strong message about standing up for what you believe in throughout the show, even if you stand out to the point that you're chastised for it.⁸

⁷ Laura Doan, 'Public Indecency: Portrait of an X' in *Queer British Art*, ed. by Clare Barlow (London: Tate Publishing, 2017), p.53.

⁸ 'Talking drag with Lucy Jane Parkinson' in *Diva* 19 April 2017 < <http://www.divamag.co.uk/Diva-Magazine/Culture/Talking-drag-with-Lucy-Jane-Parkinson/> > [accessed 10 October 2017].



Figure 18: Field & McGlynn, promotional photograph for *Joan* (2015). Lucy Jane Parkinson as Joan of Arc
Source: Milk Presents
<<http://www.milkpresents.com/production/joan>>
[accessed 20 October 2017]

Parkinson's treatment of Joan of Arc implies some alteration in the view of the influence and importance of female masculinity on wider society. Her Joan of Arc is a hybrid mixture of femininity and masculinity in which Parkinson displaces the tropes of military masculinity with a camp sensibility, but the defiant warrior is still visible beneath the make-up (see Figure 18). This deconstruction of the familiar Joan of Arc story, one in which gender identity and its influence is foregrounded to become part of the tale, suggests that similar approaches could be applied to Hall's own female masculinity in the future. Although Hall was no saint, the current movement towards gender and sexual fluidity may, in turn, help to reposition the expectations surrounding her identity as a female masculine woman and lesbian. Hall's chastisement by feminists and lesbians for failing to deliver what they expect of her has

resulted in many themes within her work being simply overlooked or ignored. The influence of Joan of Arc on her life and work is only one example where an obvious connection, both in terms of female masculine identity and Joan's hidden presence within her work, has not been explored, because it is not what scholars have wanted to find or expected to see when looking at Hall's writing.

3.3 Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Positioning the Association

During Hall's own lifetime there is little contemporary and cultural evidence suggesting that a social connection and/or comparison was made between her and the female masculine figure of Joan of Arc. An article published in *The Scotsman* on 14 March 1928, places Hall and Joan of Arc together in the same context. The article was in response to a speech by the Conservative politician and lawyer Lord Birkenhead on 'Women in Literature'. *The Times* had reported Birkenhead's talk by stating:

Lord Birkenhead spoke on Monday night at the annual "ladies dinner" of the Author's Club, taking as his subject "Women in Literature". Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins presided. Lord Birkenhead said, recognizing that there had always been more women than men in the world, it was a very remarkable thing how few women in the whole of history of the world had ever attained to great literary distinction. There had been many women writers of great distinction in this country, but not in any way comparable to men writers of distinction. He must make this challenge perfectly plain. A defence might be found in the defects of education, but to that defence he gave no support. What he wished to do was to make it quite plain that if you took the last 300 years of European life women authors had not held their own with male authors during that period. It was surprising that there should be so few women poets, because women were less material than men, and because things spiritual and beautiful appealed to them more than to men. What was the explanation? Was it a sex complex? (Laughter.)

Sir James Barrie, the new president of the club, telegraphed a message of good wishes.⁹

The talk appears to develop the themes of Birkenhead's 1910 statement against the suffragette movement, in which he hypothesised: 'I venture to say that the sum total of human happiness, knowledge and achievement would have been almost unaffected if Sappho had never sung, if Joan of Arc had never fought, if Siddons had never played, and if George Eliot had never written'.¹⁰ *The Scotsman* responded to Birkenhead's speech by commenting on the lack of opportunities presented to women across the centuries and used both Hall and Joan of Arc as references:

⁹ *The Times*, 14 March 1928.

¹⁰ John Campbell, *F. E. Smith, First Earl of Birkenhead* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), p.279.

Canute on Women

As he watches the advancing waves of feminine power in politics, Lord Birkenhead is too astute to bid them fall back, but he is apparently ready to deny that there is a tide in literature leading women on to fortune. There have been many women writers of great distinction in this country, he said on Monday night, but not any comparable to men writers of distinction. Before this rebuke women have not been silent. Miss Radclyffe Hall, herself a distinguished novelist, has maintained with some justification that today women novelists, are if anything, better than men. Without thus awarding the palm to women it is fair to say that several women novelists of the present day will stand comparison with men writers of distinction. The novel has been women's great opportunity in literature, and it seems to be the only form in which women have undeniably succeeded. The history of the modern French novel of sentiment begins with the "Princesse de Clèves" of Mme. de La Fayette. In our own country Jane Austen, the Brontës, and George Eliot represent no mean achievement. One if not two of these names would stand besides the best names in history of the novel. It may be that the novel is a form of mind. Women often write excellent letters – let Margaret Paston, Madame de Sévigné, and Jane Welsh Carlyle be witnesses – and possibly this is a kind of preparation for the novel, as the epistolary method was historically one form of presenting a story. The observation of human foibles and of the intimate transactions of daily life is natural to a woman, and the novel is a literary form which offers scope for this particular ability. In other forms, women have not achieved a comparable success. There is the name – and little more than the name – of Sappho, but in poetry Mrs Browning, save for a lyric or two, is not a name to conjure with, and women have in general eschewed the larger forms. There may be a historical reason for this, but though women may have been bound to household duties when Milton wrote his epic, it is probable that if there had been any village Sappho, or even leisured ladies with Odysseys to give to the world, something would have been heard of them. Even in ages when women, according to the feminists, have been doomed to an inferior position, there have been remarkable women, but Joan of Arc was not a poet, Queen Elizabeth was no dramatist, Catherine of Russia did not write any novels, and Elizabeth Farnese lives only in literature in Carlyle's portrait of the Termagant of Spain. It is, after all, strange that women's ability should not have found a greater outlet in Literature. But their day may be at hand.¹¹

The Scotsman is paraphrasing a press statement that Hall issued in 1928 when she had won both the Prix Femina and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Adam's Breed* (1926). In this statement, Hall declared: 'I consider women writers not only are, but always have been,

¹¹ *The Scotsman*, 14 March 1928. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) also makes reference to Birkenhead; Woolf lists him as being one the reasons why some women are poor, see Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.37. Later, as Woolf writes about the limited opportunities for women writers she states 'To answer that question I had only to open the evening paper and to read that Lord Birkenhead is of opinion – but really I am not going to trouble to copy out Lord Birkenhead's opinion upon the writing of women.' *ibid.*, pp.68-69.

the equal of men writers'.¹² Although the article is not directly comparing Hall to the great women of literature and history, her inclusion in their company infers that she has the potential to be their equal. Appearing only four months before the publication and scandal surrounding *The Well of Loneliness*, the article illustrates Hall's perceived significance and popularity as a contemporary writer at this pre-*Well* stage in her career. It also highlights the impact that the trial and the notoriety surrounding *The Well of Loneliness* would have on her long-term reputation, because it is unlikely that Hall's name would appear in a similar list today. However, at the time of the article's publication Hall, the woman and the writer, was notably included in the company of great and famous historical women, one of which is the female masculine Joan of Arc.¹³

In her *We Write as Women* (1936) (later published as *The School of Femininity*), Margaret Lawrence discusses the work of Pearl Buck, Radclyffe Hall and Mary Webb. Lawrence describes these three writers as 'Priestesses', stating that 'The Priestess is the "Dove" woman. She is the legend all through time'.¹⁴ Describing the role of the Priestesses and their qualities and skills, Lawrence gives examples of other historical women whom she considers to be priestesses:

St. Joan was one of them. So was Florence Nightingale. So too was Mary Baker Eddy. And perhaps also Helena Blavatsky. And all women who have had an idea which would, if applied, relieve the inner or outer suffering of humanity.¹⁵

In a similar manner to *The Scotsman* article, Hall is compared to other historical figures, including Joan of Arc. While Margaret Lawrence makes no further reference to the comparison between Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall, she implies that the women share traits that make them compassionate towards the suffering of others. Coincidentally, in the same year that Margaret Lawrence published her book, Hall wrote to her last lover, Evgenia Souline:

My work and why is it that the people I write of are so very often lonely people? Are they? I think that perhaps you may be right. I greatly feel the loneliness of the soul – nearly every soul is more or less lonely. Then again: I

¹² Radclyffe Hall, quoted in Cline's *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: John Murray, 1997), p.221. Cline's note states that this was used in press articles from February to June 1928.

¹³ By the end of 1928, Hall had become a figure to be mocked in the press. *The Tatler*, 26 December 1928, is an example of how Hall became a figure of fun for a society gossip columnist who wrote: 'The other mysterious rumoured engagement, Miss Radclyffe Hall's was very promptly quashed as a fantastic fable'.

¹⁴ Margaret Lawrence, *The School of Femininity* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1972) [1936], p. 311.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.317.

have been called the writer of “misfits”. And it may be that being myself a “misfit” for as you know, beloved, I am a born invert, it may be that I am a writer of “misfits” in one form or another – I think I understand them – their joys & their sorrows, indeed I know I do, and all the misfits of this world are lonely, being conscious that they differ from rank and file.¹⁶

Hall’s assessment of her skills as a writer (the ability to capture and understand the pain of the misfits and the lonely) supports Margaret Lawrence’s critique of the author. Whether or not Hall was aware of Margaret Lawrence’s book this underscores the humanitarian aims of her writing, which are not gender specific.

Despite their iconic status as famous female masculine women, it would take almost fifty years for someone else to position Joan of Arc and Hall in the same cultural context. In her book, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (1995), Terry Castle aligns the lesbian figure with the martyred figure of Joan of Arc. Castle states: ‘Joan of Arc travels through time as a peculiarly Sapphic heroine: Vita Sackville-West wrote a book about her; Radclyffe Hall wanted to’.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Castle’s statement is unreferenced. No other academic work or biography has highlighted or discussed the fact that Hall wanted to write a Joan of Arc novel. Curiously, for an author whose work is littered with the names of popular saints and deities, Joan of Arc is conspicuously absent from any of Hall’s novels or short stories, including the new material published by Jana Funke in 2016.¹⁸ In addition, there is no reference to Joan of Arc in Hall’s love letters to Evgenia Souline.¹⁹ While saints and other religious figures were used in the creation and construction of some of Hall’s characters – Gian-Luca in *Adam’s Breed* is a Saint Francis of Assisi figure; Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness* is named after Saint Stephen; and Christophe is a Christ figure in *The Master of the House* (1932) – no parallel allusion to Joan of Arc had been discovered in Hall’s work until the publication of my article ‘Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity’ in *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology* (2014).²⁰ This article presented circumstantial evidence that pointed to the influence of Joan of Arc on Hall’s understanding of her female masculine identity and argued that Joan

¹⁶ Radclyffe Hall, letter to Evgenia Souline dated 24 October 1934 in *Your John: The Love Letters of Radclyffe Hall*, ed. by Joanne Glasgow, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p.78

¹⁷ Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.185.

¹⁸ See Jana Funke, *‘The World’ and Other Unpublished Works of Radclyffe Hall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

¹⁹ See Joanna Glasgow, *Your John: The Love Letters of Radclyffe Hall* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). The letters cover an eight-year period from 1934 to 1942.

²⁰ See Steven Macnamara, ‘Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity’ in *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology*, ed. by Karioris, F.G. and Loeser, C. (Witney: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014), pp.95-122.

was a role model who shaped the depiction of her female characters. Recently Jaime E. Hovey has published the article 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West' and acknowledged the influence of Joan of Arc on Hall.²¹ Hovey uses much of the evidence presented in the 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity' article, without further developing or exploring the impact of Joan of Arc on Hall. This chapter will discuss Hovey's article, but will also present new evidence that substantiates Joan of Arc's influence on Hall.

²¹ See Jaime E. Hovey, 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West' in *Feminist Modernist Studies*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-2, (2017), pp.113-137.

3.4 Joan of Arc: The Historical, Cultural and Religious Icon

Castle's claim suggests that Hall's interest in Joan of Arc extended beyond common knowledge of the Saint, but it remains unclear how her fascination was inspired, and how she developed and researched the figure of Joan.²² Hall would have been exposed to Joan of Arc's story and image in multiple ways, as the once very real Jeanne le Pucelle has become a product crafted by historians, writers and artists to create the Joan of Arc that exists within the public consciousness.²³ In 1926, at the height of Hall's artistic output, Joan of Arc's popularity and prominence as a twentieth-century cultural figure was discussed in the article, 'Joan of Arc in English Literature' in *The Sewanee Review*, which stated: 'interest in this most remarkable of all human beings seems to grow rather than to diminish.'²⁴ The Saint Joan of Arc Centre's website claims that: 'After Jesus Christ and Napoleon, Joan of Arc is the third most popular subject in western culture'.²⁵ Since her death in 1431, there have been so many representations of Joan of Arc that no completely accurate and comprehensive list or catalogue of her cultural depictions exists.²⁶ It is therefore impossible to determine which variant and/or stories of Joan of Arc Hall was exposed to, but what follows is a brief account of Joan's life and some of the most popular representations of her as a cultural figure up to the start of the twentieth century.

Joan was born on 6 January 1412, in Domrémy, a village in the northeast of France. Around the age of twelve or thirteen, she heard a voice from God who instructed her: 'To go

²² See Vita Sackville-West, *Saint Joan of Arc* (Guernsey: Cardinal, 1990) [1936]. Describing the general awareness of Joan of Arc, Sackville-West states: 'I have observed that quite well-educated people retain no more than a vague impression that Jeanne d'Arc was a peasant girl who heard voices, saw visions, raised the siege of Orleans, and was burnt to death by the English at Rouen. Going a step further, you may be told that an English soldier made two pieces of wood into a cross, and gave it to her as the flames rose around her pyre. Such romantic facts and details have taken hold on the general mind, abetted such brilliant and untrustworthy artists as Mr Bernard Shaw and M Antole France'. p.12. Hall's manuscripts at the Harry Ransom Center reveal that, with support from Una, she researched her novels to ensure historical and cultural accuracy.

²³ See Régine Pernoud and Marie-Véronique Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, trans. Jeremy Duquesnay Adams (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998) who write: 'The person we call Joan of Arc was known to herself and to her contemporaries as Jeanne la Pucelle (Joan the Maid)', xi-i.

²⁴ *The Sewanee Review*, 'Joan of Arc in English Literature', Vol. 34, No. 4 (Oct-Dec 1924), p.431. Hall started making notes for *The Well of Loneliness* (known as *Stephen* initially) on 20 July 1926, see Lovat Dickson, *Radclyffe Hall at The Well of Loneliness: A Sapphic Chronicle* (London: Collins, 1975), p.126.

²⁵ *The Saint Joan of Arc Centre* <<http://www.stjoan-center.com/FAQ/question3.html>> [accessed 10 April 2012].

²⁶ The Maid of Heaven website states that it 'is the world's largest website about Joan of Arc containing over one thousand individual pages which is the equivalent of tens of thousands of traditional book pages covering every aspect of Joan of Arc's life, history and legacy' see, <<http://www.maidofheaven.com/>> [accessed 27 October 2017]. Despite the website's tremendous accumulation of information on Joan of Arc, the Joan of Arc Cultural Depictions page, informs the researcher that: 'Joan of Arc has been inspiring artists for almost six centuries and many of the greatest artists in history have sought to memorialize her in a variety of artistic ways. One can only speculate at how many works of art devoted to Saint Joan have been created, probably tens of thousands, so the[y] list [...] only the more notable works as recorded by history', <http://www.maidofheaven.com/joanofarc_cultural_depictions.asp> [accessed 27 October 2017].

into France [...] Go, raise the siege which is being made before the City of Orleans'.²⁷ Over the next three years Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret appeared before Joan to persuade her that she must lead Charles VII, the King of France to his coronation in Reims. Initially dismissed by members of the King's court, Joan eventually persuaded them to let her lead a small number of men into a tactical battle that ended the five-month siege of Orléans. Joan's success at Orléans led to further victories as the French army began to regain control of towns and villages controlled by the English. The Battle of Patay on 18 June 1429 was a critical victory for the French army, as it weakened the English stronghold in the Loire valley. As Joan's army marched towards Reims, they accepted the conditional surrender of villages and towns along their way. On 16 July 1429, Joan arrived at Reims and the city relinquished itself to Joan and her army. Reims was the traditional site for the crowning of the French monarchy and with the city restored to the hands of the French, Charles could now be solemnly crowned the King of France. The coronation of King Charles VII took place on 17 July 1429, with Joan standing by the side of the King, dressed in her war armour.

Theoretically, Joan had accomplished her mission from God, but encouraged by the victories of the French army she urged the King to continue his line of defence. However, during the siege of Compiègne, on 23 May 1430, the Burgundians, who supported the English army, captured and imprisoned Joan. Despite Joan's service to the King, she found herself abandoned by Charles and his court. Duke Philip of Burgundy eventually sold Joan to the English, who despised her for the victories against their armies. The English wanted her dead, yet they could not put her to death for beating them on the battlefields, but they could legitimately kill her for being a witch. The one factor that contributed to and underpinned the accusation of heresy was Joan's crossing-dressing. A letter from King Henry VI to Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, the man who would preside over Joan's trial, states:

It is notorious and well known how for some time a woman who calls herself Joan the Pucelle has put off the habit and dress of the female sex, which is contrary to divine law, abominable to God, condemned and prohibited by every law; she has dressed and armed herself in the state and habit of a man, has committed and caused cruel murders and, it is said, has given the simple people to believe that she had knowledge of His divine secrets, together with many other very dangerous dogmatic theories, most prejudicial and scandalous to our holy catholic faith.²⁸

²⁷ *Saint Joan of Arc's Trial of Condemnation*, 'Second Public Examination, Thursday 22 February 1431', trans. by Mathias Gabel and Carlyn Luzzolino <<http://www.stjoan-center.com/Trials/sec02.html>> [accessed 10 December 2011].

²⁸ Letter from Henry VI to Pierre Cauchon, 3 January 1413, in *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle- Selected Sources*, trans. by Craig Taylor (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.135.

Joan's victories over the English armies were an affront to English pride, but Henry and his court also viewed Joan's cross-dressing as evidence of her disrespect towards God.²⁹

Joan's trial started on 9 January 1431. The charges against her fell into three categories: firstly, that Joan used magic to hear the voices, which told her to dress in men's clothing; secondly, that she was headstrong in speaking about her faith and that she acted inappropriately as a woman; and thirdly, that she was disobedient towards God and refused to submit to the judgement of the Church or man. During the trial, a stake was erected in the cemetery at St Ouen, where Joan was taken and the charges against her were read out in front of a large crowd of people. Joan's resolve faltered for the first time and she agreed to sign the retraction, although it is unclear if she was aware of the conditions of the retraction.

Joan had worn male clothing throughout her trial to protect herself from the male guards, but after signing the retraction, she was returned to Rouen Castle, with no plans to move her to a suitable prison. In order to protect herself from the attention of the guards, Joan started wearing men's clothing again, but in doing so, she contravened one of the conditions of her retraction. A court hearing on 29 May 1431 declared her a relapsed heretic and sentenced her to be burnt to death the following morning. Asking for a crucifix and calling to Jesus, Joan's death moved the witnesses to tears. When she had died, the executor raked the fire back to expose her body, as evidence that she had not escaped. Joan's body was then burnt twice to reduce it to ashes, and her remains thrown in the Seine.³⁰ In the years that followed Joan's death, the trial remained contentious, because it was generally considered and acknowledged that it had been unlawful. A nullification trial in 1456 concluded that Joan had been unjustly condemned and she was cleared of the accusations of heresy.

Joan of Arc's actions were recorded in a number of historical chronicles on both sides of the English Channel, but the representation of Joan was subjective depending on who was recounting the facts. The French viewed Joan of Arc as a heroine who had been sent by God

²⁹ Deuteronomy 22:5: 'A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this'.

³⁰ It is reported that Joan of Arc's heart would not burn. Joan's executioner, Friar Isambart confirmed: 'despite the oil, sulfur [sic], and the carbon that he applied to the entrails and the heart of Joan, he still could not make them burn in any way, nor could he reduce her entrails and her heart to ashes, at which he was astonished as if by confirmed miracle'. Quoted in Pernoud and Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, p.137. Joan's heart, undamaged by the fire, is the symbolic representation of the eternal spirit. The sacred heart remains intact despite the power of the flames and illustrates Joan's divine love to the world. This illusion is a powerful metaphor, which is reminiscent of Wilde's short story 'The Happy Prince' (1888) 'This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust heap where the dead Swallow was also lying'. Oscar Wilde, 'The Happy Prince' in *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* [1888] (London: Penguin, 1995), p.12. In Wilde's story, the physical heart is broken, but it cannot be destroyed, because of the power and purity of the love between the Prince and the Swallow. Hall also uses the word 'entrails' at the conclusion of *The Well of Loneliness*. After Stephen has experienced her metaphoric fire: 'A terrifying voice that made her ears throb, that made her brain throb, that shook her very entrails, until she must stagger and all but fall beneath this appalling burden of sound that strangled her in its will to be uttered'. Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago 1990) [1928], p.447.

to save the kingdom, whilst unsurprisingly the English resented Joan of Arc and blamed her for losing their strategic hold on France, and to the English she was nothing more than an instrument of Satan.³¹ Somewhere in the middle are the Burgundian chronicles, which are sceptical that Joan of Arc's mission was from God, but acknowledge her importance in defeating the English.³² The conflicting nationalistic interpretations of Joan are captured in the first official biography of Joan of Arc. Commissioned by King Louis XII in 1500, Louis Malet de Graville discusses the varying opinions and representations of Joan: 'The chronicles differ and disagree and many [people] of varied opinions discuss this interesting question. Each side obstinately insists on its own firm opinion'.³³ Although contemporary opinion on Joan may have been divided, Malet de Graville is convinced that 'no event [is] so remarkable or memorable [as the story of Joan of Arc], nor ... more deserving to be written down and to be kept as a lasting memory by the French'.³⁴ Joan of Arc's life and death had already captured the attention and interest of writers and artists. What Malet de Graville could not have anticipated was the continued fascination with, and popularity of, Joan of Arc.

How Joan of Arc has been depicted in both literature and art throughout the centuries has largely been dependent upon the political, artistic and fashion trends of the time. One of the first significant literary outings for Joan of Arc was in Martain Lefranc's epic poem *Le Champion des Dames* (1440). Lefranc's poem is a debate between a champion of women and a challenging adversary. Thirty-three stanzas of the poem are devoted to debating Joan of Arc's rightful inclusion in the poem alongside other famous women. Joan of Arc's appearance in the poem, so shortly after her death, was both a brave and a courageous decision on Lefranc's part, because he could have been condemned for her inclusion.³⁵ While passion plays had taken place in Orléans since Joan of Arc's death, an important sixteenth century theatrical outing for her was in Shakespeare's *Henry VI: Part 1* (1592). The meeting of these two iconic figures is perhaps slightly disappointing for Johannic scholars, because Shakespeare's Joan of Arc is a fictionalised account by an Englishman for an English audience at a time of national despondency (the English were once again in Rouen

³¹ See Edward Hall's, *Hall's Chronicle* (London: G Woodfall, 1808) [1548] and Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: 1577). These were both sources that Shakespeare used for his history plays.

³² See Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Rémy's, *Chronique*, ed. by François Morand (Paris: Renouard, 1881).

³³ Louis Malet de Graville, *The First Biography of Joan of Arc*, trans. by Daniel Rankin and Claire Quintal (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), p.13.

³⁴ Malet de Graville, p.14.

³⁵ See Martin Le Franc, *The Trial of Womankind: A Rhyming Translation of Book IV of the Fifteenth-century Le Champion Des Dames*, trans. by Steven Millen Taylor (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2005) for a comprehensive translation, notes and additional information and bibliography on Le Franc.

attempting to control the city).³⁶ Shakespeare presents Joan as a woman of contradictions and therefore there are contradictory interpretations of her character. The English characters view her as a whore or a witch, 'Here, here she comes. I'll have about with thee./Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee./Blood will I draw on thee – thou art a witch',³⁷ whereas the French characters view her as a saint, 'We'll set thy statue in some holy place/And have thee revered like a blessed saint'.³⁸ Shakespeare may have been mindful not to completely demonise Joan, since parallels between Joan and Queen Elizabeth I could have been drawn by his audience, as both women inhabited hierarchical roles traditionally associated with men. To avoid possible parallels between the Queen and Joan of Arc, Shakespeare demonstrates her lack of nobility, as her resolve crumbles once she is on trial. In Shakespeare's retelling of Joan of Arc's trial, she begs for her life, summons demons and claims she is pregnant. In real life, Joan of Arc's punishment for almost ousting the English from France was death, but in this metaphorical literary retelling of events, Shakespeare illustrates to his audience the consequences for a weak woman who takes on the role normally reserved for a man. *Henry VI: Part 1* may not be Shakespeare's most popular play, but it is both historically and culturally important that he included Joan of Arc in its cast of characters.³⁹

The seventeenth century continued to use Joan of Arc as subject matter in several plays, but the most notorious literary outing for Joan of Arc during this period was in Jean Chapelain's *La Pucelle, ou la France délivrée* (1656).⁴⁰ Chapelain spent thirty years working on the poem, with the hope and ambition that it would become the French equivalent to Virgil's *Aeneid* (circa 29-19 BC). Whilst initial reaction to the poem was generally favourable, the tone of the poem was dull. The work did not depict Joan in a favourable light.

³⁶ See Jean E. Howard's 'The First Part of Henry the Sixth' in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus (London: Norton, 1997) for details on the historical inaccuracies within the play, pp.436-437. One interesting example is Lord Talbot's fictitious capture of Rouen, which was probably added as a desired outcome of the Earl of Essex's siege of Rouen during 1591-92.

³⁷ William Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part 1*, I.7. 4-6., *The Norton Shakespeare*, p.456.

³⁸ *ibid.*, III.7.14-15., p.477.

³⁹ A production of *Henry VI, Parts 1 and 2* ran at the Old Vic in London in 1923. The review in *The Times* was not very positive about the production, but they praised the depiction of Joan of Arc, stating: 'Interest is held by Miss Jane Bacon's playing of Joan of Arc, which is good enough to make one wish that Shakespeare had cared enough to give more than an outline of her', *The Times*, 30 January 1923. Una's diaries do not reveal that the couple attended a performance of the play, but they read *The Times* and were aware of the theatrical landscape in London during this period.

⁴⁰ See Françoise Michaud-Fréjaville's chapter 'Person vs. Personage: Joan of Arc in Seventeenth-Century France' in *Joan of Arc, a Saint for All Reasons: Studies in Myth and Politics*, ed. Dominique Goy-Blanquet, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003) for further information on the historical representation of Joan of Arc in a number of plays including: Nicolai de Vernulxi's *Joanna Darcia, vulgo Puella Aurelianensis, trageodia* (1629); François d'Aubignac's *La Pucelle d'Orléans, tragédie* (1642); and Hippolyte Jules de La Mesnarière's *La Pucelle d'Orléans, tragédie* (1642).

Chapelain decided to underplay Joan's achievements, instead favouring the accomplishments of Jean de Dunois, sometimes referred to as John of Orléans, but generally known as the bastard of Orléans.⁴¹ Chapelain's aim was to write a great piece of national literature, but the poem was mocked mercilessly and inspired Voltaire's eighteenth-century satire *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (circa 1730). In Voltaire's bawdy, deferential reimagining his Joan of Arc is coarse, loves to kill the English, can fly, often appears naked and has a winged donkey. The poem foregrounds the preservation of Joan of Arc's virginity beyond any of her heroic actions or achievements. The titillating treatment of Joan of Arc divided opinion and printed copies of the poem were banned, burned and suppressed, but this only led to its notoriety and increased the fame of both Voltaire and Joan of Arc. The poem remained one of the most widely read works on Joan of Arc for over a century, spreading beyond Europe to an international audience. Voltaire is often credited with 'inspiring the birth of the modern cult of Joan of Arc'.⁴² The lascivious tone of the *La Pucelle d'Orléans* intrigued, excited and shocked the public, but in France the poem also acted as a catalyst to remind the nation of the cultural significance and importance of their Joan of Arc.⁴³

The global awareness of Joan of Arc included a shift in the English perception and representation of her in the arts. Robert Southey's epic poem *Joan of Arc* (1796) substantially altered the English interpretation of Joan of Arc, focusing on her as an honourable heroine rather than a witch. The poem was well received and influential in its day, and it was reprinted throughout the nineteenth century, but it has now fallen into oblivion.⁴⁴ Another

⁴¹ Jean de Dunois was the illegitimate child of Louis d'Orléans, but due to his father's death and his half-brother's long imprisonment, Jean became the head of the house of Orléans. He joined Joan of Arc in battle and was with her during the siege of Orléans and at the coronation of Charles VII. After Joan's death, Jean continued to fight and in 1436 participated in the capture of Paris. In Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 1*, the Dunois is just referred to as the Bastard of Orléans, with his most significant act within the play being the wounding of John Talbot, which acts as a symbolic initiation of Talbot into the masculine battlefield of war.

⁴² Nora M Heimann, *Joan of Arc in French Art and Culture (1700-1855): From Satire to Sanctity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), p.14.

⁴³ Voltaire often declared that *La Pucelle d'Orléans* was only ever intended for private circulation. In 1756, he wrote *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, which attempted to objectively review the facts surrounding Joan of Arc's life. In this essay, Voltaire placed less emphasis on Joan of Arc's heavenly mission, instead reviewing the facts surrounding her life and death. Although a popular essay in France and England, it did not displace the interest in Voltaire's poem about Joan. For a discussion of both versions of Voltaire's Joan of Arc see Françoise Meltzer, *For Fear of the Fire: Joan of Arc and the Limits of Subjectivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2001).

⁴⁴ Charlotte Brontë paraphrases a line from Southey's *Joan of Arc* (1796) in the novel *Villette* (1853) when she writes, 'You unguarded Englishwomen walk calmly amidst red-hot ploughshares and escape burning', Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (London: Penguin, 1979) p.280. Southey's original reads: 'O'er red-hot ploughshares make me skip to please/Your dotard fancies!' Robert Southey, 'Joan of Arc' in *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey, Vol. 1* (London: Longman, 1838), p.49. For more information on the composition of Southey's *Joan of Arc*, see William Arthur Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press 2006). In particular, Speck draws attention to the political nature of the poem: 'Joan of Arc was written 'in a republican spirit'. The epic story of the Maid of Orleans who led a French patriotic resistance against the English, despite being set in the Middle Ages, was subversive stuff at a time when England was at war with revolutionary France'. p.64.

popular representation of Joan of Arc was Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orléans* [*The Maid of Orléans*] (1801). Offended by Voltaire's crass depiction of Joan of Arc, Schiller created his own fantastical and fantasy driven version. Although it is melodramatic and nationalistic in its themes, the play was regularly performed throughout the nineteenth century in Germany and it influenced other depictions of Joan of Arc.⁴⁵ Unlike Voltaire, who showed the world a lusty Joan of Arc, Schiller portrayed a woman in love. Although this is historically inaccurate, Schiller offered a humanised version of Joan of Arc, as a woman whose moral journey and devotions could be affected and altered by love. The concept that love can transcend and change the moral path of the individual is a recurring theme in literature, but Schiller's influence as both a writer and philosopher was far reaching across the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ In addition, two writers whom Hall admired and wrote about, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, both produced their own versions of Joan of Arc.⁴⁷ In *A Child's History of England: Volume II. – England from the Reign of Henry the Third, to the Reign of Richard the Third* (1853), Dickens includes a sympathetic account of Joan of Arc's life and death, while Twain's novel, *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896) tells Joan's story from the perspective of her page and secretary.

⁴⁵ See Pernoud and Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, who state that: 'At least thirty-four plays based on the story of Joan of Arc were composed between the beginning of the nineteenth century and 1870 ... [and] Many nineteenth-century playwrights are heavily indebted to Schiller', p.239. Radclyffe Hall lived for a year in Dresden studying literature. It is a period of Hall's life which remains completely undocumented and biographies tend simply to repeat Una Troubridge's account of her partner's later education: 'A short period of attending King's College was followed by a year in Dresden', *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, p.17. Although it is speculation, it is not impossible to imagine that during this year in Germany Hall was exposed to or was made aware of the popularity of Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orléans*.

⁴⁶ See Deborah Guth's *George Eliot and Schiller: Intertextuality and Cross Cultural Discourse* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003). Guth discusses Eliot's fascination with Friedrich Schiller's play *The Maid of Orleans* (1801) and hypothesises that Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* (1871-2) is a homage to Schiller's Joan of Arc: Guth argues that Dorothea Brooke 'recalls the moral fervour of Schiller's Joan of Arc', p.6.

⁴⁷ See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*. Cline discusses how Hall lectured at Zion College's Bookman Circle, on the 16 March 1927, on 'True Realism in Fiction' and 'praised the imaginative realism of Jane Austen and the Brontës. She lovingly surveyed Dickens, Thackeray and George Elliott', p.218. In addition, see Radclyffe Hall, 'American Literature in England,' *The Bookman*, May 1927, where Hall writes: 'two literary giants, both of whom may claim to have been purely American in their writings from start to finish. I mean that master of the short story, Bret Harte, and that master of humor, Mark Twain. Both these men became dear to the British public, even as our own English Dickens was dear —Mark Twain had much the same sort of appeal, combining as he always did pathos with humor'. See *The Bookman*, May 1927.



Figure 19: Peter Paul Rubens, *Joan of Arc* (circa 1620)
Source: North Carolina Museum of Art
<<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/joan-of-arc/WQE4uy49VvFn6Q>> [accessed 31 October 2017]

Despite her fame and popularity, there is no accurate source-portrait of how Joan of Arc looked and, as such, her image has become malleable and multifarious.⁴⁸ Up to the nineteenth century Joan of Arc was generally portrayed with long hair and/or wearing armour. Perhaps the most famous example of this type of depiction is Peter Paul Rubens's, *Joan of Arc* (circa 1620) (see Figure 19).⁴⁹ In keeping with Rubens's depiction of women, his

⁴⁸ The only known contemporary portrait of Joan of Arc is by Clément de Fauquembergue, the secretary of the Parlement of Paris. The image was doodled in the margin of the Orleans city record manuscripts on 10 May 1429, the day that Joan of Arc got the English armies away from the city and freed the countryside around Orleans. Though Fauquembergue never saw Joan of Arc in person, this is the only extant depiction from her lifetime. For information on this sketch and other selected images of Joan of Arc, see <<https://www.jeanne-darc.info/art-image/>> [accessed 29 October 2017].

⁴⁹ The quality of the painting has led art historians to believe it is an unfinished work by Rubens or one which was largely painted by his studio and became an abandoned commission. See Elizabeth McGrath's *Rubens: Subjects from History (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard)* (London: Harvey Miller, 1997) for further information on Rubens's style and the suggestion that *Joan at Prayer* is an incomplete painting by Rubens or his studio. The painting must have had some personal meaning for Rubens, as he kept it hung in his bedroom until his death in 1640. In Hall's novel *The Forge* (1924) two dogs are featured with the name Reuben.



Figure 20: Marie d'Orléans, *Jeanne d'Arc* (1837)

Source: Château de Versailles

<<http://collections.chateauversailles.fr/#8d3ff5cf-e95c-4e03-96c6-63a8051d3a49>>

[accessed 31 October 2017]

Joan of Arc is full-figured with long flowing hair. Although the Joan in the painting is in a full suit of armour, there is no doubting her gender. Rubens chose not to depict the drama of Joan of Arc at war or the tragedy of her death, but instead to show a moment of intense privacy and solitude as she prays before the cross. Yet, this Joan is still ready for battle as her tilted sword and clothing suggest. Joan of Arc's image was to change significantly in the early part of the nineteenth century when one of the most iconic portrayals of her was created by Princess Marie d'Orléans. The Princess's sculpture of *Jeanne d'Arc* was unveiled to the public at Versailles in 1837 (see Figure 20).⁵⁰ The sculpture and its iconography and topology have

become so familiar to the modern viewer, either in reproductions of the sculpture or replication of its details, that the impact of this new Joan of Arc is perhaps lost on the modern viewer. One of the most radical aspects of this sculpture is Joan of Arc's short pageboy haircut; her masculinised hair offers both a sense of realism for the practicalities of a woman at war and a profound impression of humility as Joan sacrifices her female identity for her calling. Yet, there is no doubt to the viewer that this is a woman, as her skirted bottom half emphasises her femininity. In fact, the sculpture offers one of the first historically accurate depictions of the medieval clothing that would have been available for Joan to wear. The Princess was a keen historian with a particular interest in medieval history and she had

⁵⁰ One of the pivotal scenes of realisation in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) occurs in the gardens of Versailles, as Jonathan Brockett forces Stephen Gordon to acknowledge her sexuality, heritage and loneliness, as he tells her the story of Madame de Lamballe and her lover: 'Brockett said, very low, so that Puddle should not hear him: 'Those two would often come here at sunset. Sometimes they were rowed along the canal in the sunset — can't you imagine it, Stephen? They must often have felt pretty miserable, poor souls; sick to death of the subterfuge and pretences. Don't you ever get tired of that sort of thing? My God, I do!' But she did not answer, for now there was no mistaking his meaning'. Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.241. In addition, see Sally Cline's *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*. Cline discusses how in October 1929 Andrea, the daughter of Una, visited her mother and Hall in Paris. Whilst Hall worked on *The Master of the House* (1932), Una and Andrea went sightseeing in Paris and visited Versailles, p.282.

researched Joan's life. The popularity of the sculpture increased in 1839, when at the age of twenty-five Princess Marie died of consumption and complications associated with childbirth. Alexandre Dumas dedicated his Joan of Arc novel, *Jehanne La Pucelle* (1842), to the memory of the Princess and the artist. Reproductions of *Jeanne d'Arc* or variations on the sculpture were made in varying sizes and from different materials to be displayed in churches, town squares or in private homes in France and across the world. While her name may not be widely known, the Princess created a template for how the modern world now conceptualises Joan of Arc.

The familiarity of Joan of Arc's story and image, particularly within the European public consciousness, made her an obvious candidate for treatment in early cinema, because set pieces from her life could be performed without too much narrative explanation. At least two silent films were made about Joan of Arc before the end of the nineteenth century, both with the title *Jeanne d'Arc*, one in 1898 and the other in 1899.⁵¹ The fact that Joan of Arc was a subject in this exciting new medium is a testament to her popularity and adaptability as a historical and cultural figure.⁵²

Centuries of historical, religious and artistic representations of Joan of Arc ensured that by the end of the nineteenth century she was firmly established as one of the most famous, celebrated and revered women in history. Joan of Arc's substantial presence as a global historical and cultural figure is such, that to assume Hall was unaware of Joan is unfeasible, given her class and education. By the time the most significant historical and religious event involving Joan of Arc occurred in the nineteenth century (the 1894 announcement that the Vatican's Configuration of Rites had voted unanimously for an 'introduction of the cause of beatification of Joan of Arc') there is every possibility that the thirteen-year-old Hall was already familiar with Joan's story and image.⁵³

⁵¹ *Jeanne d'Arc*, dir. Georges Hatot. (1898); *Jeanne d'Arc*, dir. Georges Méliès (1899). There is some debate over the actual date of George Méliès's film as some give the date as 1900, although Pamela Grace, *The Religious Film: Christianity and the Hagiopic* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2009) states: 'Joan of Arc was also depicted on film many times around the turn of the twentieth century. One of the most interesting movies was *Jeanne d'Arc*, made by Georges Méliès, probably in 1899, although he claimed to have made the film in 1887', p.20.

⁵² Joan of Arc's adaptability to new and different media still continues as several video and computer games have featured Joan including: *Wars and Warriors: Joan of Arc* (Windows), Enlight (Enlight, 2004); *Jeanne d'Arc* (PSP), Sony (Sony, 2006); *Warriors Orochi 3* (Playstation 3, Xbox 360), Tecmo Koei (Tecmo Koei, 2011); etc. Joan of Arc has also featured in a number of cartoons and comics including *The Simpsons*, where her story was reimaged, in 'Tales from the Public Domain', Season 13, Episode 206 (2002).

⁵³ *The Times*, 29 January 1894. The beatification of an individual is one of the processes involved in their canonisation. The announcement from the Vatican in 1894 declared that the recommendations of the committee had been supported by the Pope. After centuries of campaigning Joan of Arc was now, officially, one who was blessed and thus worthy of public religious veneration. The delay in Joan of Arc's canonisation had partly been caused by the French Catholic Church's involvement in Joan's trial and her death.

3.5 The Social and Cultural Presence of Joan of Arc within Hall's Life

By the time Joan of Arc was beatified in 1909, the twenty-nine-year-old Hall had adopted the fashions of the New Woman. This look incorporated her wearing of a tailored jacket, tie, skirt and hat.⁵⁴ Hall had several female lovers, including the novelist and translator Violet Hunt, who was the first person to read Hall's work and to offer the developing writer critical advice. Against a backdrop of religious, cultural and public interest in Joan of Arc, Hall then entered into her first serious and open relationship with the Roman Catholic married mother and grandmother Mabel 'Ladye' Batten. Mabel was a renowned socialite, beauty and amateur mezzo-soprano, with a habit of nicknaming her friends and members of her family. She affectionately called Hall 'John', 'Johnnie' or 'Jonathan', and in 1909 Hall settled on the name John and would use it for the rest of her life. Biographers have suggested that this name is either a reference to her great-grandfather or a homage to the biblical tale of David and Jonathan, particularly as Oscar Wilde cited the relationship as an example of 'the Love that dare not speak its name' at his trial in 1895.⁵⁵ As there is no definitive reason why Hall adopted the name John, the default position of biographers and academics has generally been to rationalise this choice of name within the confines of male masculine identities. However, this may not be the only way to view Hall's choice of name. The name John has everyman connotations, which could merely reflect Hall's dry sense of humour, because her female masculine identity is the antithesis of normative male masculinity. Despite the name's masculinised prominence and popularity, John has a feminine counterpart, a female version of the name, which is Joan. Whilst it is not uncommon for names to have male/female variations, it is intriguing that during a period of interest in the cross-dressing Joan of Arc and in the same year that she was beatified, Hall would settle on the name John to express her female masculine identity.

Mabel was not only responsible for christening Hall's female masculine identity, but also for broadening Hall's social, cultural and political horizons. Through their friendship and with Mabel's encouragement, they became suffragettes between 1910 and 1912. Hall was

⁵⁴ Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism – The Origins of Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Doan states: 'Hall too sported the New Woman's highly tailored look (a style popular among the set of her first long-term lover, Mabel Batten) until fashions changed after the war.', p.100.

⁵⁵ Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall*, states: 'It was Ladye who first changed Marguerite to John, probably after great-grand-father John Hall, who so resembled John in looks and whose portrait Ladye adored. When all their friends became accustomed to John or Johnnie, Ladye privately began calling her Jonathan, in reference to the Biblical friends Saul [David] and Jonathan.', p.47. Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, interprets Ladye's adoption of the David and Jonathan notion as a symbolic statement on the bond of friendship that exists between men: 'For her part, Batten had called upon the male friendship tradition she gave Hall the nickname John, after David and Jonathan, the heroic pair of friends in the Hebrew Bible.', p.93. Dellamora explores the concept that male friendships are traditionally not compared to the bonds of marriage, but can exist as a secondary source of friendship in a marriage. Ladye's adoption of the male bond is significant in that it suggests the true strength of the bond between herself and Hall.

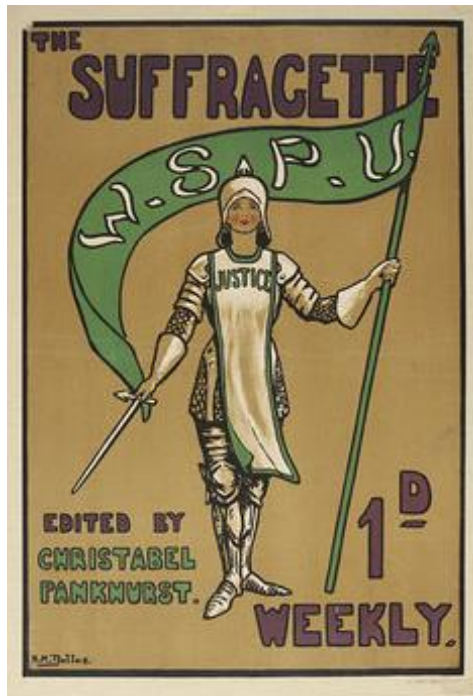


Figure 21: Hilda Dallas, Poster advertising *The Suffragette* a weekly newspaper of the Woman's Social and Political Union (WSPU) (circa 1914)

Source: V&A's collections

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O685356/the-suffragette-1d-weekly-poster-dallas-hilda/>

[accessed 31 October 2017]

generally ambivalent about the growing feminist movement, but she did attend meetings and gatherings with Mabel. It is well documented that the various strands of the suffragette movement used images of Joan of Arc as an iconic woman who represented valour and courage.⁵⁶ The most famous image that connected Joan of Arc to the Suffragettes was Hilda Dallas's poster for *The Suffragette* newspaper circa 1914 (see Figure 21). During their active time with the movement Mabel and Hall would have been exposed to images of Joan of Arc or heard a talk or read an article that aligned the suffragettes with Joan of Arc, as she was used in promotional material and literature. Suffragettes would frequently dress as Joan of Arc to lead processions or demonstrations, and English feminist activist Christabel Pankhurst often referred to Joan as the patron saint of the Suffragettes.⁵⁷

The suffragettes were not the only group to use Joan of Arc as a symbolic figurehead and Hall would have been exposed to her image through other channels. In 1909, the Catholic Women's League collected money from Roman Catholic women and girls across the country

⁵⁶ See Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 'For the suffragettes, Joan [of Arc] seems to have held the status of 'patron saint,' but in a qualified fashion – qualified both by the relationship between religious sentiment and national feeling within the British women's suffrage movement and by the gendered character of suffragette appropriations of Joan.', p.86.

⁵⁷ One of the largest suffragette processions that took place was on 17 June 1911, when an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 women gathered in London and marched from the Embankment to Albert Hall. Annan Bryce, mounted on a horse, was dressed as Joan of Arc and led the march. See *The Times*, 10 June 1911 for a notice of the event. Also see Mayhall, *ibid.*: 'Numerous historians and literary critics have accepted and elaborated upon Christabel Pankhurst's description of Joan of Arc as the 'patron saint' of the suffragette movement.' p.85.



Figure 22: W. C. Symons, mosaic of Joan of Arc (1910-16) at Westminster Cathedral. The caption beneath reads 'Beata Joanna, Intercede Pro Nobis' (Blessed Joan, intercede for us)

Source: Photorasa

<<http://photorasa.com/westminster-cathedral/mosaic-of-joan-of-arc/>>

[accessed 31 October 2017]

to install a mosaic of the beatified Joan of Arc in Westminster Cathedral (see Figure 22).⁵⁸ This was one of the regular Catholic churches in London that Mabel and Hall (and later Una) would attend.⁵⁹ The mosaic was installed between 1910 and 1911 and depicts Joan in a suit of armour, with a skirted lower half and short hair (the influence of Princess Marie d'Orléans's *Jeanne d'Arc* is evident in the design). Hall converted to Catholicism in 1912, with the encouragement and support of Mabel and her confirmation took place in the Cathedral on 20 October 1912.⁶⁰ In addition, there are documented visits that Hall made to Westminster Cathedral between 1910 and 1916.⁶¹ Hall not only converted to the Catholic faith in a church that was honouring Joan of Arc, but she regularly attended mass where there was a depiction of the female masculine Joan. The importance placed upon Joan of Arc and the celebration of her at

⁵⁸ *The Times*, 1 October 1909: 'The architects of Westminster Cathedral are at present engaged on the design of a mosaic of Joan of Arc which is the outcome of an ideal originated by the Catholic Women's League. The mosaic, which is to be erected in the Cathedral, is being subscribed for by Roman Catholic Women and children throughout the country, and it is hoped that the necessary money will be shortly forthcoming. The project has met with much favour in France. The permission required for this public veneration of one not yet officially canonized has been accorded by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The Pope, in a letter from Cardinal Merry de Val, has expressed the pleasure it affords him to bestow the Apostolic benediction on all who contributed to so worthy an object'. At present, there is no evidence that Mabel and Hall were part of the Catholic Women's League, because the records have not been retained from this period. However, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that they may have contributed to fund raising, because it was one of their regular Churches.

⁵⁹ The other catholic church in London that Hall would attend is the Brompton Oratory. See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, pp.81-82. The Brompton Oratory is also known as the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and was the largest Catholic Church in London before Westminster Cathedral opened in 1903.

⁶⁰ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*: 'On 20 October (1912), 'John [Hall] was confirmed at Westminster Cathedral by Bishop Butt.', p.82.

⁶¹ Cline, *ibid.*: '23 October (1910), 'she prayed in Westminster Cathedral with Ladye and Cara (Ladye's daughter)', p.69.; 'On 21 January (1912) John and Ladye heard Mass in Westminster Cathedral. On 20 October (1912), John was confirmed at Westminster Cathedral by Bishop Butt.', p.82.; and 'On 8 August (1914) they (Ladye and Hall) went to Confession at the Cathedral', p.96. In addition to these visits, a Memorial Service took place on 13 February 1926 at Westminster Cathedral for Una's husband Admiral Ernest Troubridge. Hall did not attend the service, but Una and her daughter Andrea were present, and Hall's own funeral service took place in the Cathedral on 14 October 1943.

Westminster Cathedral ensured that she was an integral presence in Hall's religious life and devotions.⁶²

Hall was having an affair with Una (Mabel's cousin) when Mabel died in 1916. Seeking forgiveness from Mabel for the affair and the subsequent relationship with Una, Hall turned to spiritualism. Driven by a desire to document, record and analyse Mabel's words at the *séances*, Hall, assisted by Una, harnessed a new routine and discipline for sustained writing, skills which she would later use when writing her novels. In 1918, Hall presented a paper on her research and findings to the Society for Psychical Research. As the paper alluded to her relationship with Mabel, it caused outrage amongst some in the society, with one of the members, St George Fox-Pitt, declaring Hall a 'grossly immoral woman.'⁶³ Hall was deeply upset and angry and consequently sued Fox-Pitt for slander. In the same year that Joan of Arc was canonised (1920), Hall's case went to court. Fox-Pitt decided to conduct his own defence and to cross-examine Hall in court. Biographers of Hall have made a connection with Oscar Wilde's trial, as Fox-Pitt had been the son-in-law of the Marquess of Queensbury, whom Wilde had taken to court in 1895.⁶⁴ Dellamora notes the comparative stance between Wilde's and Hall's trial, on the grounds of their sexuality, but he also examines the visual impact of Hall's masculinised style during her trial. Michael Baker's biography of Hall, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (1985) describes how in court she was: 'soberly dressed in a long dark jacket and skirt with a pale stock and high stiff collar'.⁶⁵ For Dellamora, Hall's visual presence in the courtroom is indicative of 'a person who resists conventional categorisation as a woman.'⁶⁶ As such, Hall was not only defending her moral honour, but also asserting the legitimacy of her identity. Dellamora's argument calls to mind Marjorie Garber's stance on Joan of Arc's cross-dressing, as she states: 'the clothing [Joan of Arc] chose, and the trial itself, declared not invisibility or annihilation but rather a

⁶² See the British Pathé Film from 1920, which recorded a procession coming out of Westminster Cathedral and a woman dressed as Joan of Arc to celebrate the canonisation of Joan <<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/saint-joan-of-arc/query/suffragettes>> [accessed: 1 November 2017].

⁶³ *The Times*, 19 November 1920.

⁶⁴ See Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall*: 'He [Fox-Pitt] had once been married to the daughter of the Marquess of Queensbury, the one who had clashed with Oscar Wilde. The marriage was annulled, allegedly on the grounds of Fox-Pitt's impotence. This humiliation may have turned him against women in general and fuelled his defiance of the small group of formidable females who now dominated the SPR's [Society for Psychical Research] affairs.', p. 131; Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, states 'This was St George Lane Fox-Pitt. Once married to the daughter of the Marquess of Queensbury, who had done Oscar Wilde no good at all, Fox-Pitt was a friend of [Una's husband Admiral Sir Ernest Troubridge] and intended no good to Radclyffe Hall.', p.144; and Diana Souhami, *The Trails of Radclyffe Hall*: 'But he [Fox-Pitt] was the son-in-law of the ninth Marquess of Queensbury, who had ruined Oscar Wilde. (Fox-Pitt married Queensbury's daughter, Edith, in 1898). There was family pride in victory over subverters of morality', p.108.

⁶⁵ Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall*, p.128.

⁶⁶ Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, p.86.

special and unmistakable visibility or legibility.’⁶⁷ Whilst comparisons have been made between the trials of Wilde and Hall, because of their sexual orientation, the parallels between the trials of cross-dressing Joan of Arc and Hall have gone unnoticed (both share a similar pattern of acceptance, victory and condemnation). Due to Fox-Pitt’s incompetence, Hall won the case, but it was a hollow victory, as Hall’s personal life and her relationship with Mabel and subsequently with Una had been exposed in the press. As the year ended, Hall pushed beyond the fashions of the New Woman, wearing clothes and accessories designed specifically for men and cropping her hair short and styling it like a man. More significantly, in 1920, Hall turned her attention to producing fiction and started working on the first novel she would complete, *The Unlit Lamp* (1924), in which her protagonist is a tomboy called Joan.

Hall’s first three novels were popular, well received and successful; they aroused interest in her as a writer. However, it was with the publication of *Adam’s Breed* that she established her reputation as a writer of literary merit, for which she won both the Prix Femina Vie Heureuse and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1927. One of the recent winners of the Prix Femina had been Joseph Delteil’s *Jeanne d’Arc* (1925), which was translated into English in 1926. Encouraged by the critical success and popularity of *Adam’s Breed*, Hall felt confident in her literary standing and reputation to produce a novel that would appeal for compassion towards inverts, in her most infamous novel *The Well of Loneliness*. The novel was prosecuted and banned as obscene in the UK. Although it was Hall’s publishers who were on trial, she became the subject of public focus and ridicule. By coincidence, in 1928 Delteil’s novel formed the basis of Carl Theodor Dreyer’s silent film *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* (1928) (see figure 23). The film focuses primarily on the trial and death of Joan of Arc and was released in Europe between April and October 1928. The film was ‘censored by the Catholic Church in France and banned in England’, but Hall and Una may have seen it despite this fact because they travelled extensively around Europe.⁶⁸ It is significant that a film which focuses on the trial of Joan of Arc should have been released in the same year that Hall faced her most vitriolic public trial.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin, 1992), p.216.

⁶⁸ Eric Michael Mazur, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Films*, (California: ABC-CLIO, 2011), p. 177.

⁶⁹ *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* featured the French actress Maria Falconetti as Joan of Arc. Hall and Una may have been aware of her through their friendship with Colette, whom they met in 1922. In a letter to her brother, Leo, Colette wrote: ‘Falconetti is a pain in the ass. She’s doing her Duse number. No makeup, a horrible old neck ... Let her drop dead. She’s now asking a thousand francs for a rehearsal. She must be a sordid old jewess who never washes’. Quoted in Judith Thurman, *Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), p.319.



Figure 23: Renée Jeanne Falconetti as Joan of Arc in Carl Theodor Dreyer's, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*) (1928)

Source: IMDb <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019254/mediaviewer/rm3949631488>>

[accessed 1 November 2017]

Hall would never fully recover, personally or professionally, from the publicity surrounding *The Well of Loneliness*, because the media mocked her reputation and image. In order to respond to the salacious interest *The Well of Loneliness* attracted and to demonstrate her morality and faith, Hall wrote *The Master of the House* (1932), which centred on the Christ figure of Christophe.⁷⁰ In her previous novels, religious motifs were a part of her writing, but *The Master of the House* has a significantly different tone, as it has platitudes of virtue which preach or attempt to portray a Christian ideal. By the time she wrote her final novel *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936) Hall was having an affair and was deeply in love with Evguenia Souline. Souline was a Russian exile who came from a different world and class from Hall and this influence is reflected in the narrative voice of *The Sixth Beatitude*. Claudia Stillman Franks notes how Hall was once again enthused and energised as her love for Souline 'informs the spirit of her last book.'⁷¹

⁷⁰ Coincidentally, Dreyer directed a film in 1925 entitled *Du skal ære din hustru*, which was distributed in English speaking countries as *The Master of the House* (the same title that Hall used for her later novel). For more information on Dreyer's career and films see Jean Drum and Dale D. Drum, *My Only Great Passion: The Life and Films of Carl Th. Dreyer* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2000).

⁷¹ Claudia Stillman Franks, *Beyond the Well of Loneliness: The Fiction of Radclyffe Hall*, (Wellingborough: Avebury Publishing Company), p.160.

Joan of Arc has a peripheral presence in Hall's life that is both tangible and circumstantial. The evidence presented so far locates Hall in places and circumstances where Joan of Arc's image was presented or where Hall and Una may have been culturally aware of a version of Joan's story. Whilst this would be sufficient to suggest that Joan of Arc was an influence on Hall, there is further evidence of both Hall's and Una's engagements with Joan of Arc, which confirms that she was a significant figure in their lives and in their art.

3.6 Joan of Arc: A Subversive Female Masculine Role Model

Castle's discussion of Joan of Arc and Hall is an acknowledgement that Joan has had an innate appeal to lesbians over the centuries. In truth, Joan of Arc's sexuality is irrelevant, because what she has offered to lesbians (and for that matter to all queers) is a visible, but accepted, representation of difference – she is a formative gay icon. This interpretation comes from Joan of Arc's feminine strength and courage combined with her popularity and well-known status as a historical, religious and cultural figure, but there is also a subversive and alternative view and reading of her, because Joan is one of the most accessible, accepted, and recognisable images of female cross-dressing. Although Joan of Arc falls outside the remit of Halberstam's discussions in *Female Masculinity*, she states that 'the masculine woman ... [is] a historical fixture, a character who has challenged gender systems'.⁷² Joan of Arc claimed that her voices gave a clear directive to 'put on masculine clothes; you shall bear arms and become head of the army'.⁷³ Logically it would seem that Joan of Arc adopted masculine clothing out of necessity to protect herself from her soldiers and prison guards, but it may also have been a choice, rather than a costume of war. Transgender activist and writer Leslie Feinberg argues that 'Joan of Arc suffered the excruciating pain of being burned alive rather than renounce her identity'.⁷⁴ Feinberg is challenging the historical and cultural assumptions around Joan of Arc's cross-dressing. In this reading of events, Joan of Arc is not a victim of trickery, because she decides that her own identity (an identity approved by God) is one that is worth dying for and as such she becomes the master of her own fate. Instead of being viewed as a woman who wore men's clothes because her circumstances dictated it, Joan of Arc becomes a woman who cross-dressed out of her own desires. The difference may appear slight, but it politicises Joan of Arc's cross-dressing as an act of positive gender nonconformity. During her life, Joan of Arc's fellow citizens accepted her cross-dressing (it was only when she was captured that it became a focus of her trial). More significantly, Joan of Arc's cross-dressing has been legitimised by her universal fame and canonisation. For a young girl who, as Baker puts it, was beginning to realise 'that she [Hall] was 'different' from other girls of her own age', Joan of Arc would have offered a positive female masculine role-model.⁷⁵ In a world which would have been generally devoid of images of female masculine women, Joan of Arc would not only have provided Hall with a strong example of female masculine identity, but also one which was able to infiltrate

⁷² Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, p.45.

⁷³ Sackville-West, *Saint Joan of Arc*. p. 51.

⁷⁴ Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), p.36.

⁷⁵ Michael Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall*, p.20.

hegemonic structures of gender based on Cartesian dualisms of male/female, masculine/feminine. This may appear to be reinforcing a stereotype that all lesbians must be interested in Joan of Arc and therefore Hall and Una must have been, but there is evidence that the pair were more actively engaged with Joan of Arc's story and imagery than has previously been recognised.

In her memoir and biography, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (1961), Una Troubridge claims that Hall's sexual awakening occurred as she listened to one of her stepfather's female pupils singing in his garden studio. Una writes, '(Hall's) first serious falling in love, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, was, she always told me, with a voice ... The lovely pure soprano voice of stepfather's pupil, Agnes Nicols [sic. Nicholls].'⁷⁶ While there is probably an element of truth in this account, the story has a remarkably fairy-tale quality. The tale presents Hall's sexual awakening as otherworldly and beyond the reality of the physical and sexual desire experienced by most people. As so little is known about Hall's early life scholars have taken this explanation to be true.⁷⁷ The stigma attached to coming out and accepting one's own sexuality appears not to have impacted on Hall, as she experiences no internal turmoil, anxiety, shame, or guilt, but instead hears Agnes singing, falls in love with a woman and graciously accepts the fact of her sexuality.

Hall's and Una's complicit production of this tale reveals not only their desire to present Hall's sexuality in a positive light, but also offers access to the psychology of their fantasy world. The most striking aspect of their tale is its similarity to Joan of Arc's calling from God. At her trial in 1431, Joan of Arc said, 'I was thirteen when I had a Voice from God for my help and guidance. The first time that I heard this Voice, I was very much frightened; it was mid-day, in the summer, in my father's garden.'⁷⁸ Whilst the credibility of both Joan of Arc's and Hall's encounters with the voices in their father's/step-father's garden is debatable, both stories do serve the same purpose: external celestial voices act as an epiphany that legitimises the future life choices of Joan and Hall. Their encounters and

⁷⁶ Una Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hammond Hammond, 1961), p.25. Although Hall's romantic relationship with Agnes would only last a few years, they remained lifelong friends. In addition, see *The Times*, 23 April 1917, which gives details of a 'Pageant of Fair Women' as part of a Joan of Arc Day. Agnes was one of many well-known people who had volunteered to attend the event. It is not documented if Hall was aware of the Pageant, but at the time her relationship with Una was troubled as she was still in mourning over the death of Mabel Batten.

⁷⁷ Ironically, more is known about Joan of Arc's nineteen-year-old life than is known about Hall's early life. See Jeremy Duquesnay Adams 'Preface' in Régine Pernoud and Marie-Véronique Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, 'we know more details about her [Joan of Arc] short life than we do of any other human being before her time (including Plato, or Alexander of Macedon, or Julius Caesar, or Jesus Christ) and for several centuries thereafter, is extraordinary', xvi.

⁷⁸ Mathias Gabel and Carlyn Luzzolino, trans., *Saint Joan of Arc's Trial of Condemnation, 'Second Public Examination, Thursday 22 February 1431'*, <<http://www.stjoan-center.com/Trials/sec02.html>> [accessed 5 March 2013].

reaction to the divine and ethereal voices in the garden suggest that Joan of Arc and Hall should be viewed as spiritually different from the rest of humanity, as God has predetermined their destinies instead of leaving them to be driven by their own moral choices.⁷⁹ The sanitised and highly romantic account of Hall's lesbian awakening is too similar to Joan of Arc's calling to be mere coincidence, particularly as Hall and Una were both aware of Joan of Arc's story and during their lifetime, the cross-dressing Joan became a saint. In Una's (and Hall's) attempt to make Hall's sexuality palatable to the public, it appears they turned to history's most famous cross-dressing woman for inspiration and the hope of mass understanding. If the world accepted Joan of Arc's cross-dressing, because she claimed to have been instructed by a voice in a garden, then perhaps by the same logic the world would accept Hall's sexuality. Hall and Una thus suggest a comparable association between Hall's sexual awakening and Joan of Arc's calling from God.

While there is some subtlety to the story of Hall's first love, Una ensures there is no doubt about her lover's role model, when she later describes her as:

one who, if the need arose, would go to the pillory or the stake for her convictions, one who would go through the fire and water, would never accept defeat and would fight the good fight through mental and physical suffering until, when the tormented body failed, the spirit blazed forth, brave, patient, and unafraid, and she rendered up her splendid soul to God.⁸⁰

Joan of Arc may not be explicitly mentioned in this passage, or for that matter in Una's memoir and biography of Hall, but the references to stake and fire offer sufficient symbolic associations with Joan not to be dismissed as accidental or subconscious.⁸¹ In a piece of unpublished and undated writing, Una discusses people who have 'It', the 'It' being a charisma, charm or skill that they are born with and which marks them as different. In this essay, Una discusses several historical figures including Joan of Arc: 'There are plenty of evidences that Joan of Arc had "It" in so marked a degree that her opponents evoked witchcraft to account for her uncanny influence upon those with whom she came in

⁷⁹ Souhami, *The Trails of Radclyffe Hall*. Souhami suggests that Hall was exploring and experimenting with other girls at an earlier age than has previously been acknowledged by biographers: 'When she was fifteen she pushed up the sleeve of a student in a silk dress and kissed her arm. The girl laughed, seemed apprehensive but interested, so Marguerite kissed her on the lips. She 'repeated the exercise at every opportunity' – until the girl left to study in Paris.', p.22. Souhami's account of the early life of Hall is interesting, but much of the material is unreferenced or taken from unpublished works of fiction and writings by Radclyffe Hall.

⁸⁰ Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, p.49.

⁸¹ *ibid*. There is one inadvertent mention of Joan of Arc's name in Una's biography, but this is in relation to a product and not Joan herself, as Una refers to 'wandering through that lovely town of Arles and drinking iced Jeanne d'Arc beer', p.97.

contact'.⁸² Una was an intelligent, religious and cultured woman who purposefully chose her metaphors to describe the nature of Hall's personality, suggesting that her lover had the spirit and temperament of a martyr and saint whose death is associated with being burnt at the stake as readily as crucifixion is associated with Jesus Christ.⁸³

The imagery that Una evokes in describing Hall's personality is very similar to Hall's own metaphorical concept of herself when writing of her passion for Souline:

Sometimes it seems to me that one almost touches the spirit of the beloved in moments of intense physical passion – strange that I feel this & yet I do. It is as though the flesh must melt, be burned away by the intensity of its own desire and by the rapture of its ultimate fulfillment [sic].⁸⁴

Although this is a very private declaration by Hall, it reveals the depths of her self-martyrdom, as even in moments of intimate erotic love she associates her feelings with the pain of burning. Passion is both ardent love and suffering for Hall and she places herself in the Joan of Arc martyr role.

Hall was attracted to the ideology and idolatry of martyrdom, which Dellamora has linked to the Passion, as an indication that she 'merged her identity with that of the historical figure of Christ'.⁸⁵ The influence of Dellamora's reading is evident in Emily S. Hill's recent article 'God's Miserable Army: Love, Suffering, and Queer Faith in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*' (2016) in which Hill argues that 'Stephen becomes a queer Christ figure whose suffering ushers in a new ethics of love'.⁸⁶ The article conceptualises Stephen as a Christ figure and reads the conclusion of *The Well of Loneliness* as a form of crucifixion. The risk of Dellamora's reading and Hill's interpretation is that Hall's and Stephen's female masculinity is interpreted using the masculine figure of Christ. Acknowledging and recognising the

⁸² Una Troubridge, "It", Lovat Dickson Collection, (MG 30, D 237), Volume 3, Una Troubridge Manuscripts, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1197/2029?r=0&s=3> [accessed 2 November 2017]. In addition, Una did research for Hall's novel, *The Master of the House*. In one of the fragment papers on Trench Warfare in 1915, Una writes: 'January to March, heavy fighting in Alsace and Lorraine (*Joan of Arc, Lorraine*)' see Holograph and typescript notes, fragments, Harry Ransom Centre, The Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Box 4, Folder 1. The reference to Joan of Arc is not relevant to Una's research on trench warfare, but is a note and a reminder (it is underlined in red on the page) that this region has a connection to Joan. The note suggests a subliminal and automatic association with Joan of Arc for Una.

⁸³ In his Preface to *Saint Joan* (1924) George Bernard Shaw reminds his reader, that Joan of Arc's death was nothing extraordinary and that 'Joan was burnt just as dozens of less interesting heretics were burnt in her time. Christ, in being crucified, only shared the fate of thousands of forgotten malefactors'. Preface, *Saint Joan* (London: Penguin, 1984) [1924], p.30.

⁸⁴ Radclyffe Hall to Evgenia Souline, 27 March 1935, in *Your John: The Love Letters of Radclyffe Hall*, ed., Joanne Glasgow, p.111.

⁸⁵ Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, p.4.

⁸⁶ Emily S. Hill, 'God's Miserable Army: Love, Suffering, and Queer Faith in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*' in *Literature and Theology*, Volume 30, Issue 3, 1 September 2016, pp 359–374, <<https://academic-oup.com.ezproxy.nottingham.ac.uk/litthe/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/litthe/frv013>> [accessed 12 November 2017].

importance of Joan of Arc within the context of Hall's own self-identity and its influence on Una's consciously constructed depiction of her lover counteracts the tired (and rather dated) notion that female masculine identities are derived only from male role models.

3.7 *Saint Joan* (1924): Resonance in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928)



Figure 24: Sybil Thorndike as Joan of Arc in *Saint Joan* (1924)

Source: Getty Images

<<http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/sybil-thorndike-as-saint-joan-c-1924-from-the-irish-author-news-photo/171165298?#sybil-thorndike-as-saint-joan-c-1924-from-the-irish-author-george-picture-id171165298>>

[accessed 4 November 2017]

One of the most popular UK theatrical representations of Joan of Arc in the early twentieth century was Shaw's *Saint Joan*.⁸⁷ Shaw, like Hall, had lived through a period of resurgent interest in the cultural, historical and religious figure of Joan of Arc. During a visit to Orléans in 1913, Shaw wrote to Mrs Patrick Campbell, 'I shall do a Joan play some day.'⁸⁸ However, the play would take another ten years to materialise, by which time Joan of Arc had become a saint. The canonisation of Joan of Arc, according to Brian Tyson's book, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan* (1982), provided an opportunity for Shaw to comment on the 'very institution that had been instrumental in burning her.'⁸⁹ The irony was that the Church, responsible for Joan of Arc's death, was celebrating and honouring her bravery, devotion and courage five-hundred years later.

There has been no published account of Hall and Una ever attending the theatre to see *Saint Joan*, but the play's popularity and their acquaintance with both Shaw and Sybil Thorndike (see Figure 24), who played Joan of Arc on the stage in London to great critical acclaim, suggests they were highly likely

⁸⁷ See Sheridan Morely, *Sybil Thorndike: A Life in the Theatre* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 1977): 'Another of the lingering misapprehensions about *Saint Joan* is that it was an immediate critical success. Certainly, it was an immediate public success: Archibald Haddon, the BBC's first and only fully accredited theatre critic, reported on the air that public interest was so intense that a queue began to assemble at five o'clock in the morning. More than two thousand applications for first night tickets had to be refused, and when the curtain rose celebrities were as plentiful in the audience as they used to be at Henry Irving's Lyceum or Herbert Tree's His Majesty's', p.78.

⁸⁸ George Bernard Shaw, letter to Mrs Patrick Campbell, 8 September 1913, quoted in Michel W. Pharand, *Bernard Shaw and the French* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), p.150.

⁸⁹ Brian Tyson, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan* (Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982), p.2.

to have seen the London production.⁹⁰ Indeed, Una's diary entry on Friday 9 May 1924 confirms that they saw *Saint Joan*:

John [Hall] and I up rather later and out shopping to Tailors & Co. In [the] afternoon we drove to Tallulah's (Bankhead) for tea. We took Francis and Mary to *St. Joan* and to supper at Moulin D'Or then home not to [sic] late.⁹¹

This new unpublished evidence not only documents that Hall and Una were engaged with Joan of Arc's image and story, but also, and more importantly, it identifies the actual cultural and intellectual version of Joan. Shaw's Joan of Arc is a cross-dressing woman who believes in her own opinion and refuses to back down to authority. In his Preface to the play, Shaw describes Joan of Arc:

At eighteen Joan's pretensions were beyond those of the proudest Pope or the naughtiest emperor. She claimed to be the ambassador and plenipotentiary of God, and to be, in effect, a member of the Church Triumphant whilst still in the flesh on earth. She patronized her own kin, and summoned the English king to repentance and obedience to her commands. She lectured, talked down, and overruled statesmen and prelates. She pooh-poohed the plans of the generals, leading their troops to victory on plans of her own. She had an unbounded and quite unconcealed contempt for official opinion, judgement, and authority, and for War Office tactics and strategy. [...] As her actual condition was a pure upstart, there were only two opinions about her. One was that she was miraculous: the other that she was unbearable.⁹²

Shaw's *Saint Joan* offered an exciting and positive depiction of a female masculine woman who was empowered, headstrong, brave and who ultimately became a saint. While there is

⁹⁰ Hall and Shaw moved in similar circles and had mutual friends as they were both members of PEN club. Rachel Potter, *Obscene Modernism: Literary Censorship and Experiment 1900-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) states: 'created in 1921 in London by Catherin Amy Dawson Scott, with John Galsworthy as its first president. Founding members included Joseph Conrad, George Bernard Shaw, and H G Wells, with Mary Webb, Violet Hunt, May Sinclair, Rebecca West, Radclyffe Hall, and W. B. Yeats joining soon afterwards', p.156. Shaw was also one of the many writers and artists who initially spoke out against the Government's treatment of Hall over *The Well of Loneliness*; his views were printed in most newspapers on 17 November 1928. In addition he wrote supportive articles for both the *Daily Herald* and *The Irish Statesman*. For more detail, see Celia Marshik, *British Modernism and Censorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 83-4. To celebrate winning the Femina Prize in 1926 for *Adam's Breed* Hall and Una hosted a party which was attended by Sybil Thorndike; see Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, p.220. Una's diary for 4 May 1930 states that 'Sybil Thorndike and her children came' [for tea], in Richard Ormrod, *Una Troubridge: The Friend of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p.198.

⁹¹ Una Troubridge diary entry for Friday 9 May 1924, in the Lovat Dickson Collection, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1196/1647?r=0&s=4> [accessed: 24 October 2017]. *Saint Joan* was produced in New York in 1923 and then opened at the New Theatre, London on 26 March 1924.

⁹² Shaw, Preface, *Saint Joan*, p.7.

no commentary or reaction to the play in Una's diary, the couple evidently enjoyed *Saint Joan*, as Una reveals in her diary entry for Wednesday 13 August 1924:

John and I breakfasted in bed and up and John heard 'Mark Anthony Brakes' taken by Hutchinson – we worked and fussed all morning about the house. P.M. we drove and shopped – finished jacket for *The Unlit Lamp* cover. We went to 1st night of *Storm* rotten play – home and sat up till 1.30 waiting for Teddie (Gerrard) who never came. We read *St Joan*.⁹³

The couple tended to read novels, so for them to read the published text of a play is quite unusual.⁹⁴ This engagement with Shaw's text (and one presumes his Preface) indicates an interest in Joan of Arc and the representation of her in *Saint Joan* that extended beyond an entertaining evening at the theatre. Their fascination with, and enjoyment of, the play are evident when they return to see *Saint Joan* on Saturday 4 October 1924. Una writes: 'John and I breakfasted in bed and in the car to Bank and to meet Audrey Heath at the Berkeley and took her to *St. Joan* after lunch and brought her home to tea'.⁹⁵ All three of these diary entries provide new evidence that Shaw's *Saint Joan* was a play/text that had a significant impact on both Hall and Una. Up to 1924, Joan of Arc may have been a formative figure and role model in their lives, but Shaw's *Saint Joan* focuses Hall's and Una's attention on how a female masculine figure can be represented and be a popular and critical success.

In addition to Hall and Una engaging with the play and the text, there is another element to this version of Joan of Arc which suggests how influential Shaw's *Saint Joan* was on the couple. Hall and Una had read the initial published version of *Saint Joan*, but in October 1924 a *de lux* edition was published, with illustrations by Charles Ricketts (see Figure 25).⁹⁶ Ricketts's cover for *Saint Joan* is art nouveau in style and shows an elongated Joan of Arc adopting a crucified/Christ like-pose, with her sword attached to her belt; she is

⁹³ Una Troubridge, diary entry for Wednesday 13 August 1924, in the Lovat Dickson Collection, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1196/1696?r=0&s=3>. 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes' was one of Hall's unpublished short stories; see Funke *'The World' and Other Unpublished Works of Radclyffe Hall* – 'Even though she agreed that it would be best to present herself to the world as a novelist, she continued to write short stories and never abandoned the idea of publishing her short fiction. Indeed a notebook she kept from October 1924 to March 1925 indicates that she sent several of her short stories to her literary agent, Audrey M. Heath, and was planning to put together a collection of short stories at this time. It was meant to include some of her first short stories, 'Bonaparte', 'The Blossoms', 'Poor Miss Briggs' and 'The Career of Mark Anthony Brakes', together with newer works, such as 'Miles', 'Saint Ethelflaeda', 'The Scarecrow' and 'Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself'. For reasons that are unknown, Hall did not publish the volume at this time', p.3. Teddie Gerard was an Argentine actress (1890[1] – 1942). C. K. Munro, *Storm* (1924).

⁹⁴ *Saint Joan* was published on 25 June 1924. See Tyson, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan*, p.103.

⁹⁵ Una Troubridge diary entry for Saturday 4 October 1924, in the Lovat Dickson Collection, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_h1196/1724?r=0&s=3> [accessed: 4 November 2017]. Audrey Heath was Radclyffe Hall's literary agent.

⁹⁶ See Tyson: 'By October an *edition de lux* illustrated by Charles Ricketts and limited to 750 copies had appeared, priced at five guineas', p.103.



Figure 25: C. Ricketts's cover of George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1924)

Source: abebooks.com,

https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=11002839945&searchurl=kn%3Dsaint%2Bjoan%2Ba%2Bchronicle%2Bplay%2Bin%2Bsix%2Bscenes%2Band%2Ban%2Bepilogue%2Bshaw%2Bbernard%2Bric ketts%2Bcharles%26sortby%3D17&cm_sp=snippet-_-srp1-_-title6

[accessed 5 January 2018]

fully clothed and even has gloves on, but underneath the fleur-de-lis smock, her armoured feet appear suspended above the fire. Joan of Arc's head is tilted to one side, exposing an angular bob haircut and there appears to be a crown on her head. Behind Joan of Arc there are circles that suggest aureole lights. Ricketts's cover is an unusual depiction of Joan of Arc because of the pose and the clothing, but it is also instantly recognisable as Joan. Una's diaries do not mention the *de lux* edition of *Saint Joan*, but in October 1924 the couple were regularly going into bookshops and reading the literary press, because they were monitoring sales and reviews of *The Unlit Lamp*, (which had been published in September 1924). Aware of their interest in the play, it is possible they also saw or purchased the *de lux* edition of *Saint Joan*, because there are remarkable similarities between Ricketts's cover and the dust jacket that Una designed for *Adam's Breed* (1926) (see Figure 26). The cover of *Adam's Breed*



Figure 26: Dust jacket for Radclyffe Hall's, *Adam's Breed* (1926), designed by Una Troubridge. The initials UVT (Una Vincenzo Troubridge) are in the bottom righthand corner

Source: Ashton Rare Books, <<http://www.ashtonrarebooks.com/book/hall-radclyffe-adams-breed-with-the-original-wrapper-and-a-hw-letter-from-the-artist-una-troubridge/>> [accessed 5 January 2018]

depicts an elongated bearded man in a crucifixion/Christ-like pose standing in front of a tree with his hands open, feeding birds; at his bare feet are forest animals. The man dominates the cover and the slightly raised ground around the tree roots creates the illusion that he is elevated. The pose is classically Christ-like, in the same manner as Ricketts's *Saint Joan of Arc*, but the cover also resembles Edmund Dulac's portrait of *Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon as Medieval Saints* (1920) (see Figure 27). The portrait of Ricketts and his long-term companion Charles Shannon, places the men in a pastoral setting, surrounded by animals dressed as monks/friars. Whether Una was aware of Dulac's portrait remains uncertain, but Ricketts's cover for *Saint Joan* and Dulac's portrait of Ricketts and Shannon, share much in common with the cover for *Adam's Breed*.⁹⁷ All three images use Christian

⁹⁷ Una's diaries from 7 July 1925 to 29 July 1925 state she is working on the cover, but there are no details about her rationale for it.



Figure 27: Edmund Dulac, *Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon as Medieval Saints* (1920)

Source: The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,
<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/hiddenhistories/biographies/bio/friendship/rickettsshannon_biography.html>
[accessed 5 January 2017]

iconography in relation to figures whose sexuality is ambiguous: Ricketts and Shannon never explicitly declared they were lovers, the female masculine Joan of Arc is a queer icon, and Gian-Luca in *Adam's Breed* is presented as heterosexual, but he also appears to be a suppressed homosexual. The cover for *Adam's Breed* could be a mere coincidence, but as Hall and Una had engaged with Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Ricketts's cover might have influenced Una's design choices.

Although they were produced within similar periods, Shaw's *Saint Joan* has not previously been considered as a source of inspiration for Hall's most famous novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, in which she explores society's reaction to, and treatment of, the female masculine Stephen. The theme of individualism, which is central to Shaw's *Saint Joan*, along

with the punishment and isolation of the female masculine cross-dressing woman, all feature within Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. In Act III of *Saint Joan* Joan states:

JOAN: [*matter-of-fact*] I will never take a husband. A man in Toul took an action against me for breach of promise; but I never promised him. I am a soldier: I do not want to be thought of as a woman. I will not dress as a woman. I do not care for things women care for. They dream of lovers, and of money. I dream of leading a charge, and of placing the big guns. You soldiers do not know how to use the big guns: you think you can win battles with a great noise and smoke.⁹⁸

Shaw presents his Joan as a female masculine woman who is unafraid to declare that she is different from other women both in terms of her clothing and personal ambitions. It is an appealing and positive depiction, which can be seen to resonate in *The Well of Loneliness*. While similar dramatic themes can be coincidental, in the case of Hall's conclusion to *The Well of Loneliness* the intertextual evidence strongly suggests the presence and influence of Shaw's *Saint Joan*.

Shaw concludes *Saint Joan* with an epilogue, in which a 1920s cleric arrives to announce to Joan of Arc and to other characters on the stage that she is to be 'canonized as a saint.'⁹⁹ The characters congratulate Joan on her achievement and recognition, at which point she comments:

JOAN. Woe unto me when all men praise me! I bid you remember that I am a saint, and that saints can work miracles. And now tell me: shall I rise from the dead, and come back to you as a living woman?

A sudden darkness blots out the walls of the room as they all spring to their feet in consternation. Only the figures and the bed remain visible.

JOAN: What! Must I burn again? Are none of you ready to receive me?¹⁰⁰

Despite the adulation of those around her, when she suggests she should be resurrected in order to return to the living, the characters gradually vacate the stage, leaving Joan alone. The play ends with an isolated Joan asking, 'O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?'.¹⁰¹ The inclusion of her canonisation within the play draws attention to Joan of Arc's contemporary and on-going

⁹⁸ George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan* (London: Penguin, 1984) [1924], p.83.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.155.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.158.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.159.

relevance as a cultural figure, but it also signifies and reinforces that she is still perceived as an outsider. Shaw emphasises that the female masculine Joan of Arc is a woman who can be celebrated safely in her death, but whose type cannot be allowed to live on earth. Contemporary reaction to the epilogue was critical and *The Times* review is typical in declaring the ending 'an artistic error, because it lets the play down.'¹⁰² Instead of ending with Joan's heroic death, Shaw questions a society that so willingly punishes difference.

The conclusion of *The Well of Loneliness* has been a source of frustration for many readers and critics over the years, because Stephen sacrifices her happiness by relinquishing her lover Mary into the arms of Martin (and the illusion of a heterosexual relationship). Unlike E. M. Forster's *Maurice* (written in 1914, but published in 1971), *The Well of Loneliness* offers no happy ending for the gay lovers, but instead reflects a realistic account of suppressed sexuality and the painful sense of loneliness felt by many queers at the time. *The Well of Loneliness* concludes with Stephen heartbroken and alone in her bedroom. In her moment of despair, the world's inverts start to appear before her:

Rockets of pain, burning rockets of pain — their pain, her pain, all welded together into one great consuming agony. Rockets of pain that shot up and burst, dropping scorching tears of fire on the spirit — her pain, their pain...all the misery at Alec's. [...] The walls fell down and crumbled before them; at the cry of their suffering the walls fell and crumbled: 'We are coming, Stephen — we are still coming on, and our name is legion — you dare not disown us!' She raised her arms, trying to ward them off, but they closed in and in: 'You dare not disown us!'¹⁰³

The metaphoric fire that engulfs Stephen presents a comparative allusion to Joan of Arc's death. At this moment, Stephen feels the burning pain and suffering of all the inverts of the world. They beg her to speak to God and to represent their cause to him: 'Stephen, Stephen, speak with your God and ask Him why He has left us forsaken!'.¹⁰⁴ The inverts enter Stephen's body, leaving her alone in her bedroom, but united with the voices of the inverts. Stephen then asks God:

'God,' she gasped, we believe; we have told You we believe...We have not denied You, then rise up and defend us. Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence!'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *The Times*, 27 May 1924.

¹⁰³ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, p.446.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p.446.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.447.

In this moment of solitude in a bedroom (a solitude akin to that of Shaw's Joan of Arc), Stephen's final question has an inflection which is similar to Shaw's final line in the play. Joan acknowledges the beauty of God's earth, but questions how long it will be before saints can return and be welcomed by their communities. *Saint Joan* and *The Well of Loneliness* both conclude with an isolated female masculine woman asking God a direct and challenging question about the acceptance of those who are different from the rest of society. Although the question is addressed to God, its purpose is to make the audience/readers reflect and question their own attitudes towards difference. Hall's engagement with the play and the text of *Saint Joan* suggests that the similarity between the two final statements is not coincidence, but demonstrates Shaw's influence on the conclusion of *The Well of Loneliness*.

There is also a further resonance between *Saint Joan* and *The Well of Loneliness*, in the word 'loneliness' itself which features in the most melodramatic moments of the play. After the king's coronation, Joan stays to pray, but realises she is alone on earth and declares her loneliness:

Do not think you can frighten me by telling me that I am alone. France is alone; and God is alone; and what is my loneliness before the loneliness of my country and my God? I see now that the loneliness of God is His strength: what would He be if He listened to your jealous little counsels? Well, my loneliness shall be my strength too; it is better to be alone with God.¹⁰⁶

This scene is one of the most dramatic moments in the play, because Joan is powerful and defiant, but with a vulnerable loneliness that reinforces her connection to God. Despite being abandoned, Joan retains her belief that God is still with her and loves her. It is a powerful speech and one that is thematically comparable to Hall's interest in characters who are isolated, but have a deep sense of spirituality.

This intertextual evidence helps to reveal an artistic connection between *Saint Joan* and *The Well of Loneliness*. Shaw had presented a version of Joan of Arc, which created a positive and inspiring vision of female masculinity. Yet, it is not just in *The Well of Loneliness* that Joan of Arc's influence and presence can be identified, as a closer examination of Hall's work reveals that she was a female role model, artistic inspiration and thematic emblem for Hall throughout her writing career.

¹⁰⁶ Shaw, *Saint Joan*, p.112.

3.8 Revealing the Emblematic Figure of Joan of Arc in Hall's Writing

While Joan of Arc is not directly mentioned in any of Hall's work, her presence and influence are still ascertainable and visible in her writing. The most obvious example of Joan of Arc's influence is in the naming of Hall's protagonist Joan in *The Unlit Lamp*. In 1920, the same year that Joan of Arc became a saint, Hall started working on *Octopi* (the initial working title for *The Unlit Lamp*).¹⁰⁷ Despite the clue in the name and Joan Ogden's tomboy appearance, there had been no suggestion that Joan of Arc inspired the character until the publication of my article, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity'.¹⁰⁸ Jaime Hovey has recently acknowledged the importance of Joan of Arc in Hall's work in her article 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West'. Hovey argues that other contemporary writers 'modelled protagonists on her [Joan of Arc], most notably Radclyffe Hall, Vita Sackville-West, but also Virginia Woolf, Enid Bagnold, and Daphne du Maurier, among others'.¹⁰⁹ Although Hovey includes a range of contemporary writers who were influenced by Joan of Arc, her article only focuses on Hall and Sackville-West. In her discussion of the influence of Joan of Arc on Hall, Hovey misconstrues the subtleties of Joan of Arc's influence as an historical, religious and cultural figure. Hovey misreads the circumstantial evidence presented in 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity' as suggesting that, 'Hall was obsessed with Joan of Arc'.¹¹⁰ This is not the case. The evidence I presented simply served to demonstrate how prominent a figure Joan of Arc was during Hall's life and how this positive, celebrated and honoured female masculine woman was a potential role model for Hall. Drawing on this circumstantial evidence this Chapter has developed the argument by discovering primary evidence that unequivocally demonstrates how Joan of Arc, and in particular Shaw's *Saint Joan*, had an impact on both Hall and Una.

¹⁰⁷ Coincidentally 1920 was the same year that Hall cut her hair short. See Cline: 'At the end of 1920 she [Hall] finally cut her hair and took on the muted but powerful lesbian look. Her close-cropped Eton hairstyle with its exotic kiss curls like sideburns gave her an aura of highbrow modernism', p.148.

¹⁰⁸ See Steven Macnamara, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity': 'Based on the social circumstances leading up to the production of this novel [*The Unlit Lamp*] and the determinable circumstances of when Hall started writing it, I would argue that the character of Joan Ogden has been inspired and influenced by no less a figure than Joan of Arc herself', in *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology*, ed. by Karioris, F. G. and Loeser, C. (Witney: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014). p. 106.

¹⁰⁹ Jaime E. Hovey, 'Gallantry and its discontents: Joan of Arc and Virtuous Transmasculinity in Radclyffe Hall and Vita Sackville-West', in *Feminist Modernist Studies*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-2, (2018), p.113.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.125.

The fact that Hall named her first completed female character Joan in the same year that Joan of Arc became a saint could easily be dismissed as mere coincidence. However, it is a formula that she repeated in her most critically acclaimed novel *Adam's Breed*. Although



Figure 28: Saint Thérèse (also known as St. Thérèse of Lisieux or the Little Flower) dressed as Joan of Arc for her play on Joan that was performed on 21 January 1895

Source: Maid of Heaven

<http://www.maidofheaven.com/joanofarc_st_therese.asp> [accessed 11 November 2017]

the central character of the novel is the male Gian-Luca, his grandmother and guardian is called Teresa. At the start of the novel Teresa rejects God, because her daughter dies giving birth to Gian-Luca and she fails to show him any love or warmth during his life. Hall had toyed with the idea of *Adam's Breed* for a couple of years, but she started writing the novel in earnest in 1925, which is the year that Thérèse of Lisieux was canonised. Thérèse's short life at the end of the nineteenth century and her quick canonisation made her a popular saint during the 1920s.

Thérèse was a keen writer and even wrote a play based on Joan of Arc's life, but it is not the play which ratifies the connection between these two saints, so much as

photographs of Thérèse dressed as Joan of Arc (see Figure 28). Thérèse presents a feminine Joan of Arc, with her long hair and skirt, but her armour and tilted sword suggest that she is also ready for battle. Interestingly, Una documents a visit that they made to Lisieux, to visit Thérèse's effigy, but they were unimpressed with the crowds and the tacky displays, as Una records: 'She is not reserved for the faithful of impeccable taste, as is testified by the curtains that flank or used to flank her shrine.'¹¹¹ Una's commentary on Saint Thérèse and Hall's use of the name in *Adam's Breed*, for a disagreeable and unloveable character, suggests they did not admire her in the same way as Saint Joan of Arc.

¹¹¹ Troubridge, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, p.89.

By contrast, Joan in *The Unlit Lamp* is portrayed more sympathetically as an intelligent tomboy, who is described as being, 'lanky as a boy, with a pale face and short black hair.'¹¹² The description could easily apply to many representations of Joan of Arc. The young Joan attempts to escape the clutches of her mother through education and the friendship of her tutor Elizabeth Rodney. However, Joan is torn between her mother and her tutor, as they both present her with a moral and life-changing choice. Ultimately, she sacrifices her life and the possibility of a relationship with Elizabeth to nurse her mother, out of a sense of loyalty and duty. Hall's Joan may not perish in a fire, but as a young woman she is viewed by others as having the potential to become a 'burnt sacrifice'.¹¹³ Joan condemns herself to a living hell of subservient drudgery, loneliness and wasted opportunity, and when her mother dies her fate is to be tethered to nursing an invalid family member. Hall describes how 'Joan looked into the fire' recognising that she has fulfilled her own prophecy.¹¹⁴ Although Joan's sacrifice is tragic, her self-martyrdom is typical of Hall's protagonists.

Joan Ogden's character was partly inspired by the women Hall met during her time with the suffragettes. In her biography, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (1985), Sally Cline states: 'Hall's awareness of the challenge presented by women's struggle for independence is recalled in the governess Elizabeth Rodney's resolve to show young Joan Ogden the myriad ways in which women are held back.'¹¹⁵ Hall captures this in one of the most poignantly moving scenes in *The Unlit Lamp*, as an older Joan is mocked by two progressively mannish women, who describe her as a 'kind of pioneer that's got left behind'.¹¹⁶ The two women recognise Joan as a New Woman, who has failed to escape the family home, but they also acknowledge the contribution of women like Joan to their independence, as one of them states: 'I believe she's the beginning of things like me.'¹¹⁷ There is both irony and pathos in Hall's decision to name her heroine Joan, because she is not a trailblazer or a warrior. Hovey reads Joan Ogden as a thwarted saint, a woman who fails to change the circumstances of her life in either a political or a domestic sense, but a more sympathetic interpretation is that she represents an army of nameless women who were suffragettes and New Women: anonymous women who held banners, marched in processions, handed out leaflets or, as in Joan's case, just attempted to break free from the

¹¹² Radclyffe Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, (London: Virago Press, 1989) [1924], p.11.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p.118.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.313.

¹¹⁵ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, p.78.

¹¹⁶ Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, p.284.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.284.

domestic only to find their lives relatively unchanged.¹¹⁸ In *The Unlit Lamp*, Hall gives a voice to these unknown women and she honours their sacrifice and martyrdom by giving her heroine the most appropriate and obvious name of Joan.

Joan of Arc's presence is thus evident in *The Unlit Lamp* and her influence on the depiction of Hall's other female characters can also be traced in her works. *The Forge* (1924) and *A Saturday Life* (1925) are light comedy novels, but they share with *The Unlit Lamp* the same thematic interest in the martyrdom of the female protagonists: characters like Joan Ogden, with short hair and ambiguous sexual tendencies, who eventually martyr themselves and their talents for the sake of other people's happiness. Hilary Brent in *The Forge* argues in these terms with his wife, Susan:

But all history's full of chains, I know now that they've always existed. Take the Crusaders as one example, they were chained to a great ideal; and so, for that matter, were all the saints, and the martyrs and those sort of people.¹¹⁹

It is significant that even Hall's comedic characters are still conceived as saints and martyrs. While her male protagonists are loosely based on Christ, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Anthony of Padua, Joan of Arc is the model for female characters. Whereas Joan in *The Unlit Lamp* sacrificed herself out of misguided loyalty and Susan in *The Forge* settled for security, it is love that appears to alter the course of Sidonia's destiny, rather like Schiller's Joan of Arc. In *A Saturday Life* Hall supplies a traditional heteronormative conclusion, in as much as the heroine is married and has produced a son and heir. However, it is a poignantly

¹¹⁸ George Bernard Shaw discussed the relationship between his *Saint Joan* (1924) and the women of the suffragette movement and stated: 'They were none of them exactly like St Joan, but I believe every one of them did regard herself as, in a measure, repeating the experience of St Joan. St Joan inspired that movement, that curious movement, [...] If you read Miss Pankhurst, you will understand a great deal more about the psychology of Joan'. Lloyd Besant, *Shaw's Women Characters* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1964), p.222.

¹¹⁹ Radclyffe Hall, *The Forge* (London: Falcon Press, 1952) [1924], p.240. The working title of *The Forge* was *Chains*, but this was changed by the time Hall submitted the novel to her agent, Audrey Heath, on 19 June 1923. See Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John*, p.185.

sad conclusion, because Sidonia's husband of choice is dull and marriage is an ordinary choice for a character that is otherwise so extraordinary.¹²⁰

The Well of Loneliness presents Hall's most fully realised version of the female masculine Joan of Arc, even though the reader is informed that Stephen is named after Saint Stephen, the first Christian saint:

He [Sir Philip] christened the unborn infant Stephen, because he admired the pluck of that Saint. He was not a religious man by instinct, being perhaps too much of a student, but he read the Bible for its fine literature, and Stephen had gripped his imagination.¹²¹

There are, however, multiple Christian models for Stephen's character: Dellamora views Stephen as a female masculine Christ figure and Joan of Arc offers an additional and alternative Christian female role model.¹²² Dellamora argues that Hall's later work is 'shaped along Chistological and, in the case of *The Well of Loneliness*, Marian lines.'¹²³ In this reading, Dellamora examines the influence of female-centred Christian ideology on *The Well of Loneliness*, but excludes the most obvious figure of Joan of Arc, who was herself inspired and devoted to the Virgin Mary and guided by the voices of Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. Marian devotions offer a way of viewing Hall's Christianity within her fiction, but Stephen has more in common with the figure of Joan of Arc than Christ: she is a tomboy, who cuts her hair short, is uncomfortable and awkward in female clothing, is spiritually attuned to nature because she is able to hear the voices of animals, goes to war in France, and undergoes her

¹²⁰ See Alison Hennegan, 'Introduction' in Radclyffe Hall's *A Saturday Life* (London: Virago, 1987), in which she discusses the conclusion of the novel and offers hope that Sidonia may be entering a new phase of her life, rather than sacrificing her talents for an unworthy man: 'Sidonia sees her new husband through the eyes of love: Hall does not. Sidonia sees his strength and beauty: Hall sees, and makes us see, his eternal boyishness (so charming in youth, so wearisome in maturity), the arrogance with which he condescends to the woman he claims to love, the basic contempt and fear he feels for everything which affronts his aggressively conventional sense of normality. A strange mate for Sidonia. But even as we leave her, we realize that her infant son has already displaced her husband in her affections. In the best comic tradition, *A Saturday Life* ends with a marriage and a baby. In life itself, that isn't the end of the story. Una knew that. Once Sidonia discovers it, anything may happen', xvii. See also Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, who argues that Una inspired Sidonia's character: 'The trajectory of Hall's fictional biography of Sidonia Shore in *A Saturday Life* lines up with that of a young Troubridge. Key aspects of Troubridge's life – the various arts in which she trained, her rejection of male mentors, her ambivalence about her failure to develop fully her potential as an artist, her bisexuality, her ambivalence about being a mother, and her highly self-conscious senses of gender performance – provide the novel with its thematics', p.138

¹²¹ Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*: 'He christened the unborn infant Stephen, because he admired the pluck of that Saint. He was not a religious man by instinct, being perhaps too much of a student, but he read the Bible for its fine literature, and Stephen had gripped his imagination'. p.8.

¹²² See Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, Chapters 7 and 8. Other scholars have also written about the influence of Christ on Stephen Gordon; see Ed Madden's article 'The Well of Loneliness, or the Gospel According to Radclyffe Hall' in *Journal of Homosexuality*, Volume 33, 1997 - Issue 3-4, and Isabella Cooper 'The Passion of Stephen Gordon: The Messianic Lesbian Artist in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*' in *Transverse Journal*, Issue No. 11, 2011.

¹²³ Dellamora, *Radclyffe Hall: A Life in the Writing*, xviii.

metaphorical burning also in France. Hovey interprets this reading of Stephen as a Joan of Arc figure, but her argument is focused on how 'Hall's protagonist Stephen Gordon in *The Well of Loneliness* succeeds where Joan [Ogden] fails because Stephen comes to see her masculinity as giving her a higher purpose'.¹²⁴ However, Hall's objective was not to portray a definitive version of Joan of Arc; rather, the figure of Joan of Arc offered her a template for feminine identity and so a pattern for the construction and depiction of her female protagonists. Joan Ogden's depiction in *The Unlit Lamp* is different, because Hall is portraying a woman in a different set of social circumstances to that of Stephen in *The Well of Loneliness*. A lack of money prohibits Joan Ogden from being a 'successful' (to paraphrase Hovey's expression) female masculine Joan of Arc figure. Stephen is able to present a more successful female masculine woman and live as a lesbian, because she has money (rather like Hall), which empowers her social freedom, mobility and visibility.¹²⁵ The success of Joan Ogden and Stephen is measured not by whether they are more or less Joan of Arc figures, but by the fact that they are recognisable as women who are different from those around them, and who offer a different portrayal of female masculine identities.

In Hall's final novel, *The Sixth Beatitude* (1936) Hannah Bullens embodies a different type of heroine again, because she is poor, uneducated and a highly sexualised heterosexual character. Nevertheless, she is still a variant Joan of Arc figure, with her short hair, intuitive relationship with the natural world, and rustic/rural working-class background.

A key motif in the identification of Joan of Arc's presence in the characterisation of Hall's female protagonists is hair. Since Princess Marie d'Orléans's sculpture of *Joan of Arc*, short hair is often associated with Joan of Arc. During the early part of the twentieth century, this haircut was often referred to as *coupe à la Jeanne d'Arc*.¹²⁶ There are several hairdressing legends surrounding the creation and popularity of the haircut, one of them being the fact that the forty-year-old French actress Eve Lavallière had her hair cut in this style, so she could

¹²⁴ Hovey, p.128.

¹²⁵ Stephen's teacher and companion Puddle is an intelligent working woman who has had to suppress her own sexual desires. When Stephen has been told to leave her family home Puddle tells her: 'Where you go, I go, Stephen. All that you're suffering at this moment I've suffered. It was when I was very young like you — but I still remember.' Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, pp.207-208. Puddle offers an insight into the future options for women of Elizabeth's or Joan's class who do not have financial security to live openly as female masculine women or lesbians.

¹²⁶ See Shaw's description of Joan entering the court of the Dauphin in Act II of *Saint Joan*:

Joan, dressed as a soldier, with her hair bobbed and hanging thickly round her face, is led in by a bashful and speechless noble man, from whom she detaches herself to stop and look around eagerly for the Dauphin.

THE DUCHESS [to the nearest lady in waiting] My dear! Her Hair *All the ladies explode into uncontrollable laughter.*

BLUEBEARD [trying not to laugh, and waving his hand in deprecation of their merriment] Ssh-ssh! Ladies, Ladies!!

JOAN [not at all embarrassed] I wear it like this because I am a soldier. Where be Dauphin?'. p.72.

play the part of a teenager.¹²⁷ Hair is a prominent feature in Hall's writing of her female characters and acts as an indicator of personality types. In *The Forge*, Susan is described as looking like a 'girl of nineteen at times [...] Her glossy brown hair was straight and bobbed, and turned inwards ever so slightly at the tips, fitting closely to her head like a cap.'¹²⁸ Susan is actually thirty-three years old, but it is perhaps no coincidence that a haircut which is so often associated with Joan of Arc (who was nineteen-years-old when she died) should evoke a connection to the age of nineteen. As well as suggesting youth, short hair on women is also a sign of rebelliousness and in *The Unlit Lamp* a young Joan defiantly cuts her own hair short:

They had cut her thick hair during scarlet fever, and Joan refused to allow it to grow again. She invariably found scissors and snipped and snipped, and Mrs. Ogden's resistance broke down at the final act of defiance, when she was discovered hacking at her hair with a pen-knife.¹²⁹

Hovey also notes the significance of Joan's hair: 'In *The Unlit Lamp*, Hall makes a crop-haired Joan of Arc a conflicted, embattled martyr to the injustice of female gender expectations'.¹³⁰ Joan Ogden is rebelling against the expectations of her gender and short hair is a symbol of modernity and daring for women. It is a style sported by Sidonia, the carefree and bohemian central character in *A Saturday Life*:

Sidonia touched her own pleasing waves with a feeling of satisfaction. Her hair had always refused to grow long (by long, she meant down to her knees), and as she objected to half-way things, she had not allowed it to grow at all. It framed her face in a thick, soft curve that ended just below her ears. A little unusual, short hair at twenty, but Sidonia cared nothing for that.¹³¹

Sidonia's short hair befits her provocative and unconventional nature, but its style also signals danger, taboo and sensuality. In *The Well of Loneliness* Angela Crosby, Stephen's first lover, is described as wearing her hair 'cut short like a mediaeval page'.¹³² In contrast, when Stephen eventually cuts her hair short, the description is more suggestive of an Eton crop than a *coupe à la Jeanne d'Arc* hairstyle:

¹²⁷ Steven Zdatny, ed., *Hairstyles and Fashion: A Hairdresser's History of Paris, 1910-1920*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006): 'In one frequently repeated story, Antoine (Cierplikowski) took credit for having invented the 'coupe à la Jeanne d'Arc' when, in 1909, he cropped the hair of Eve Lavallière in order to fit the forty-year-old actress to the part of the eighteen-year-old heroine of *L'Ane de Buridan*.' p.25.

¹²⁸ Hall, *The Forge*, p.13.

¹²⁹ Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, p.11.

¹³⁰ Hovey, p.125.

¹³¹ Radclyffe Hall, *A Saturday Life* (London: Virago Press, 1987) [1925], p.88.

¹³² Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Virago, 1990) [1928], p.129.

Her hair was quite short. In a mood of defiance she had suddenly walked off to the barber's one morning and had made him crop it close like a man's. And mightily did the fashion become her, for now the fine shape of her head was unmarred by the stiff clumpy plait in the nape of her neck. Released from the torment imposed upon it the thick auburn hair could breathe and wave freely, and Stephen had grown fond and proud of her hair — a hundred strokes must it have with the brush every night until it looked burnished. Sir Philip also had been proud of his hair in the days of his youthful manhood.¹³³

Stephen's haircut, by suggesting her masculinity, implies a demarcation between various butch-femme lesbian identities, but it was also a fashionable haircut in the 1920s.¹³⁴ Stephen, like Joan of Arc, had her hair cut in a style that reflected contemporary female masculine identities. The prominence of the *coupe à la Jeanne d'Arc* hairstyle for Hall's female characters reflects its popularity and her own personal attraction to women who sported this Joan of Arc/medieval haircut.

In addition to hair, another significant motif that signals the presence of Joan of Arc in Hall's writing is fire. Joan Ogden's association with fire is evident in how others view her as a martyr, but the irony is that her flame (expressed by her passion for learning and the possibility of unconventional love) remains unlit. Joan of Arc may have lived and died by the courage of her convictions, but in *The Unlit Lamp* Hall illustrates how potentially great and inspiring women sometimes never get the opportunity to show their flame/talents. In contrast, money and self-confidence enable Sidonia in *A Saturday Life* to explore multiple artistic opportunities without ever really achieving greatness, because she eventually loses interest and moves on to her next project. Sidonia burns brightly to begin with, but fades quickly; the trajectory of the novel, follows the pattern of her character's nature. Hall describes Sidonia through the analogy with fire: 'something flame-like in the quality of her face, and at the same time cold and aloof. That was it, the girl was like some queer, unnatural fire, that gave out brilliance but no heat.'¹³⁵ Despite the anticlimactic conclusion of *A Saturday Life*, there is a sense of hope that Sidonia is about to start a new phase of her life, when a match is lit: 'Frances screwed in her tortoiseshell eyeglass and fished for a cigarette./'Um-m,' she grunted, striking a match. 'All the same, I'd call him Monday, I think, if I were you.'¹³⁶ Even Sidonia's name has an association with fire, as Sidonia von Borcke was

¹³³ *ibid.* p.210.

¹³⁴ See Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture*, in which she discusses the popularity of the Eton crop and its various styles. Doan states: 'Along with the "look" came an attitude of rebelliousness and pleasure seeking flaunted by the smoking of cigarettes — a new athleticism and an apparent sexual freedom'. p.102.

¹³⁵ Hall, *A Saturday Life*, p.64.

¹³⁶ Hall, *A Saturday Life*, p.224.

a famous noblewoman who was accused of witchcraft in 1620, found guilty and sentenced to death by decapitation and burning. Oscar Wilde's mother had translated Johann Wilhelm Meinhold's, *Sidonia von Bork* (1847) from German into English, under the title, *Sidonia the Sorceress* (1849).¹³⁷ Whereas *A Saturday Life* concludes with a spark of fire, *The Forge* ends with Hilary and Susan reforming their passionless, but affectionate relationship in front of the dead ashes of an unlit stove. Susan's talents have been stifled by the needs and demands of her husband to the extent that her flame will never burn in his presence. Accepting Hilary back into her life is ultimately a sacrifice of her freedom and talents. In all these examples Hall uses fire symbolically to represent the spirit and passion of her female characters and also to identify where they remain stagnant and unlit. This use of fire is not an unusual literary device or metaphor, but in Hall's work its connection with women who sport the *coupe à la Jeanne d'Arc* is significant.

Death by fire or the allusion to dying in a fire also has a recurrent and significant presence in Hall's writing, as for example with Stephen's metaphoric burning at the end of *The Well of Loneliness*. However, Hall is less ambiguous in *The Unlit Lamp*, when Elizabeth and Joan witness a young woman who has caught fire and is engulfed in flames:

Then someone screamed, not once but many times. It was an ungainly sound, crude with terror. The screams appeared to be coming from Mrs. Jenkin's, the draper's shop, whither Elizabeth was bent; and then before any of them realized what was happening, a woman had rushed out into the street covered in flames. The spectacle she made, horrible in itself, was still more horrible because this was the sort of thing that one heard of or read of but never expected to see. Through the fire which seemed to engulf her, her arms were waving and flapping in the air. Joan noticed that her hair, which had come down, streamed out in the wind, a mass of flame. The woman, still screaming, turned and ran towards them, and as she ran the wind fanned the flames.¹³⁸

In an attempt to save the woman (a servant of Mrs. Jenkins), Elizabeth burns her own hands, but her efforts are futile and the woman eventually dies. It is a shocking scene that contrasts sharply with the novel's sedate confinement to the family home. In Hall's most obviously feminist novel, a woman who burns to death is reminiscent of Joan of Arc's own death, but fire also physically scars Elizabeth and psychologically alters the fifteen-year-old

¹³⁷ See Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Penguin, 1988), 'His [Wilde] reading was chiefly in historical romances, such as J. W. Meinhold's *The Amber Witch*, and an even greater favorite, the same author's *Sidonia the Sorceress*, which his mother had translated in 1849. *Sidonia* was one of those gifted, ferocious women who fascinated the Pre-Raphaelites'. p.19.

¹³⁸ Hall, *The Unlit Lamp*, p.95.

Joan Ogden's experience of the world outside her home.¹³⁹ Hall returns to death by fire in her final novel, *The Sixth Beatitude*, when Hannah Bullens runs into a burning house to save her children: 'With a sudden sharp crash the roof fell in and the cottage blazed up magnificently, like a beacon set on the crest of the hill./It was New Year's Day. It was Hannah's birthday'.¹⁴⁰ Hannah's death is unexpected and pointless, as her children were probably already dead, but her instincts as a mother overtake any sense of self-preservation. Aware of Joan of Arc's death, Hall would have recognised the powerful pathos in Hannah's bravery and the hopelessness of her situation. In *The Unlit Lamp* and *The Sixth Beatitude*, Hall symbolically turns to death by fire to reinforce her characters' impossible positions between bravery and hopelessness.

In all Hall wrote five novels with a central female protagonist, of which four conclude with fire either physically or metaphorically – *The Forge*, *A Saturday Life*, *The Well of Loneliness* and *The Sixth Beatitude* - while fire features in the title of the fifth, *The Unlit Lamp*. The fates of Hall's female characters are connected to fire in ways that express the hopelessness of the situations they find themselves in as women, while their short hair signifies their difference, but also a connection to the figure of Joan of Arc. Recognising the emblematic importance of Joan of Arc for Hall offers a way of understanding her female characters, because it suggests that they are women who are in their own ways warriors and martyrs. Nearly 500 years after Joan of Arc's death, Hall is suggesting that women who are different or who have the potential for greatness are always at risk of being burnt by their communities or circumstances.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*: 'Surely the last place in the world where anyone would have expected to meet a tragedy was in the High Street of Seabourne. There never was a street so genteel and so lacking in emotion; it was almost an indecency to associate emotion with it, and yet it was in the High Street that a thing happened which was to make a lasting impression on Joan'. p.95.

¹⁴⁰ Hall, *The Sixth Beatitude* (London: William Heinemann, 1936), p.261.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has moved beyond Terry Castle's unreferenced statement and researched contexts unexplored by Judith Halberstam in *Female Masculinity*, examining the influence of Joan of Arc as a cross-dressing female masculine woman on the life and writing of Radclyffe Hall. While Joan of Arc is an historical, cultural and religious figure who exists within the wider public consciousness, the evidence presented in this chapter has demonstrated that Hall and Una were not only exposed to Joan in circumstantial ways, but also engaged with and were influenced by her identity as an acceptable and revered representation of female masculinity. Numerous representations of Joan of Arc were available to Hall and Una during their lives, but this chapter has revealed that Shaw's *Saint Joan* was a particular cultural depiction of Joan that greatly appealed to them; it has provided evidence that they saw the play performed on at least two occasions and went out their way to read the script. The ideology and iconography of Joan of Arc are a recurring presence in Hall's life and works and they are not confined solely to her most famous novel, *The Well of Loneliness*. The chapter has offered an alternative way of viewing and contextualising Hall's Christianity and faith. Whereas previous studies have aligned Hall's Christian devotion with the figure of Christ, this chapter has presented evidence for the significance of Joan of Arc in her construction of feminine identity. Joan of Arc's female masculinity and her appropriation as a lesbian iconic figure offer a different and more revealing role model through which to explore Hall's relationship with Christianity. Jaime Hovey supports this interpretation (and in addition suggests the wider cultural influence of Joan of Arc on Hall's contemporaries), but her reading is too prescriptive in its claims for a single and definitive Joan of Arc figure in Hall's work. Instead, the argument presented in this chapter shows that all of Hall's female protagonists share, to a greater or lesser extent, something in common with the figure of Joan of Arc. Hall's objective was not to insist on overt female masculinity in all of her female protagonists, but through hints to suggest that all women have the potential to be a Joan of Arc. It is a great pity that Hall never did write a Joan of Arc novel, but her interest in and fascination with Joan is clearly evident across her *oeuvre*.

Conclusion: Martyrdom and Masculinity: Ideology and Masculine Identity in the Work of Radclyffe Hall

This thesis has aimed to contribute to the process of widening the understanding of Hall's significance as a writer in the early part of the twentieth century. To date, the critical emphasis upon her lesbianism and *The Well of Loneliness* has limited the ways in which her work has been interpreted within social, historical and cultural queer narratives. By focusing instead on masculinity, this thesis has been able to approach Hall's work from a different critical perspective and as such it has shifted the focus from the female-centric themes of female depiction and representation, lesbianism and the difficulties associated with sexuality and gender in *The Well of Loneliness*. While these are undeniably important factors in the debates surrounding Hall, it is to her detriment as a writer to limit her work solely to these concerns. Rather, this thesis argues that as a female masculine woman, writing predominately in the inter-war years, Hall offers a discourse on masculinity that has yet to be fully recognised and explored. This thesis also explores female masculinity, but in contrast to other studies that view Hall's female masculinity as a variant of male masculine identity, it argues that Saint Joan of Arc offers an alternative role model that helped Hall to shape an understanding of her female masculine identity and inspired the construction of her female characters.

Moving beyond the acknowledged success of 'The Blind Ploughman', this thesis places the poem/song within a historical, social and cultural context and thus reveals how it became part of the *zeitgeist* of the First World War and the contemporary concern for blinded soldiers, as expressed, for example, by the St. Dunstan postcards, numerous fundraising concerts and John Singer Sargent's painting, *Gassed*. While Hall could not have anticipated the wartime significance of 'The Blind Ploughman' she nevertheless witnessed its increased association with damaged/different masculinity as well as male homosexuality. Thematically, Hall continued to explore blindness/sight and insight and its relationship to homosexuality and sexual ambiguity throughout her work. Her speech, 'Ghosts' provides specific evidence of her connection of war injured men with homosexual men and women who had fought or played an active role in the war, and as such it is an important text for revealing Hall as a humanitarian queer writer who was not limited solely to lesbian issues. In addition to introducing the theme of blindness into her work, 'The Blind Ploughman' also formed Hall's sense of herself as a writer, as reflected both in her fiction and non-fiction writing, such as with *The Furrow* reference and in 'The Writing of Novels' and 'Ghosts'. The

early success of 'The Blind Ploughman' is also a significant factor for understanding her depiction of masculinity. Whilst a simple and sentimental poem, it represents a complex network of meaning for Hall, because not only did it help to shape a connection between homosexuality and damaged/different masculinity, but it also initiated her association with men who were blinded and injured in the war.

Whereas 'The Blind Ploughman' is recognised as a popular success, *The Master of the House* is generally regarded as a critical and commercial failure. As a result, *The Master of the House* is one of Hall's least discussed novels. This thesis argues however, that it is an unrecognised homoromantic novel and deserves to be more widely known within queer narratives of this era. Hall's reputation as a lesbian middlebrow writer may explain why *The Master of the House* has been neglected as a text, but the evidence presented in this thesis illustrates how she engaged with themes similar to those of Modernist writers. The commonalities that *The Master of the House* shares with D. H. Lawrence's novella 'The Escaped Cock', both in terms of the events leading up to the production of the novel and the authors' exploration of a reimagined Christ-figure, demonstrate that Hall was questioning Christianity and its relationship with sexuality in ways similar to Lawrence. In fact, the overt Christian theme of *The Master of the House* and her Christ figure, Christophe, disguise the homosexual undertones of the novel. Hall's manuscripts and typescripts for *The Master of the House* reveal her wariness to portray Christophe as too recognisably homosexual, while the published version retains a hint of the queer subtext. Reading *The Master of the House* as a homoromantic novel that deals with the unrequited love between Christophe and his cousin Jan positions Hall as a queer writer rather than one who was only focused on lesbian matters.

Female masculinity has been discussed in relation to Hall in many studies, but each of these reviews her female masculinity through male masculine identities. This thesis presents evidence to suggest that the female masculine Saint Joan of Arc (who was canonised during Hall's life) is a figure who also influenced Hall's perception of her identity as a female masculine woman and inspired the construction of her female characters. Arguing against Jamie Hovey's overly prescriptive reading of Joan, the thesis contends that Hall used the figure of Joan of Arc as a role model to explore and identify female difference, and thus goes beyond the circumstantial evidence presented in my 2014 article by providing primary evidence of Hall's and Una's engagement with the figure of Joan and in particular Shaw's play

Saint Joan.¹ Examining the evidence of the heritage, history and cultural impact of one of history's most famous female masculine women, Joan of Arc, this thesis offers an alternative role model through which to explore Hall's female masculine identity and characters.

This thesis does not suggest that Hall is perfect: she did not write the perfect lesbian novel and she was not an exemplary role model for lesbians and feminists, but imperfection is the inevitability of greater queer representation. Hall's life and work illustrate the complexity of queer narratives, because there will always be an antagonism between the past and the progressive LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning) future. The late-twentieth-century feminist and lesbian reactions to and criticisms of Hall's depiction of lesbianism in *The Well of Loneliness* have ultimately harmed her reputation as a writer, while at the same time systematically reducing the perception of Hall's literary output to just one novel. Hall should not be consistently and regimentally punished for writing *The Well of Loneliness* and neither should she continue to be judged by this one novel. In the current gender and sexually fluid present, the previous feminist and lesbian responses to *The Well of Loneliness* are guilty of overlooking and neglecting the fact that Hall represented gay male sexuality in the novel. This too may rely on stereotypes of gender and sexuality, but nonetheless it has been ignored and overlooked by feminists and lesbians who have been overly concerned with the type of lesbian that Stephen represents in the novel. This thesis recognises Hall's faults, but also argues that she has a unique voice and one that can offer a greater understanding of queer lives in the early part of the twentieth century.

¹ See Steven Macnamara, 'Joan of Arc and Radclyffe Hall: Martyrdom and Masculinity' in *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology*, ed. by Karioris, F. G. and Loeser, C. (Witney: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014).

Appendix One: Radclyffe Hall, 'Ghosts' (1930s)

This epoch has its own particular ghosts, paradoxically still clothed in the flesh, but for all that they are homeless and uneasy spirits. Many an one should have died in the war that which giving with the one hand took away with the other – that which sparing a life, yet destroyed its future.

Today there are middle aged ghosts among us who have nothing in common with the past existence, who are neither understood nor understanding. Men whose eyes have seen and whose ears have heard things that should neither be seen or heard, they seldom if ever speak of these things, which however does not mean that they can forget them. And the worst of it is that in 1914 they were full to the neck of pitiful illusions, they believed in a war that was to end wars, and later they believed in a world redeemed by blood in a world purged and purified by blood, though this later illusion passed all too quickly.

The world had in no way been redeemed, on the contrary it was retrogressing with a truly startling rapidity, nor did it appear to have been “made fit for heroes”. A good few of the humbler heroes in fact could not find work, they were a drag on the market. An unpleasant and distinctly nauseating surprise, for unfortunately even a single man cannot hope keep up his strength on cheers, or to pacify his belly by eating war-ribbons.

Then of course, there was that enormous army of Hospital Blues – that terrible army, which at first attracted so much public compassion, so much eager attention and courtesy. Embarrassing almost, those outstretched hands – everyone rushing to pick up a crutch, everyone visiting hospitals – cigarettes, new laid eggs, “Can I write your letters”, “Shall I read aloud”, “Can I take you for a drive?”, “Let me tighten that sling” embarrassing almost. Then gradually no more Hospital Blue, in the wards of the general hospitals or about the streets – no more Hospital Blue. To find it one must go farther afield – one must go to certain outlying districts or even into the depths of [the] country – “This farm is run by the gravely wounded ...”. One glimpses such words on a noticeboard as one motors past “The gravely wounded” – they are still alive, now, after all these years – and surely one has heard of unspeakable things that still live - of men so hideously blemished that they must be carefully hidden lest they shock our susceptibilities, lest they reveal the true meaning of war – Thus divested of pomp and circumstance, of the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets – yes, surely one has heard of such things? Of course they are not dinner table topics, nor do we mention them to the young – Our children may one day be in like case, but one does not speak of such things to children.

Poor patient ghosts still looking for jobs, still those bewildered and pained handicapped. Poor patient ghosts still in Hospital Blue, still creeping about on the face of the earth, but creeping quietly and discreetly. Do they ever think of those outstretched hands, embarrassing almost those outstretched hands – everyone rushing to pick up a crutch, everyone visiting hospitals – cigarettes, new laid eggs: “Can I write your letters?” Do they ever think of these things? I wonder.

But the ghosts that I think find most deplorable, have never gone short of food in their lives, and have either not been wounded at all, or else have apparently quite recovered. These are the cultured, well educated men who are now grey-haired, and peculiarly friendless – men whose intimate friends were killed in the war, men who have outlived their own generation and who in consequence often feel lonely.

Fundamentally, they have nothing in common with post war manners, and customs and events – nothing in common with post war youths, nothing in common with post war madness. And yet they will try to emulate these things. It is often grotesque and rather pathetic. Such ghosts are sometimes a trifle shell-shocked, frequently inclined to be scared. If they write of the war and the horrors of war, as one reads one has the uneasy feeling that here is no propaganda for peace, but rather some form of self-indulgence a kind of spiritual and mental masturbation. Homeless in a world to which they are strangers, haunted by memories that they fear and that yet are not entirely distraught, having little to live for yet dreading old age and the loss of their waning virility, these ghosts are a very potential danger.

Perhaps it is the feeling that their own youth was blemished and defrauded by the years of fighting and hardship that makes them crave the companionship of youth. Be this as it may they undoubtedly do crave it, and in order to get tolerance for themselves they will pander to youths least desirable instincts.

And a sorry spectacle enough they make, with their voodoo parties and middle-aged gambles, with their poor foolish eyes grown sheepish with drink, while their unsteady hands fill the empty glasses. A sorry spectacle enough they make forever hanging about younger men, forever craving the company of those who if particularly vicious are as yet unformed and powerfully callow.

There is nothing undignified and unworthy than this type of unhappy ghost will not stoop to. He will spend his money quite recklessly upon drink for those whom he knows he bores for that is [the] worst of it, he knows, that they never come to his hand for him, but only for the drink he provides and this being so, in his heart he hates them. And because he hates them yet cannot exist without the drug of their constant presence, because of this he pushes them down – just a sly push here and a sly push there, nothing melodramatically

wicked, of course, just a sly push here and a sly push there. A slight twisting of fundamental truths, a slight tendency to sharpen the wit at the expense of fundamental soundness, a slight tendency to jeer at self-sacrifice and above all at anyone's cherished ideals. Really, poor ghost it is not worthy of you, I would rather see you commit a grand sin, a big, flaming, flamboyant hell-fire sin, this at least would need courage, you who fought in the wars – whereas this action needs nothing but voodoo.

Yet one more group of ghosts come into my mind – women this time, if so they must be called. Women then who are sexually inverted. The war was to them something like a Godsend. I might almost dare to say God's justification. For the first time in their lives they were given a chance to justify their abhorred existence, nor were they slow to recognise this chance and to serve the country with skill and courage. But sooner or later wars come to an end. What then my brethren, what happened to you then, did England praise you for what you are? Did England say, "By their fruits have I judged them?" Not at all, England said "Since they did such a good work, it is obvious that they must be quite normal". And to me, who are one of the least of you, since I could not share your fine deeds and your hardships, to me England said: "You have written a foul book – a filthy book about filthy women". And many other things England said at the time of "The Well of Loneliness" brute things that for England's sake, or yours or mine are really little forgotten.

Ghosts. You also have become ghosts, you who stood for the honour of your kind – you who endeavoured to lift your kind out of the slough of the world's opprobrium. And sometimes you make me want to weep for you, so desperately do you cling to the past, to the memory of those years of war. And sometimes you do rather foolish things standing stiff and erect at God save the King as you need to do, with your hands clasped to your side, or talking too loudly about your war service, or assuming an air of bonhomie that strikes one as somewhat exaggerated, as walking with a more merry stride than do men. Yes sometimes you do rather foolish things, but for all that your fine, and honest service – You are as God made you – And not merely a pose – born of a craving to attract bizarre, an undue amount of attention. You indeed, if I have read you aright, dear courageous ghosts of your short lived glory, indeed if I have read you aright you wish to be accepted for what you are, and once so accepted to go your ways in peace. Calling for no particular comment. You wish to guide your lives by the standards that have long been accorded the so called normal – for you realise – who better than you – that to journey through life one needs many eager parts, otherwise the halt and the lame and the blind are apt to get lost and fall by the wayside. That I take it, is what you ask of the world, to be judged neither more or less severely, than those whose faults and virtues you share in every respect – the so called normal.

But indeed I pity you, as never before, since now you must stand by and see others destroy the edifice that you have built up – with so much endurance and so much labour. Away with these daughters and sons of stark prevision, these lying, vicious, detestable fools who perpetually find themselves with the headlights – these creatures who wish to appear what they are not, because all that is simple is to the unlovely. They it is who pull down as fast as we create and who for a whim would bring us to destruction. And away with those who can claim the hardship with us, but who degrade us by their own degradation. No worse than some of the so called normal? This I will admit – nothing could well be worse, But I say and you say that we must be better. More faithful, more patient, more honest, more courageous. For we have a harder furrow to hoe – a hard, long, gruelling furrow to hoe. And we dare not take our hands from the plough – [nor look back, for so much as a moment] till this furrow is driven home straight and true, we dare not to relax our grip for a moment.

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