The Immortality Phantasy: an extension of the instinctual model of creativity and its application to classic literary texts

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‘Survival [is] the twin brother of annihilation’

Winston Churchill (1955)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis puts forward the hypothesis that there exists within us an *Immortality Phantasy* which can help to explain the relationship between creativity and destruction. The Immortality Phantasy occurs in response to sublimation, leading to desexualised libido and the release of self-destructive impulses and can help to explain the connection between creativity and destruction. As a result of the first identifications with the Oedipal parent, we can see a defusion of instinct occur, which allows for the concurrent release of creative and destructive energies. The ego is left unprotected against the death instinct, resulting in guilt and punishment for Oedipal phantasies. However, through creativity and reparation on the page, a survival can occur, and it is this survival which must be repeated; it is also responsible for the oscillation often viewed in creative artists between manic creativity and melancholia. Each repetition is a symbolic phantasy of victory over the father, but with the *survival*, there is also the accompanying destruction. So we can define the Immortality Phantasy as *the symbolic matrix of the desire for survival, stemming from the repetition of the defusion of instinct following sublimation.*

The Immortality Phantasy allows for an indulgence in destructive behaviour due to an omnipotent belief in our immortality. The ego acts as if it cannot be destroyed, which allows it in turn to survive this created destruction, reinforcing this idea.

This thesis explores in detail Freud's theories of the life and death instinct, whilst giving close considerations to the existing theoretical ideas on creativity, aesthetics and melancholia. Three novels are used as case studies to test the Immortality Phantasy

hypothesis: *The Spire* by William Golding, *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf and *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe.

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CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE IMMORTALITY PHANTASY

1.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I will be discussing the concepts of survival and self-destruction. These are fundamental human themes with which we must all deal. At first sight, they appear to be mutually exclusive or even contradictory but my contention is that they are, in fact, closely bound together within the human condition, thus, an exploration of their relationship will be enriching and can potentially yield new insights into our basic human tendencies. It is not surprising, therefore, that both key psychoanalytic writers and prominent novelists should share a concern with survival and destruction and that there is further room for developments in theory.

I have hypothesised that there exists within us an *Immortality Phantasy*, which can help to explain a range of self-destructive behaviours and aid our understanding of the life and death instincts. This thesis focuses particularly on the self-destructive behaviour of creative writers to try to put forward a paradigm that helps to understand the seemingly more frequent incidences of self-destruction, depression, and suicide within creative artists, and explores in detail the link between destruction and creativity. This is achieved by attempting a synthesis between Freud's instinctual theory (focusing on his controversial *death instinct*) alongside an examination of creativity (especially as seen through the Kleinian tradition, most notably the ideas on *reparation*). I propose a paradigmatic shift in our understanding of creativity and destruction, setting up *survival* and *repetition* as key elements of the proposed Immortality Phantasy.

The original idea for the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis started with everyday observations that become illuminated under a psychoanalytic light. The dynamics of Freud's notion of an innate drive towards destruction and the complexities of the co-

existence of the life and death instincts, give language to some of my own observations. When I was first introduced to this theory, I struggled with the concept of the death instinct being silent or inertial (and perhaps here I am more sympathetic with Klein who argued that it could be seen in clinical cases). I assumed it was something loud and active – the tendency towards self-destruction was seemingly all around, with evidence for the death instinct appearing to be abundant. Further understanding was garnered from Freud's introduction of the destructive instinct in 1923, tying the whole concept together and demonstrating both the inertial and destructive parts of these death instincts. This, I tied to the observation of a common phenomenon: amongst my peers, on TV, in poetry, through art, celebrity interviews, an occurrence, with the same conclusion - an apparent 'glamour' in the experience of hardship or tragedy. I observed that self-worth, or the value put upon you by others, appeared to be directly linked to a perception of hardship. I noticed a phenomenon that only allowed you to claim knowledge of the world if you had experienced some sort of tragedy and that this tragedy was frequently phantasised and even unconsciously sought out. I witnessed the need to create one's own tragic narrative. Where does this come from? Why does it appear that self-worth is based on the experience of, or potential for, destruction – imposed or self-inflicted? Freud's death and destructive instincts do a lot to teach us about the processes of aggression, both internal and external, but it is my contention that there is something else going on that needs explanation. Bringing in Klein's ideas on reparation and the need to make objects whole again, allowed for the development of a clearer picture to emerge. These quite different concepts led me to the formation of the *Immortality Phantasy*, hypothesising that the societal value put upon survival (surviving, survivors) is key to answering some of these questions.

1.2 The Immortality Phantasy

The Immortality Phantasy can be defined as a symbolic matrix, representing the pivotal point of defusion between the life and death instincts that allows for the release of both destructive and creative energies, leading to the necessary repetition of survival.

The key elements of the hypothesis are as follows:

- The Immortality Phantasy has at its core, the desire for survival
- This survival is felt as a repetition compulsion and it is this repetition that is responsible for frequent oscillation from creativity to destruction, demonstrated with more prevalence in creative artists
- The Immortality Phantasy can help to provide a model to aid our understanding of melancholia and can help to bridge some of the gaps in Freud's writing
- This hypothesis can be viewed as a more effective model of creativity than the Kleinian model, which appears to omit the necessity of survival, viewed here as a crucial factor

Freud's postulation of the existence of a *death instinct* in 1920 is regarded in psychoanalysis as one of the most radical and polarising of all his concepts. Freud himself acknowledged that, 'The assumption of the existence of an instinct of death or destruction has met with resistance even in analytic circles' (1930, p.119). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud attempts to maintain a dialectical thinking, proposing that life was a compromise between the reproductive desires of the life instincts and the inertial nature of the death instincts. For many, Freud's new development had no clinical basis and was therefore redundant. Others, such as Klein and Segal, demonstrated its clinical value with regards to anxiety and aggression. Klein extended some of Freud's ideas, especially with theorisations on creativity and the addition of the roles of reparation and mourning. Setting Klein's view up alongside Freud's model of destruction helps us to navigate their complex and distinct theories, whilst explicitly attempting a *synthesis* of their ideas alongside my own hypothesis to explore the potential of a more versatile paradigm. The alloying of ideas, with the postulation of the existence of an Immortality Phantasy may help us to understand the relationship between creativity and destruction from a new angle. This hypothesis suggests that destruction is potentially welcomed, but only in so far as it supports our desire for *survival* and, most importantly, the repetition and testing of survival. This destruction can be felt as painful guilt and anxiety stemming from a reaction

to a lost object, but dominated by identifications made during the Oedipus complex. The subsequent sublimation that occurs laid the ground for the defusion of instincts (as described by Freud in 1923), allowing for the first developments of creativity and the consequential need for survival. The apparent tendency towards self-destruction observed in those who demonstrate creative abilities is examined using the synthesised Freudian/Kleinian model leading to the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, and I turn to classic literary texts to act as case studies, offering insights into the authors' minds. As well as considering the author's mental process, I aim to demonstrate how my ideas can be useful in contributing to an enlightened understanding of a wide range of literature, highlighting ideas that would perhaps not be visible without the critical facility of psychoanalysis that is supported by a new conceptual structure: the Immortality Phantasy.

Following sublimation, the death instinct is kept inside the individual, consequently changing its definition to become the *destructive* instinct (per Freud's model). For healthy ego development, it is necessary to form an identification with the Oedipal parent, leading to a primary sublimation in response to this identification and the desexualisation of this link, the desexualisation of the life instinct. This leads to a defusion of instinct and it is this defusion, this sublimation of the ties to the Oedipal parent, that I propose needs to be repeated in the creative artist and which forms the basis of the Immortality Phantasy. So, why does it? This must occur specifically in the form of a *survival*, a crucial element of my hypothesis. When consistent and constant sublimation of the life instinct occurs, the death instinct is given freer rein to seek reprisal from the ego for its Oedipal desires. However, *survival* of the retribution of the parent's wrath in response to our Oedipal phantasies, becomes the reward and this is the repetition that is held on to. This is manifested through phantasies of survival: the re-enactment of this original struggle, which is responsible for the oscillation between creativity and destruction in the creative artist. The act of creation is an attempt at reparation (using Kleinian theory) and to make whole the injured parent, attacked in phantasy. One must symbolically survive the retributions of the parent, but also accept the subsequent consequences (self-punishment, destruction) tested through internal or external destruction. The desexualised libido is useless to defend

itself against the perils of the death instinct (now the destructive instinct) but it *is* useful as creative energy and is the ego's last defence against destruction. It is following this idea that the Immortality Phantasy can help to explain the obligation and *necessity* to create, to relive the survival of the Oedipal parent through artistic endeavours.

1.3 Immortality Phantasy and Survival

How do I defend my assertion? Where does my perception of survival being so crucial come from? Why would survival be the most phantasised attribute that one can have over perhaps, bravery, courage, intelligence, power? Are these not what are desired, or so greatly esteemed in others? I maintain that survival encompasses all these things – all these notions are assumed in a 'survivor'. Let us look at Malala Yousafzai, as a good current example of this. Malala was an advocate of the rights of girls to receive an education in Afghanistan and, even from a young age, was politically active in her battle to achieve this. She gained a level of notoriety thanks to her production of a diary detailing her life as a young girl under Taliban rule and later participated in a documentary following her life. She was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize in 2009, but lost out to Michaela Mycroft (who campaigned for the rights of South African children with disabilities). Mycroft remains relatively unknown next to Yousafzai. In 2012, aged 15, Malala was shot on her bus to school in a targeted attack on her life at the hands of the Taliban. She survived the attack despite extensive damage to her head and immediately became an international name. The extensive news coverage on her bravery continued alongside praise from some of the world's leaders, as well as numerous celebrity endorsements and massive public support. This led to an appearance in front of the UN and in 2014 she was the co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. The achievements in her fight for education have been immense and numerous. She is without doubt extremely brave, courageous, intelligent, diligent and dedicated – these attributes could never be argued and are no doubt, in our conscious minds, characteristics that we strive for. However, it is my contention that the unconscious phantasy of survival is the real driver in our lives – it is this aspect that makes Malala more than a political activist, of whom there are many and in many wonderful, inspirational guises. Malala's survival supports the

Immortality Phantasy within us – her bravery, her acceptance of the potential for, and subsequent survival of, a destructive attack fuels the unconscious belief we have in our immortality, the same belief that allows, even encourages us to indulge destructive behaviours, to push ourselves into dangerous situations, as Malala knowingly did. However, her reward was the ultimate one - survival and, in front of the whole world, infamy and immortality.

Immortality is a concept that has fascinated people for years, an idea that essentially, is the goal of many scientists, the muse of poets, and the eternal debate of philosophers. Perhaps this stems from it being the central concept of most mythology, notably the ancient Greeks and their Gods, providing archaic knowledge that filters through the generations. It is the key idea in Greek literature, focusing on the immortality of the Olympians, Titans and other gods and goddesses. Within mythological texts, such as Homer's *Iliad* and the character of Achilles, we see how the central idea and the designation of power, revolves around the immortal characters. Achilles was immortal except for one part of his foot, where his mother Thetis, a sea nymph, had dipped him into the lake of immortality. Crucially his one weakness eventually led to his demise but he was feared and revered as the greatest warrior of all due to his dreaded, reckless, wild and destructive behaviour, fuelled by his immortality. Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian* Gray, examines a similar idea from a very different angle and the novel is discussed later in the thesis. Additionally, we need only look at the success of the *Twilight* novels and all things vampire related, to see that there is something in the notion of immortality that is so alluring and seductive. Not least because of eternal life but also because it seems to allow for the release of something destructive. The power of immortality and the victory of life over death is demonstrated in the work of Marshall Fredericks, for example, an American sculptor whose most famous work is the Cleveland War Memorial Fountain. Fredericks wrote of the sculpture:

> This figure expresses…the spirit of mankind rising out of the encircling flames of war, pestilence, and the destructive elements of life, reaching and ascending to a new understanding of life. Man rising above death, reaching upward to his God and towards Peace (Fredericks, 1964).

A statue of Jesus, on the mountain of Corcovado, rides high above the city of Rio de Janeiro, asserting his power and dominance over those below. These symbolic reminders keep in our minds the constant feeling of eternal life, power over death. In addition, the cornerstone of most early civilisation is religion and the concept of immortality pervades most religious texts. Jesus demonstrated his deathlessness, setting it up as the ultimate reward for his followers – only by being destroyed could he come back to life and we are taught that he died so that we could live: '…I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die' (John, 11:26), or in another passage, '...now has been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light' (Timothy, 1:10). Therefore, does this not create an unconscious belief that to live, we must first destroy or be destroyed? In Rio, the uplifting, powerful statue presides over a city riddled with gangs and warfare. Christ's statue demonstrates life rising out of the chaos below.

Furthermore, it could be suggested that in gang membership, the Immortality Phantasy is heightened. There is an unconscious and necessary belief in one's immortality - a heightened Immortality Phantasy, allowed dominance by a learnt apathy to life and death, perhaps stemming from the omnipresence of death and violence. Bullet wounds are a badge of honour, reinforcing the mandatory belief in immortality. They represent survival – the failure of the other/the bad object, to inflict death. The intricate psychological make up of gangs could well be a thesis unto itself and to avoid being side tracked, the main idea I wish to put forward here is that even a more abstract (for this thesis) concept, such as violent gangs, may still uphold the ideas of the Immortality Phantasy and the dependence and necessity of destruction to survive. The gang member acts as though they are invincible because there has been a survival of the persecutory parent in the form of other gangs. Indeed, for this reason, I prefer the name 'Immortality Phantasy' over a title such as the 'survival phantasy'. The unconscious idea of our inability to be destroyed is what keeps us moving forward, rather than becoming paralysed by fear. This keeps us active despite the knowledge (and self-infliction) of all the destruction in the

world. We must believe we are immortal. It is mythological, it is religious, it pervades our everyday language. Survival is one aspect of this concept that is key to our understanding of it. Indeed, the idea of survival is so prevalent in our day to day language and manifests itself time and time again through perhaps the most accessible of the modern arts: songs and their lyrics. This can range from the more aggressive, destructive lyrics of some rap music (see below, reflecting the collective unconscious of gangs), to more uplifting pop songs, which look at survival usually themed around relationships.

> Until my death, my goal's to stay alive
> Survival of the fit, only the strong survive (Mobb Deep, 2008)

In accordance with the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, this would be due to a repetition of the first relationship experienced, the Oedipal parents. This relationship needs to be repeated; love needs to endure; the individual will survive the persecuting object (usually in the form of an ex-lover). Here are a few examples:

> I'm a survivor
> I'm going to make it
> I will survive
> Keep on surviving (Destiny's Child, 2001)

> And I'm killing myself
> Just to keep alive
> Killing myself to survive
> Killing myself to survive (Los Lobos, 2006)

Additionally, we have the anthemic, *I will Survive* (1978) by Gloria Gaynor; or the band Survivor, who's iconic song *Eye of the Tiger* (1982) and the words, 'Just a man and his will to survive', accompanied the film *Rocky* (1977) and became synonymous with struggle, both internal and external. In another form of popular culture, we can look at the phenomenal success of Bear Grylls, self-titled *Born Survivor*, who puts himself into perilous situations and repeatedly survives using some of the most creative methods available. Perhaps it is this survival (and our safety in the knowledge that he *will* endure all the challenges he faces) that soothes our Immortality Phantasy and is therefore so entertaining or enjoyable to his audience. The desire for survival pervades every aspect of life (and perhaps most noticeably, our entertainment) and it is my hypothesis that, by

understanding this, and through our belief in immortality, the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis can add weight to our understanding of the relationship between creativity and destruction.

1.4 The Role of the Novel

The advantages of using novels as case studies allows for a twofold presentation: on the one hand, the thesis can demonstrate the potential contribution of the Immortality Phantasy to psychoanalytic theory, as it aims to synthesise Freud and Klein's theories of creativity, whilst adding in a new supposition that examines the role of survival as the impetus for both creativity and destruction, fuelled by the repetition compulsion. On the other hand, I explicitly aim to further our comprehension of some the complexities of literature and the chosen texts, by using the Immortality Phantasy to increase understanding of the novels and delineate the experiences of reader, writer and character on the page. I do not aim to add to literary theory in the scope of this thesis, but instead to ask if using the Immortality Phantasy can aid literary criticism, bring awareness to deeper layers of the texts, and offer a richer understanding of the creative process? The novels that I have chosen have been selected to demonstrate and illustrate the efficacy of Immortality Phantasy as a new conceptual framework for understanding.

The need of the artist to suffer, but not to perish, to survive, can be demonstrated time and time again and is often reflected in the prevalence of mental illness within writers. These complex psychic demands become a prison of persecution and destruction and the only release can be found in the manifestation of phantasies on the page, where painful thoughts can be organised into words, to create order, sense and an attempt at reparation. This idea is examined later in Chapter 4. Below is a list of a few of the authors (poets and writers) who have suffered from depression and then those who have eventually take their own lives[1]:

[1] The lists are extensive and therefore, for the sake of space, I have listed only the most generally well-known.

Depression:
William Blake
Lord Byron
Joseph Conrad
Charles Dickens
Graham Greene
John Keats
Edgar Allen Poe
J.K Rowling
J.D Salinger
Leo Tolstoy
Mark Twain
Tennessee Williams

***Suicide*:**
John Berryman
Thomas Chatterton
Ernest Hemingway
Robert E. Howard
Jack London
Sylvia Plath
Mark Shepherd
Hunter S. Thompson
Virginia Woolf

I note and discuss later in the thesis that suicide goes against the Immortality Phantasy and I examine how this fits into my hypothesis. I propose that in those struggling with the extremes of the Immortality Phantasy, who battle the movement from creativity to melancholia in a chronic capacity, at some point must end their repetitions and the survival is no longer desired. The death instinct becomes a pure version of itself and the only resolution to the internal conflicts is death.

1.5 Theoretical components

Freud's instinct theory could be seen to contain lapses and at times, appeared contradictory, but the key ideas that rose out of the evolved theory, especially with regards to the external

destructive instinct and the internal death instinct, were extremely important theoretical developments. Despite its critics and criticisms, my contention is that the death instinct, along with both its theoretical and potentially clinical implications, is a crucial aspect of psychoanalytic theory. This thesis aims to examine the death instinct alongside what I conjecture is its counterpart: creativity. Self-destruction and creative outlays (as a sublimation) are both examples of an instinctual defusion according to Freud and this relationship needs to be explored further. This thesis puts forward a unique examination of the nature of this relationship using the Immortality Phantasy and looking at the roles of repetition and survival, suggesting that destruction is both welcomed and necessary. This destruction can be a felt as painful guilt and anxiety, stemming from a reaction to a lost object, but dominated by identifications made during the Oedipus complex. The subsequent sublimation laid the ground for the defusion of instinct allowing for the first development of creativity and the consequential need for survival. I will put forward the argument that there is scope within Freud's instinctual theory for the development of his ideas on fusion and defusion to encompass a theory of creativity and especially Klein's ideas on melancholia and reparation. The Immortality Phantasy offers a paradigmatic shift to incorporate a theory of survival in direct relation to destruction, differing from the role of the life instincts and from Winnicott's notion of *psychic survival*. The opening quotation from Churchill suggests that there is something intrinsic in the relationship between survival and destruction and to develop a clear hypothesis, this affiliation must be explored. Therefore, I put forward a detailed examination of Freud's instinct theory and its evolution from his original scientific works in the 'Project for Scientific Psychology' (1895), to 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) and 'The Ego and the Id' (1923) – the latter two works being seminal papers in regards to the development of his theories and the postulation of his radical new ideas. In 1920, Freud introduced the notion of a death instinct, which was in an oppositional relationship to the life instinct, together compromising on 'life'. His 1923 paper added a complication to the dynamics of this relationship in the form of a destructive instinct and the introduction of the possible states of fusion and defusion of instinct. In this paper, Freud put forward examples of sublimation and melancholia as clinical examples of such states of defusion. It is the

relationship between these two states (sublimation and melancholia) that is explored further in this thesis. As Freud did not link them directly, nor hypothesise on the nature of the relationship between the two, there is room for an amendment and addition to Freud's instinctual paradigm.

Melanie Klein however, and many since her, did see the link between creativity and melancholia and this relationship has been highly theorised from varying disciplinary standpoints. However, it is my contention that there is the need for a model that helps to explain such a link by highlighting one of the aspects: the repetitive nature of this relationship. This would go some way towards bringing together creativity and destruction, including melancholia, and its clinical counterpart depression, along with various other forms of self-destruction, such as addiction. I hypothesise that this repetition is tied to a psychic necessity for survival, which must be felt anew repeatedly, stemming from complications with object relations. This is especially linked to the Oedipus complex and the role of the parents in cementing good object relations. Klein's theory of creativity focuses on the role of reparation, whilst Freud's model sees creativity as an extension of childhood phantasies of beating. Both models are explored in detail in Chapter 2.

1.6 Structure of the thesis and the use of literary examples

This thesis is divided into two sections: the first is the examination and amalgamation of the Freudian and Kleinian models. This is followed by the investigation of key theories on creativity and aesthetics, allowing for a wide-ranging, balanced understanding of destruction and creativity. Although Freudian and Kleinian theories remain the dominant ones, I do expand the field with regards to creativity and aesthetics, where Freud and Klein's work is more limited. By limiting the conceptual framework (to a mainly Freudian/Kleinian one), this keeps the thesis focused on its aims, but potentially limits the conclusions. This will be looked at within the discussion at the end of the paper. The second half of the thesis puts the Immortality Phantasy to the test, with its application to a wide range of novels, and an in-depth, detailed analysis restricted to three novels, from three different angles. These are: *The Spire,* by William Golding and an examination of

the characters on the page; *Mrs Dalloway,* by Virginia Woolf and an examination of the author herself; and *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* by Goethe, which is examined from the position of the reader. In the concluding discussion of the thesis, I will briefly explore the potential of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis to bring additional meaning and value to the following texts: *Paradise Lost,* by John Milton, *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* by Oscar Wilde and *The Bell Jar,* by Sylvia Plath. The weight of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis will be examined against other psychoanalytic theories and the weight it lends to our understanding of these novels, and its usefulness to literary criticism will lead to a statement of my main conclusion.

My examination of Freud's instinct theory looks at the evolution of his ideas, especially revolving around his seminal 1920 and 1923 papers on this topic. Freud maintained a duality in his setting up of instincts throughout his theory, starting from an examination of our two basic needs – love and hunger – to the development of his oppositional relationship between the life and death instincts. The postulation of a 'death instinct' arose from two key observations: the repetition compulsion and war neuroses, where we move from a passive to an active role in dealing with a traumatic situation. The repetition of the anxiety in war-neuroses led Freud to hypothesise, 'there is something about anxiety that protects its subject against fright and so against fright-neuroses' (1920, p.13). However, the best observation of the repetition compulsion at work came through children's play. Freud postulated that we are conservative in nature and that life comes about in response to environmental influences, rather than a desire to live. Instead, he suggested that 'the aim of all life is death' (1920, p.38), leading to his hypothesised term, the *death instinct,* an instinct which is characterised by its inertial objectives. However, Strachey's translation of the word 'trieb' in the *Standard Edition* is itself a source of contention amongst psychoanalysts, some arguing that he incorrectly translated this as 'instinct', as opposed to 'drive'. There are those who argue that Freud was specifically referring to a 'drive', when he postulated his ideas, relying on the evidence of his early descriptions that this drive could be found somewhere between the 'mental and somatic, as the psychical representation of the stimuli originating from within the organism' (1915,

p.122). There are those who argue that the basis of Freud's whole theory is changed when we see a drive as something fluid and adaptable, an evolutionary process; as opposed to an instinct, which is something more 'rigid' and 'innate', as described by Carel: 'In this sense drives are undetermined compared to instincts, which are a fully determined behaviour, often in response to a cue' (2006, p. 10). Freud postulated that every aspect of human life is a compromise formation between the inertial nature of the organism and the inflect of external factors (Freud, 1920). It is certainly understandable that, for some, this constitutes an immense and important difference in the way Freud's theory could be read. However, the complexities of this issue are perhaps undermined in this thesis, as I propose that the Freudian instinct refers to an impetus towards a hypothesised state and a constant striving for change.

In 1923, Freud further complicated his already complex and at times contradictory theory by postulating that the death instinct can be modified to a *destructive instinct*, an external aggressor, responsible for the self-preservation of the individual: 'the death instinct would then express itself…as an instinct for destruction directed against the external world' (1923, p.41). Freud now sets up the destructive instinct as the aggression put outside the self, and the death instinct as aggression turned against one's own ego. This was one of the possible outcomes of an instinctual defusion, primarily responsible for sublimation, melancholia, narcissism, and sadism. The co-existence of sublimation and melancholia are discussed in detail throughout this thesis and especially with regards to Virginia Woolf and her manic depression in Chapter 6. Here, I have proposed that we need to take Freud's ideas on defusion further, to improve our understanding of the dualistic relationship between creativity and destruction, which I have suggested Freud neglected to highlight sufficiently.

Post-Freudians have been varied in their responses to Freud's death instinct, with many strongly denying its value as a theoretical concept. But for others, including Rosenfeld, Segal and Marion Milner, Freud's postulation of the destructive instinct as something distinct from the death instinct, gave the theory a new life. Melanie Klein

reconceptualised the death instinct, downgrading its role in favour of her postulation of the depressive position. Klein attempted to remain true to Freud's theories, although she disagreed with the origins of the death instinct, arguing that it appears from the very beginning, felt by the infant as persecutory anxiety in response to a frustrating breast. The death instinct is then felt as a destructive instinct, an aggression against the external object. For Klein, 'anxiety has its origin in the fear of death' and a 'fear of annihilation of life' (1948, p.116). Klein's development of Freud's ideas led to a new direction in psychoanalytic theory and such a reconceptualization allowed her to develop an extensive theory of creativity. Klein's theory hypothesises that creativity is an act of reparation for the attacks made against the mother's body in phantasy and an attempt to make her whole again in phantasy. This is a defence against anxiety – destructive wishes are overcome by the reconstruction of the object. Within this thesis, I consider the reconstruction on the page only, but this is also applicable to the canvas, sculpture, music etc.; thus, the further arguments reflected in this thesis should also be applicable to other forms of art or artistic expression. Figures and characters are representations of our internal objects, psychic realities, projected onto, and introjected from, the page. This idea is explored in Klein's 1929 paper, 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse'.

Further theories of creativity are abundant, but this thesis focuses on the work of Hanna Segal and other Kleinians. Segal followed Klein's ideas on reparation, '…to restore his parents to their original state, reparative impulses come into play' (1974, p.139) and Joan Riviere suggested that, 'the characters belong so predominantly to the inner world that the entire drama is a representation of that world' (1952, p.173). One of the difficulties presented by Freud's proposition of a death instinct, was that this idea was purely *hypothetical,* as he believed it to be 'clinically silent' and therefore he could not provide the evidence for this theory, in the same way he could for his other theories. Both Segal and Klein have turned to literary creativity in their search for evidence and this thesis continues this tradition. I hypothesise that literature can provide the evidence that the clinical setting cannot and, following this supposition, allows me to test my hypothesis

with literary evidence, alongside making a potential contribution to methods of literary criticism. My model differs from the Kleinian tradition (and certainly the Freudian), as it introduces a paradigmatic move towards my observation of the psychic necessity of survival, demonstrated in my first literary case study, an exploration of Golding's novel, *The Spire* (1964). I argue that the protagonist, Jocelin, attempts to achieve the survival of the ultimate Oedipal parent: God. A desire for mastery and the deflection of aggression onto others allows for the repetition of his survival as he aims to reach God through his spire, a phallic representation of his omnipotent beliefs. This novel is approached using a *thematic analysis* to test the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, searching for evidence of my theorisations on the role of survival and repetition. The thematic analysis follows closely the methodology used by Segal to draw out the most relevant themes of the novel and to allow for *an analysis of the key characters on the page*. The aim is, not only to demonstrate that the Immortality Phantasy is helpful in aiding our understanding of the novel and illuminating additional aspects, but also to demonstrate that it is a more effective model than Segal's, thus attempting to adequately test the theory.

Alongside an exploration of the complexity of creative theory, I research a psychoanalytic approach to aesthetics. This focuses particularly on Segal's presentation and her exemplary thinking within this framework on our relationship to *beauty and ugliness*, alongside the ideas of Meltzer, Rickman, and Hagman. Rickman argued that the life and death instincts are represented on the page and it is when they are reflected back to us within a controlled environment, that the art or literature becomes most appealing. He also suggested that 'our need for beauty springs from the gloom and pain which we experience from our destructive impulses toward our good and loved objects' (1957, p.121). For Hagman, 'beauty is the expression of the internal forces of death and life' (2002, p.663). Beauty demonstrates our victory over the death instinct. And here, following the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, we can examine the idea that the aesthetic conflict is actually a source of pleasure – due to the battle between the ugly and the beautiful. By putting both sides of the aesthetic onto the page, we can view the life and death instinct (and their representatives) becoming fused once again and consequently

contained. The creation of the neutral space (or as it would be perceived, the 'good' aesthetic), demonstrates the *refusion* of the instincts, allowing for the necessary survival of the death instinct to occur. Each repetition of refused instinct on the page is manifested as a fresh survival, for the creator or the audience. We can reintegrate the damaged objects and make them whole again (following Klein's reparation); but when creativity stops, there is the potential for the instinct to become defused once more, especially where the good object has been destroyed (in phantasy, but also in reality). We seek the destructive component of the repetition of survival – guilt and anxiety are once again released as punishment for the destruction of the object.

A second case study, using a *psychobiographical approach* to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* is pursued, seeking evidence of the existence of the postulated Immortality Phantasy in the characters of Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith, as representative of the life and death instincts. Through an *examination of the author*, her life and some of the traumatic episodes she experienced, I demonstrate that the characters on the page are representations of her inner world and act out her repetitive oscillations between periods of creativity and melancholia. On the page, Woolf can attempt a mastery and fusion of the instincts through her creativity; however, this satisfaction is short lived and soon she must experience the survival anew. Woolf's creativity allowed her to make reparations with her mother, the lost object; but, soon the guilt and persecutory anxiety, which the internalised mother brought with her, rose once more. She must then test her ability to survive this self-destruction from the punitive superego, which leads her into bouts of depression and melancholia. I have suggested that Woolf threw herself into these states of self-punishment, flagellating herself for the multiple deaths of those she loved – a psychic necessity to survive the persecution, to allow herself to become whole, once again free from the guilt and pain of loss, albeit temporarily. She must believe in her immortality (even through the idea of her writing and legacy being 'immortal', as Jocelyn's stone spire was felt to be). Woolf throws herself into the destruction, with the desire for, and belief in, her *survival* of it. Until eventually, the death instinct becomes totally defused from the life instinct, taking her over completely; until she can no longer bare the repetitions, and her

Immortality Phantasy ceases. Thus, the desire to survive halts and she gives in to the inertial desires of the pure death instinct.

The final case study that I examine in this thesis, is Goethe's extremely influential epistolary novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In this chapter, I examine the influence of the novel upon the reader, as Goethe bares his soul in a semi-autobiographical recanting of his own life and loves. He demonstrates an introspection in the epistolary set up that created intense realism and consequently a strong wave of emotion in his readers. This led to a spate of copycat suicides in young men touched or affected by his writing. Goethe became an overnight celebrity with the release of the novel in 1774, creating a tide of 'Werther fever', as it became known. This chapter questions exactly what it was about his novel, about the emotions that it appeared to draw out of people, touching something personal and sometimes deadly within them. Why did this novel create such hysteria, more than other stories with a similarly suicidal protagonist? I examine the effect on the reader, the aesthetic reaction and question if the Immortality Phantasy can aid the interpretation of the novel and, therefore, aid our understanding of the pleasure and pain taken on board by the audience, enhancing the literary experience? I observe the text as the free associations of the author, revealing aspects of his own mind which are taken up by the reader to create a certain poetic experience. I approach this novel to contribute to an understanding of the *aesthetic experience of the reader*.

In my discussion chapter at the end of the thesis, I use a process of *verificationism*, which suggests that the more texts that show the appearance of the Immortality Phantasy, or prove my hypothesis to be correct, the stronger my claim is. I will accrue evidence from a variety of literary sources to support my hypothesis that survival and repetition are the key components of the relationship between creativity and destruction. This follows the logical idea that, building up quantities of evidence, strengthens an argument. With every illustration of the Immortality Phantasy found in the texts, the more solid we can reveal the theory to be. Although verificationism is no longer a popular methodology, it is useful

in my aims to build up support for my hypothesis and to be placed alongside other methodologies used to test the ideas I have put forward.

It is necessary to briefly discuss each of the methodological options associated with the three main texts further, to understand the challenges associated and to demonstrate previous models for engaging with the texts, which I will attempt to emulate.

1.7 Methodology

Francis Baudry is an American ego psychologist who has outlined some of the difficulties associated to the psychoanalytic approach to the analysis of literary texts via 'applied psychoanalysis'. I have chosen to use Baudry's paper (1984), as it provides an interesting introduction to the ways of using applied psychoanalysis, putting forward four main approaches to the examination of literature:

1) Text as case history – a 'character analysis'
2) Text as representative of the free associations of the author
3) Thematic analysis in order identify 'mental contents'
4) Aesthetic and poetic experience of the reader

For my chapter on William Golding's *The Spire*, I look at thematic analysis. An exploration of *Mrs Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf, through a psychobiographical exploration, will incorporate approach one and two. Finally, Goethe's novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* will be examined through the experience of the reader.

I would argue that the use of 'eliminative inductivism' is also valid for this thesis. This method argues that the hypothesis must be clearly demonstrated within the evidence given. This must then be tested against a rival's hypothesis, and then determined to be better. As described by Marshall Edelson:

> Eliminative inductivism answers the question, "What evidence shall count as *scientific support* for a hypothesis?" in a way that distinguishes it from the enumerative inductivism associated with logical positivism and from Popper's falsification. In brief, enumerative inductivism holds that any positive instance of

> a hypothesis – any observation entailed by it or deducible from it – confirms it (Edelson, 1984, p.42).

Hinshelwood (2013) examined this idea as the 'Alternate Hypotheses', which 'selects between two theories that cover the same facts…the condition is to pose the question clearly and the data needed will then be equally clear' (p.107). So, within this type of methodology, there must be an alternate explanation suggested and I have attempted to follow this procedure as far as possible within the second half of thesis.

1.8 Conclusion

This thesis aims to demonstrate that both Freud and Klein neglected to observe the necessity of repetition and of survival in our experience of the oscillation between creativity and destruction (melancholia), allowing scope for an extension of these theories via the Immortality Phantasy. With the aid of literary case studies, I have attempted to illustrate the repetitive manifestations of these complex psychic demands and understand the complexities of *why* such repetition occurs. Freud's repetition compulsion forms a key part of my Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, but my idea goes further than Freud's, by examining the dynamics of the repetition of survival of the Oedipal parent that is the key to creativity, and responsible for its co-existence with destruction. For Klein, 'the repetition of the act is designed to test the reality of this fear and disprove them' (1937, p.147) - the repetition for Klein is the incorporation of the good object. In my theory, the Immortality Phantasy assembled around the Oedipus complex centres on the idea that the repetition is in favour of the destructive instinct and it is the destructive situation that is phantasised, allowing for the survival to occur, reinforcing our existence beyond the wrath of the Oedipal parent. Unlike Klein's model, the repetition is not tied up to anxiety, or guilt as in Freud's model, but instead to narcissism and omnipotence. This thesis uses the Immortality Phantasy to bridge some of the gaps in both Freud and Klein's theories, whilst generating a shift in the existing paradigm for creativity and destruction that can potentially lead to an extension in our understanding of the relationship between them, whilst developing a new tool to aid literary criticis

CHAPTER TWO: A HISTORY OF INSTINCT THEORY

2.1 Introduction

The hypothesis of the existence of an Immortality Phantasy leans heavily on Freudian and Kleinian theory, highlighting Freud's instinctual theory as *the* key idea to help us understand the relationship between creativity and destruction. Still, as my supposition demonstrates, there are additional elements that can take our understanding of this relationship even further, especially with regards to the exploration of literary texts. Before additional ideas can be presented however, we must explore in detail Freud's instinctual theory and track its evolutionary path to illuminate any potential issues that arise from it, but also to demonstrate the foundations of my own theory.

Freud's controversial and dynamic model is one of the most dividing of psychoanalytic concepts. The postulation of a 'death drive' or 'death instinct' polarised the psychoanalytic community, separating its supporters and those who vehemently denied its existence. From his initial thoughts, postulated in 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915), Freud's theory underwent dramatic transformations which for some, undermined his previous conceptualisation of instinct theory, making it redundant and irrelevant. For others, it was a pivotal moment in the development of psychoanalysis, leading to a radical and exciting postulation that at our core we are bound for death; that we are innately inertial. This thesis follows a traditional Freudian framework and therefore supports the death instinct as one of Freud's most revolutionary ideas. It is worth noting one additional theoretical complication involved in the use of the terminology: 'death instinct' versus 'death drive'? Some use the phrase interchangeably; some disagree with Strachey's translation of 'trieb' as 'instinct' rather than 'drive'. Drive theory implies a more psychological and conscious element, whereas it is my contention that 'instinct' theory refers to something more organic and innate. In the Standard Edition, Strachey identifies the word 'trieb' as instinct and therefore this thesis will continue in this mould.

Freud's instinct theory can essentially be split into two schools of thought – pre-1920 and post-1920, the latter including his seminal paper, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. Freud always maintained a dualistic vision of instincts, which never wavered during the evolution of his theory, leading to his final conclusion of 'death instinct' and 'life instinct'. One of the greatest criticisms of Freud's instinctual framework is that it frequently demonstrated contradictions and gaps that at times it seemed even Freud himself could not fill in. Illuminating and working through some of these issues is the primary aim of this chapter, as despite the abundance of literature on Freud's instinct theory, a systematic revision of the theory's development is needed. The observation of certain theoretical ellipses demonstrates the need for a modernisation of instinct theory and as even Freud admitted, ambiguities were all part and parcel of its evolution: '…for psycho-analysis too the theory of the instincts is an obscure region' (1926, p.112).

2.2 Freudian instinct theory pre-1920

From his first writings in the scientific rhetoric, his infamous 'Project' (1895), Freud was already formulating ideas that would become part of his later metapsychology:

> …the first nervous system had two functions: the reception of stimuli *from outside* and the discharge of excitations *of endogenous* origin. It was from this latter obligation, indeed, that, owing to the exigencies of life, a compulsion came about towards further biological development (Freud, 1895, p.303).

This formed the basis of his ideas and in 1915 Freud adapted his language to describe 'instinctual stimuli', later becoming the 'instincts', manifestations of energy:

> …a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connections with the body (Freud, 1915, p.122).

In his 1914 paper, 'On Narcissism', Freud examined the first needs that arise in humans as being *love* and *hunger*. To these two ideas, he assigned a set of instincts: the *ego instincts* (hunger) and the *sexual instincts* (love). From 1915 onwards, Freud adapted his hypothesis to incorporate the role of the self-preservative instincts, setting up the dualism of the

ego/self-preservative instincts on the one hand and the *sexual instincts* on the other. Through his observation of psychoneurotic patients, Freud noted that, '…at the root of all such affections there is to be found a conflict between the claims of sexuality and those of the ego' (1915, p.124). The sexual instincts had as their primary task the reproduction of humanity and therefore the preservation of the species (1915, p.124). However, the self-preservative element of the instincts was a source of conflict for Freud. Originally, he attaches the role of self-preservation to the sexual instincts, but soon suggests it as a function of the ego instincts (only later does he tie together the ego and sexual instincts). A key component of his instinct theory at this stage is the ability to defend against the instincts in several ways. The first is the reversal of the instinct into its opposite – a change in its aim – usually entailing a replacement of something active into something passive (he uses the example of turning sadism into masochism). The second involves the turning around of the instinct onto oneself – a change in the object. Again, he uses masochism as an example, perhaps suggesting the origins of his thinking on the death instinct, as he understood the relationship between sexuality and destruction. In response to the onset of war and through further hypothesising on the repetition compulsion, Freud began to theorise the possibility of an innate instinct of destruction. As an instinct develops, we can observe the ability for it to turn into its opposite, become passive, or potentially ambivalent, in addition to the potential for its content to also change – as in from love to hate:

> At the very beginning, it seems, the external world, object, and what is hated are identical. If later on an object turns out to be a source of pleasure, it is loved, but it is also incorporated into the ego; so that for the purified pleasure-ego once again objects coincide with what is extraneous and hated (Freud, 1915, p.136).

Therefore, we see Freud setting up his first polarity – the conflict between love and hate:

> Hate...derives from the narcissistic ego's primordial repudiation of the external world with its outpouring of stimuli. As an expression of the reaction of unpleasure evoked by objects, it always remains in an intimate relation with the self-preservative instincts; so that the sexual and ego-instincts can readily develop an antithesis which repeats that of love and hate (1915, p.139).

With the introduction of the pleasure principle, Freud embarks upon a line of thinking that remains within his work:

> In so far as objects which are presented to it are a source of pleasure, it takes them into itself, 'introjects' them; and, on the other hand, it expels whatever within itself becomes a cause of unpleasure (1915, p.136).

This sets up his ideas to be taken on in his seminal 1920s paper, which will be discussed below.

2.3 Beyond the pleasure principle: A revolution of ideas

Freud wrote 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in the aftermath of the First World War, where he bore witness to a new form of destruction and degradation arising between familiar nations, leaving the civilised world reeling. Such a war understandably affected Freud's thinking as he attempted to postulate ideas on the darkest characteristics of mankind. Regarding his hypothesis of the pleasure principle, he suggested, 'This is the most obscure and inaccessible region of the mind, and since, we cannot avoid contact with it, the least rigid hypothesis, it seems to me, will be the best' (1920, p.7). In Freud's professional life, there was a demand for answers to the problem of war and the newly visible destructive characteristics on show, as more and more people presented with what he termed 'war neuroses'. At the same time, Freud was going through his own personal conflicts as he fell out with his friend and confidante, Carl Jung. In this paper, there is the sense that Freud is trying to find some clarity in the confusion of his internal and external world, and perhaps it would be fair to suggest that some of this chaos is reflected in the complexity of the paper. The observation of 'traumatic neuroses' proved to be a turning point in Freud's thoughts as he detected the appearance of hysteria combined with melancholia. 'In the case of war neuroses, the fact that the same symptoms came about without the intervention of any gross mechanical force seemed at once enlightening and bewildering' (Freud, 1920, p.12), suggesting that the *threat* of trauma could have the same effect as *actual* trauma. This led Freud to offer a further hypothesis: 'War neuroses…may very well be traumatic neuroses which have been facilitated by the conflict in the ego' (1920, p.33) – an observation that resonated throughout his work. With the introduction of his libido theory, Freud's ideas took another turn, 'the ego is the true and original reservoir of libido' (1920, p.40). Up until now, he had separated the *libido* and the *life*

instincts, but in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', he grouped them together to be in opposition to *the death instinct* and it is said to be this point in his theorisation which was responsible for the antagonism with his followers. This also led Freud to postulate that individuals had at their core,

> …an urge inherent to return to an organic state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life" (Freud, 1920, p.36).

If it were possible, the organism would be content repeating the same actions over and over, but with every external influence, this repetition is stored up by the conservative instincts for later usage (Freud, 1920). Herein lies the paradox, he suggests: it is not the desire for change, nor the striving for life that is the cause of action, but simply the conservative instincts saving up their repetitions. Because of their conservative nature, Freud proposes that it would be impossible for them to desire something they do not yet know. He concludes, 'the aim of all life is death', suggesting that instincts are active and mobile, best observed through dream work. He ties his postulation of the inertial characteristics of one set of instincts to the repetition compulsion, highlighting the desire within each organism to return to its original state and repeat the circle of life. These instincts were to be found in opposition to others, who had as their aim: '…to push forward towards a progress and the production of new forms… But for the moment it is tempting to pursue to its logical conclusion the hypothesis that all instincts tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things' (1920, p.37). Then, 'These circuitous paths to death, faithfully kept to by the conservative instincts, would thus present us to-day with the picture of the phenomena of life' (1920, p.39). This also leads to the production of the first instinct, Freud says:

> The tension which then arose in what had hitherto been an inanimate substance endeavoured to cancel itself out. In this way the first instinct came into being: the instinct to return to an inanimate state...living substance was thus being constantly created afresh and easily dying, till decisive external influences altered in such a way as to oblige the still surviving substance to diverge ever more widely from its original course of life and to make ever more complicated *detours* before reaching its aim of death (1920, pp.38-39).

Hence, it is due to the conservative nature of the instincts that we can see the phenomena of life. But these ideas must now be reconciled with the self-preservative instincts, which had been neglected in Freud's latest theorisations and seem to be in contradiction to his new hypothesis. Therefore, he downgrades their importance, citing that there are no instincts more powerful and more masterful than those who seek out death (Freud, 1920). But he must maintain his duality and consequently he redefines the sexual instincts:

> They are the true life instincts. They operate against the purpose of the other instinct, which leads by reason of their function, to death; and this fact indicated that there is an opposition between them and the instincts, an opposition whose importance was long ago recognised by the theory of neuroses. It is as though the life of the organism moved with a vacillating rhythm. One group of instincts rushes forward so as to reach the final aim of life as swiftly as possible, but when a particular stage in the advance has been reached, the other group jerks back to a certain point to make a fresh start and so prolong the journey (1920, pp.40-41).

Freud questions whether it really is only the sexual instincts that require change and development, which thus far has been a key element of his hypothesis. He answers his own question: 'I have no faith…in the existence of any such internal instinct and cannot see how this benevolent illusion is to be preserved' (1920, p.44). Towards the end of the paper, we see the first appearance of the term 'death instincts' which he sets up in a final opposition, against the life instincts (or sexual instincts) (Freud, 1920, p.44). He maintains the role of the death instinct as being inertial but also suggests that they are served by the pleasure principle (1920, p.63). However, at the end of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', there is still much work needed to complete his instinctual theory, and to fill in some of the confusion and continuity issues that have arisen.

2.4 Freudian Theory Post-1920

By 1923, Freud had once again grown dissatisfied with his instinct theory and was aware of many of its limitations, especially with regards to the newly hypothesised dialectic of the life and death instincts. Although for many, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' was Freud's most important paper with regards to his instinct theory, I would argue that 'The Ego and the Id' and the ironing out of some of his theoretical complications, makes this

1923 paper equally valuable. Freud insisted that the instincts were to be found in a *fused* state, but was facing difficulties in the exploration of this idea:

> This hypothesis throws no light whatever upon the manner in which the two classes of instincts are fused, blended or alloyed with each other, but that this takes place regularly and very extensively is an assumption indispensable to our conception" (Freud, 1923, p.41)

The fluid movement in quantity and quality of the two sets of instincts led to the compromise of life:

> The emergence of life would thus be the cause of the continuance of life and also at the same time of the striving towards death; and life itself would be a conflict and compromise between these two trends (Freud, 1923, pp.40-41).

However, Freud remained unsatisfied with his ideas and this time it was the death instinct that needed clarification as a concept. Freud answered his own concerns, and his critics, with the postulation of a new version of the death instinct, which he termed the *destructive instinct.* Below is an explanation of its role:

> It appears that, as a result of the combination of unicellular organisms into multicellular forms of life, the death instinct of the single cell can successfully be neutralized and the destructive impulses be diverted on to the external world through the instrumentality of a special organ. This special organ would seem to be the muscular apparatus; and the death instinct would thus seem to express itself – though probably only in part – as an instinct for destruction directed against the external world and other organisms (Freud, 1923, p.41).

The idea that the death instinct can be neutralised is key to Freud's theory. This can be achieved by its action as an instinct for aggression – the death instinct put outside of the individual. Freud's death instinct has up to now been inertial, with its aim to return to an inorganic state. But the destructive instinct is self-preservative by nature and its 'neutralisation' seems like a further contradiction when this is applied to its transformation to active aggressor. However, this postulation of an instinct that can be represented externally must be seen as a very important one and can certainly be seen in archaic man as a survival instinct[2]. We can also make the supposition that the inertial instinct has its opposite in the sexual instincts, so the destructive instinct must too have its counterpart?

[2] Freud discusses this idea in his 1932 *Why War?* exchange with Einstein.

Perhaps creativity? However, Freud struggles to clarify this idea, even returning to it again much later in Lecture XXXII on 'Anxiety and Instinctual Life', from his 'New Introductory Lectures' (1933), although he does not present additional clarification. However, this newly hypothesised idea - that there is an instinct for destruction that can be expressed externally - is of huge theoretical importance and Freud must clarify this through an understanding of his concepts of fusion and defusion:

> Once we have admitted the idea of a fusion of the two classes of instincts with each other, the possibility of a – more or less complete – 'defusion' of them forces itself upon us...we suspect that the epileptic fit is a product and indication of an instinctual defusion, and we come to understand that instinct defusion and the marked emergence of the death instinct call for particular consideration among the effects of some severe neuroses (Freud, 1923, pp.41-2).

The introduction of the state of *defusion* marks yet another turn in Freud's instinctual model and he associates defusion to a state of psychological imbalance, with fusion representing the normal or healthy. As a clinical example of defusion, Freud suggests melancholia, where we see the instinct of destruction being set free, setting itself up in the ego to become 'the pure culture of the death instinct' (1923, p.53), an expression that has now become synonymous with the condition of melancholia. In defusion, 'The instinct of destruction has been set free and it seeks to destroy the object' (1923, p.52). It is a pathological, punitive state of being and Freud notes the ease of which love can be turned into hate and vice versa. In the case of melancholia, hatred has been turned against the self, onto one's own ego with extreme ferocity. So, love and hate (or their representatives in the instinctual paradigm) are fused together as a protective measure, but there is the ability for one of the instincts to become more intense than the other as quickly as this can be reversed. There is a fluidity between them, but they remain bound together: 'We perceive that for purposes of discharge the instinct of destruction is habitually brought into the service of Eros…' (1923, p.41).

2.5 The Role of Sublimation

Interestingly, Freud cites sublimation as a further demonstration of an instinctual defusion, so can we assume that sublimation and melancholia - both as examples of instinctual defusions - can be linked? In melancholia, the destructive instinct (now the death instinct) has moved into the superego and has been turned against the self:

> ...we should say that the destructive component has entrenched itself in the super-ego and turned against the ego. What is now holding sway in the super-ego is, as it were, a pure culture of the death instinct, and in fact it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death... (1923, p.52).

This is the purest version of the death instinct, returning to its aims of inertia for the organism, to nothingness. The only defence we have against the death instinct Freud informs us is *fusion*. The death instincts must be 'fused with the erotic, in part they are diverted towards the external world in the form of aggression, while to a larger extent they undoubtedly continue their internal work unhindered' (1923, p.54). So ideally, the death instinct can be put outside via the 'muscular apparatus' or diluted courtesy of the life instincts. But where does this internal aggression stem from? It comes straight from the superego as a response to feelings of guilt. Guilt can be responsible for self-aggression but also for aggression against others:

> It was as if it was a relief to be able to fasten this unconscious sense of guilt onto something real and immediate…The more a man controls his aggressiveness, the more intense his ideal's inclination to aggressiveness against his ego (1923, p.54).

Freud visits his theorisations on fusion again in his 1924 paper 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', reiterating the dangers of pure death instinct:

> ...we can only assume that a very extensive fusion and amalgamation, in varying proportions, of the two classes of instincts takes place, so that we never have to deal with pure life instincts or pure death instinct but with mixtures of them in different amounts (1924, p.164).

The introduction of 'pure life instinct' is novel to this paper and a conjecture on what this could potentially look like would be a valuable enquiry (I would suggest it could be found

in the realm of creativity). Regretfully, Freud does not offer up any examples or further theorisations of such a hypothesised state.

To return to the concept of sublimation, Freud postulates it as a defusion, as a response to Oedipal identifications:

> The super-ego arises, as we know, from an identification with the father taken as a model. Every such identification is in the nature of a desexualization or even of a sublimation. It now seems as though when a transformation of this kind takes place, an instinctual defusion occurs at the same time. After sublimation the erotic component no longer has the power to bind the whole of destructiveness that was combined with it, and this is released in the form of an inclination to aggression and destruction. This defusion would be the source of the general character of harshness and cruelty exhibited by the ideal – its dictatorial 'Thou Shalt" (1923, p.164).

As a result of desexualising the libido (the life instinct) which occurs in the process of sublimation, it no longer has the ability to bind the destructive instinct. I argue that Freud does not adequately reconcile his ideas of destruction with his limited theorisations on creativity and instinct theory is kept separately (as are melancholia and sublimation). This thesis attempts to tie these crucial ideas together. Let us look further at his 1923 paper, where Freud attempts a clarification on his sublimation hypothesis:

> In the case of the origin of homosexuality and of desexualised social feelings as well, analytic investigation has only recently taught us to recognize that violent feelings of rivalry are present which lead to aggressive inclination, and that it is only after these have been surmounted that the formerly hated object becomes the loved one or gives rise to an identification (1923, p.43).

It is my contention that Freud is referring to the Oedipal identifications he has mentioned previously. Freud hypothesises that sublimation carried such assimilations within it, implying that when the hated object becomes loved, we incorporate it into ourselves:

> We have reckoned as though there existed in the mind – whether in the ego or the id – a displaceable energy, which, neutral in itself, can be added to qualitatively differentiated erotic or destructive impulse, and augment its total cathexis…It seems a plausible view that this displaceable and neutral energy, which is no doubt active both in the ego and in the id, proceeds from the narcissistic store of libido – that it is desexualised Eros. If this displaceable energy is desexualised libido, it may also be described as *sublimated* energy; for it would still retain the main purpose of Eros – that of uniting and binding – in so far

> as it helps towards establishing unity, or tendency to unity, which is particularly characteristic of the ego (Freud, 1923, pp.44-45).

So there appears to be a dangerous dynamic to sublimation, which occurs in relation to the instincts. By 'desexualising or sublimating the libido of the id, the ego is working in opposition to the purposes of Eros and placing itself at the service of the opposing instinctual impulses' (1923, p.46). This reminds us that the libido's energy is neutral and can be placed in favour of either set of instincts to increase its potential for release. However, due to its neutrality, the energy is still in the service of Eros. At first, Freud appears to be saying that the aim of sublimation is to ensure the balance of the organism and to quieten both sets of instincts, with the result usually being something of cultural benefit. However, he then seems to contradict this, suggesting that by sublimating libido, the ego is actually working towards the goals of the death instinct. Death instinct is set free through an instinctual defusion:

> After sublimation the erotic component no longer has the power to bind the whole of the destructiveness that was combined with it, and this is released in the form of an inclination to aggression and destruction (1923, pp.54-55).

Due to the weakening of the life instinct, due to its desexualisation in sublimation, it cannot do its job of fusing, neutralising or diluting the death instinct. Does this suggest sublimation is a dangerous action? We must assume that an 'over-sublimation', if such a term were to exist, would disturb the balance of the ego and this idea must be investigated further. If there is chronic sublimation, then the death instinct is given free reign within the organism to be as harsh and critical as it wants to be, potentially driving the individual into a state of melancholia? Can we see the beginnings of a framework in which to tie sublimation and melancholia? It is not something that Freud addresses directly and his later postulation on the origins of creativity do not follow this paradigm either. However, it is a hypothesis that I follow in my conjecture of the Immortality Phantasy and it will be explored further in this thesis.

2.6 Gaps and Inconsistencies in Freud's Writing

After an exploration of some of the key ideas to emerge within Freud's instinctual framework, following the ideas from their origins through to some of Freud's later and more developed ideas, it is my conclusion that there are four areas within this evolving paradigm that need to be addressed further and demonstrate some of the gaps in Freud's writing:

1) Regarding the neutralisation and diversion of the death instinct: Freud is saying that it now becomes the **'destructive instinct'**, active, fused, self-preservative and a representation of healthy functioning. It is contrasted to the silent, defused, self-destructive death instinct. Freud does not adequately complete his definition of the two versions, or how they move from internal to external, as he assigns the function to the body (through the muscular apparatus) rather than as a function of the ego. If the destructive instinct also represents a healthy state of fusion, can we say that in normal functioning, there is no inertial desire? This is only a result of the death instinct – the aggressive instinct being moved into the ego. It is my contention that this was one of Freud's boldest and most important theoretical advancements and that we can understand it as described above, despite a lack of clarification from Freud.
2) Is there a relationship between **sublimation** and the Oedipus complex? Is sublimation assigned to the death instincts or life instinct? Is sublimation a potentially dangerous action? Freud's writing on sublimation is extremely complex (and continues to be so in post-Freudian theory). Freud's conceptualisation of this area appears to be confused and, at times, contradictory. We must assume that at the conclusion of his thinking, Freud no longer assigned sublimation to one of the instincts, suggesting instead that it was an act of passivity involving both sets of instincts. Perhaps he might have used this as the antithesis of his warning against the existence of pure life or pure death instincts? On the contrary, this could be an example of how pure life and death instincts could come about? It is my supposition that Freud was demonstrating the close relationship between sublimation and melancholia, although he never postulated this

idea exactly. The two concepts contain similar qualities although their aims are different.

3) What is the link between **creativity** and destruction? Freud never makes a direct association between the two, although the dialectical quality of his theories would suggest this as an obvious example. Having postulated sublimation and melancholia so closely together, one would assume that a theory of creativity would lead out of this. However, this is not the case, leaving one to conjecture why Freud did not make this link[3]?
4) Finally, there is work to be done in understanding Freud's notion of **defusion**. Having postulated the *existence* of life and death instincts in 1920, his 1923 paper need to clarify the *relationship* between them. Fusion and defusion was his answer: Making a swift generalization, we might conjecture that the essence of a regression of libido (e.g. from the genital to the sadistic-anal phase) lies in a defusion of instincts. The question also arises whether ordinary ambivalence, which is so often unusually strong in the constitutional disposition to neurosis, should not be regarded as the product of a defusion; ambivalence, however, is such a fundamental phenomenon that it more probably represents an instinctual fusion that has not been completed (1923, p.42).

He suggests neuroses, sublimation and narcissism as some of the states of defusion, but there are some fundamental issues within his ideas, especially regarding the destructive instinct and sublimation. It is my hypothesis that the amalgamation of creativity and destruction is potentially dangerous and threatened with madness. Freud neglected to highlight this relationship, but his ideas on fusion and defusion can offer an explanation of *why*, and therefore, I defend that these ideas remain vital to creative theory.

[3] One hypothesis for this, is that due to Virginia Woolf's known dislike of Freud and all things psychoanalytic (although as Hinshelwood (1990) suggests, she disliked *everything*) and the importance of the Hogarth Press in the distribution of Freud's work, perhaps Freud was worried about too easily putting together melancholia and creativity in case it was viewed as a direct analysis of her.

2.7 Key Concepts in Freud's Instinct Theory

This section briefly explores some of Freud's key ideas to arise out of his instinctual model that are used throughout this thesis as tools to aid us in an investigation into the relationship between creativity and destruction:

2.7.1 Repetition Compulsion

The repetition compulsion has formed part of Freud's thinking from the very start, first observed as a clinical phenomenon (1914), although present in his theorisations right from the beginning. However, it is only in his 1919 paper that Freud refers to it directly, setting up a definition:

> ...the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts – a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character (p.238).

This idea is elaborated in full in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920). Here, he attributes the repetition compulsion to instinctual behaviour. Whilst attempting to understand the abundant traumatic neuroses as a consequence of World War I, Freud was particularly struck by the re-enactment of a game that he observed in his 18-month-old grandson, Ernst. Freud, whilst living with the family for several weeks, had the opportunity to observe the boy and noted that one specific game was frequently acted out, suggesting there might be more to it than simple 'child's play' - it was the act of play itself that held meaning. In this particular scene, the 'fort/da game', the child appeared to be obtaining 'instinctual renunciation' (1920, p.13). He had found a way to release the extreme instinctual tension he felt so helpless against by controlling the disappearance and subsequent return of a cotton reel. The mother's 'departure had to be enacted as a necessary preliminary to her joyful return' (p.13). The repetition of the situation allowed the boy to control the frustration he felt at her leaving, and to gain mastery over the situation[4]. Freud is careful

[4] The use of the word 'frustration' is Kleinian language (for Klein, the instincts develop out of frustration). I have used it here, with regards to a Freudian concept as Freud neglects the concept of frustration and it

to comment that the relationship with the parents was a healthy one, suggesting this concept to be one that was applicable to all, not some neuroses on the part of the child. This 'instinct for mastery', is also part of the destructive instinct, 'or the will to power' (Freud, 1923, p.163). But at the heart of all these repetitions, he says, is the Oedipus complex. When repression occurs, instead of remembering, the patient 'is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material…These reproductions, which emerge with such unwished-for exactitude, always have as their subject some portion of infantile sexual life – of the Oedipus complex' (1923, p.18).

2.7.2 Sadism

Freud's first ideas on sadism referred to the idea that the sexual instinct could move from being active and sadistic, to passive and masochistic. In 1915, Freud suggested that it was the aim of the instinct to torture, humiliate, and cause pain to its master (p.128):

> Is it not plausible to suppose that this sadism is in fact a death instinct which, under the influence of the narcissistic libido, has been forced away from the ego and has consequently only emerged in relation to the object? It now enters the service of the sexual function…During the oral stage of organization of the libido, the act of obtaining erotic mastery over an object coincides with that object's destruction (Freud, 1920, p.54).

Later, the 'sadistic instinct' splits off and moves into the service of reproduction. However, where a defusion occurs (taking it away from its reproductive aims), we can then see sadism as a perversion.

2.7.3 The role of the pleasure principle

In his 1915 paper, Freud hypothesised that everything was subject to the pleasure principle, an idea followed up in 1920. However, by 1923, this idea was largely redundant, as the important role of the pleasure principle had been replaced by his instinct theory.

Freud suggests (1915) that we seek only that which is pleasurable: introjecting objects of pleasure and projecting out those of displeasure. The reality-ego changes into a

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is beneficial to an understanding of the source of the repetition compulsion to include it in this description.

pleasure-ego (p.136). This occurs by the experiencing of something agreeable from the outside world, leading to feelings of love. In 1920, Freud suggested that the pleasure principle could be viewed as 'an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure' and this concept is juxtaposed to the Nirvana principle[5] (which forms part of the principle of constancy, the desire to keep as low as possible the quantity of excitation present in the mental apparatus (1920, p.59)). So, the pleasure principle is a *modification* of the Nirvana principle. Strachey informs us in a footnote that 'the Nirvana principle, he maintains, is to be attributed to the 'death instinct', and its modification into the pleasure principle is due to the influence of the 'life instinct' or libido' (1920, p.59). However, Freud cannot find a way to take the 'Nirvana principle' any further and he must return to a new hypothesis for the pleasure principle:

> ...there exist in the mind a strong *tendency* towards the pleasure principle, but that tendency is opposed by certain other forces or circumstances, so that the final outcome cannot always be in harmony with the tendency towards pleasure" (1920, pp.9-10).

The pleasure principle remains in an antagonistic relationship to the reality principle.

2.7.4 Immortality

It is my contention that *immortality* plays an important part in Freud's writing, even though it is not explicitly examined. The term makes several appearances throughout his work, often centring on his theoretical observations of the death instinct, especially visible in his 1915 paper, 'On Transience'. In this work, it appears at times that Freud might be heading towards a postulation on the role of immortality, although he never reaches this point and the paper is, instead, a commentary on aspects of creativity and destruction.

Freud first sows the seeds of potential ideas by looking at the immortal germ cells in 1900 and he tied up immortality to the production of children. This idea was revisited again in his 1914 paper 'On Narcissism', where he describes us as the mortal vessels of a '(possibly) immortal substance' (p.78). Before moving on to examine his thoughts on

[5] This is a term postulated by Barbara Low, which Freud appeared keen to incorporate into his line of thinking. However, he never offers a full hypothesis for this idea and it does not make another appearance in his writing post-1920.

immortality in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', it is worth briefly exploring his 1919 paper on 'The 'Uncanny', where Freud is very preoccupied with the idea of the 'double', which he suggests is the ego's defence against its own destruction and that this could be where the notion of immortality comes from. He goes on to hypothesise that the concept of immortality, is *a defence against death*. In this paper, his thoughts immediately turn to the repetition compulsion, leaving us to infer a connection between the repetition compulsion and immortality? Perhaps part of the reason that we feel the compulsion to repeat, is ensuring the cycle of life, thus by repeating situations we ensure our own survival – the basis of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis. In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), Freud returned to the notion of immortality in reproduction, attempting to demonstrate the archaic contents of the protozoa, putting forward a biological hypothesis:

> …one portion of their substance pursues its development to a finish, whilst another portion harks back once again as a fresh residual germ to the beginning of the process of development. These germ cells therefore work against the death of a living substance and succeed in winning for it what we can only regard as potential immortality (Freud, 1920, p.40)

These ideas are abandoned along with his scientific ideas, in favour of his instinctual framework. Here, the idea is similar but the language has changed, '…those which seek to lead what is living to death, and others, the sexual instincts, which are perpetually attempting and achieving a renewal of life' (Freud, 1920, p.49).

Freud further considered ideas on immortality in his 1915 paper – written against the backdrop of war and therefore demonstrating a preoccupation with death and survival (this is also helpful for a later examination of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis):

> Hence the psycho-analytic school could venture on the assertion that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality (Freud, 1915, p.289).

It remains my contention that Freud abandoned his ideas on immortality, with the introduction of his conceptualisation of instinct theory and to move away from the scientific language of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate

the value of incorporating immortality into a psychoanalytic framework, not as a bid for eternal life, but in its role as a desire for survival.

2.7.5 The Oedipus complex

Through his early self-analysis and a great appreciation for Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Freud was led to hypothesise that there was a certain dynamic and displaceable relationship between a child and its parents, which could be responsible for pathological disturbances in adulthood:

> Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim to neurosis. With the progress of psycho-analytic studies the importance of the Oedipus complex has became [*sic*] more and more clearly evident (Freud, 1905, p.226).

In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), Freud informs us of the 'narcissistic scar' left behind after the rejection by the parents of the child's Oedipal desires, which can lead to low self-esteem and an inferiority complex. He informs us of the great importance that the Oedipus complex can have later on in life, especially on future relationships as we tend to mimic the very first objects of our affections (the parents). The notion of the Oedipus complex, in one guise or another, makes its way into the majority of Freud's writing, but perhaps the most noteworthy contribution came from his paper 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' (1924). Due to the threat of castration[6], the male child's ego will give up its Oedipal desires (either to take the place of the father, or to be loved by his father) (1924, p.176). This occurs via the following processes:

> The object-cathexes are given up and replaced by identifications. The authority of the father or the parents is introjected into the ego, and there it forms the nucleus of the super-ego…The libidinal trends belonging to the Oedipus complex are in part desexualized and sublimated (a thing which probably happens with every transformation into an identification) and in part inhibited in their aim and changed into impulses of affection (Freud, 1924, p.127).

[6] For the female, this is replaced by the fear of a loss of love and the fear that the father will not give her a baby (Freud, 1924).

It is essential to move through the Oedipus complex with as little psychological disruption as possible.

Before moving on to Kleinian theory, I would like to put forward a summary by Sanchez-Pardo:

> Most analysts compromised with the death drive by accepting the theory of a primary instinct of aggression but rejected or ignored the self-directed aspect of the death drive theory. This was certainly not the case with Melanie Klein. She took the death drive as crucial in the psychosexual development of the individual, and it acquired a central and even founding role in her theory' (2003, p.138).

We have traced the relevant aspects of Freud's theory in order to provide a clear picture on which to base the conceptualisation of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis atop. However, as Kleinian theory is also crucial to the developments of my hypothesis, it is essential to explore her contributions to instinct theory, alongside those of other key and relevant post-Freudians. Freud's postulation of the death instinct in 1920 was arguably one of his greatest offerings to the field of psychoanalysis. It was also one of his most controversial, resulting in a split within the field of psychoanalysis between those who maintained Freud's ideas such as Klein, Segal, and Rosenfeld; and those who totally rejected them, such as Compton, Reich, and Fenichel. There were also those who maintained a middle ground, relegating the role of the death instinct in favour of an aggressive instinct. These various groups and their dealing with the death instinct will be discussed within this chapter. However, the important theoretical advancements make by the Kleinian school will remain the primary focus.

2.7.6 The Deflectors

There is a note-worthy group of psychoanalysts who rejected the death instinct theory completely. The varying reasons are numerous but a few ideas are discussed below. In 2003, Frank describes the conditions of the instinct theory that makes it unpalatable to some, primarily the notion of an 'instinct' rather than external learning (p.693). He accuses Freud's instinct theory of being too reductionist and 'biologizing', suggesting there are many internal and external forces at work that need to be accounted for (he postulates

language such as need, instinct, wish, affect and belief as needing a place in psychoanalytic language) (2003). For Bibring (1941), the problem with instinct theory arose from the postulation of the self-destructive element of the death instinct, 'How is it possible that the aggressive instincts should be turned against the subject's own person to the point of self-destruction?' (p.116). He also comments, 'The terms 'life instincts' and 'sexual instincts' on the one hand and 'death instincts' and 'destructive instincts' on the other are used by Freud synonymously and without any distinction' (1941, p.123), suggesting his criticisms of Freud's theory were more on presentation of certain ideas rather than a fundamental issue with the concept. Compton (1983) shares concerns of the language of Freud's theorisations as his primary objection. In his reflections on drive theory, he suggests that the role of aggression is one that has not been effectively explained yet, especially with regards to primary and secondary aggression. The post-Freudian model of the dualism of sexuality and aggression also does not work according to Compton and he claims,

> Despite widespread acceptance of the idea of aggression as simply parallel to sexuality in all respects, there are major discrepancies. Perhaps aggression cannot be viewed as a drive after all; perhaps our drive construct needs to be modified to accommodate aggression (1983, p.397).

Compton suggests that a critique of Freudian theory is vital and the flaws, especially relating to the role of aggression, need to be addressed. However, he concludes that the new developments for drive theory have not achieved any further explanations or observations and, in many respects, have added to the complications of both the theoretical and clinical implications. In this respect, the Immortality Phantasy aims to consolidate, simplify and further these clinical theorisations.

The general criticisms that this group put forward were threefold: firstly, there needed to be an updated view of the role of aggression; secondly, there needs to be an abolition of the instinctual vocabulary; thirdly, psychoanalysts need to make more of an attempt to clarify rather than complicate Freud's already muddled theories.

2.7.7 The Middle Ground

This group was comprised mainly of Hartman, Kris and Loewenstein, who together wrote extensively on the 'formation of psychic structure' (1949), attempting to maintain a duality between libido and aggression:

> The comparison of libido and aggression begins with problems of terminology: we contrast sexual impulses in the broad sense defined by Freud with aggressive impulses; but while we designate the energy ascribed to the sexual impulses as libido, we do not choose to adopt a similar term for the energy of aggressive impulses, though two such terms (*mortido*, *destrudo*) have been suggested; we refer to this energy as "aggression" (1949, p.12).

This paper also demonstrates a lexiconical compromise in the form of 'instinctual drive' for Freud's 'trieb', differing itself from normal base instincts (1949). Loewenstein later demonstrated a complication found in the defusion of instinct, suggesting that Freud did not adequately demonstrate where the aggressive instinct came from. He maintains that one of the issues is finding a biological representation of aggression, when one so easily exists for the sexual instincts. Others have tried to find a psychological form for this (Weiss and Federn) although this has proved to be unsatisfactory too (Loewenstein, p.381). The move from the biological for a representation of aggression, to the psychological, is a major concern for Loewenstein.

2.7.8 The Supporters

Within this group, we find the post-Freudians who maintained Freud's vision of the instincts, albeit with some adaptation in order to iron out many of the complications and to put forward attempts at modernisation. Klein was a major contributor to this area, offering up a new paradigm for the understanding of our relationship to internal objects, which Freud had only briefly engaged with. Other changes she made included the death instinct being present from birth, and the Oedipus complex also occurring at a much earlier age. Other key members of this group were Hanna Segal, Herbert Rosenfeld, and William Gillespie.

2.8 The Kleinian Death instinct

Klein viewed herself as a true disciple of Freud and she has been partially criticised for the consequent devotion to the death instinct in her work. For Klein, there were two main developmental elements of the death instinct in children: anxiety and guilt. Anxiety arose out of a desire for the lost loved object or a fear of a loss of the object. Klein discusses in her 1948 paper how Freud suggested guilt arose both in response to the Oedipus complex, but also as a result of conflict between the life and death instincts. For Klein, anxiety was also a response to a fear of death or annihilation, especially a fear of the loss of the good object – the breast, which could simultaneously be felt as self-preservative, or could be felt as the devouring breast, which became a representation of the death instinct (Klein, 1948). Klein demonstrated that the death instinct could be heard or viewed clinically, something Freud had struggled to do leading him to postulate it as 'silent'. For Klein, the death instinct could be viewed from an early age through beasts and monsters in child's play as one example, developing into a capacity for creativity. From the beginning, the life and death instincts struggle within the individual with the death instinct being felt in two ways: the first is persecutory anxiety, fear of death, fear of loss. The second is because of the deflection of the death instinct outside of the infant, against the frustrating breast in the form of aggression, making it the external representation of the death instinct (Klein, 1948):

> The bad breast is also introjected, and this intensifies…the internal danger situation…For by the internalization of the 'bad' breast, the portion of the death instinct which had been deflected outwards, with all its associated dangers, is turned inwards again and the ego attaches its fear of its own destructive impulses to the internal bad object (Klein, 1948, p.117)

So, there is an internal and external representation of the death instinct: internal is the persecutory anxiety felt in response to the possible loss of the loved object; the external comes as a result of a corollary deflection of the death instinct outside in response to projection against the frustrating breast. However, the life instinct too has its internal and external representations in the form of the nourishing, loving good breast/object:

> The good internalized breast and the bad devouring breast form the core of the super-ego in its good and bad aspects; they are the representatives within the ego of the struggle between the life and death instincts… Paranoid disturbances in adults are, in my view, based on the persecutory anxiety experienced in the first few months of life (Klein, 1948, p.118).

Klein distinguishes between two types of anxiety: persecutory and depressive. The former, persecutory anxiety, relates to the anxiety produced in response to the fear of annihilation. Depressive anxiety arises as a response of the fear of the destruction of the loved object, due to destructive projections, although she is keen to point out that this is not necessarily a simple definition (Klein, 1948). Depressive anxiety, Klein informs us, is especially acute in response to the loss or suffering of the loved object and heightens both feelings of guilt and the need for reparation. Guilt stems from fear of harm to the loved object from projected aggression, leading to the desire to make reparations for the damage done. The three concepts are all tied together, Klein suggests, so where there is depressive anxiety, guilt and reparation follow closely:

> It seems probable that depressive anxiety, guilt and the reparative tendency are only experienced when feelings of love for the object predominate over destructive impulses. In other words, we may assume that recurrent experiences of love dominating over hatred – ultimately the life instinct dominating over the death instinct – are an essential condition for the ego's capacity to integrate itself and to synthesize the contrasting aspects of the object (Klein, 1948, p.120).

Klein dealt with issues of idealisation and denial in an earlier paper (1946), which helps to understand another aspect of the instincts. In her paper, 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms', Klein wrote that:

> …with the splitting of the object, idealization is bound up, for the good aspects of the breast are exaggerated as a safeguard against the fear of the persecuting breast. Idealization is thus the corollary of persecutory fear, but it also springs from the power of the instinctual desires which aim at unlimited gratification and therefore create the picture of an inexhaustible and always bountiful breast – an ideal breast (Klein, 1946, p.101-2).

In other words, idealisation occurs in response to a splitting of the object. In this way, the infant can maintain the ideal breast on the one hand, away from the persecutory breast on the other hand. However, this leads to an omnipotent denial of the object, something Klein suggests is 'equal to the annihilation by the destructive impulses' (1946, p.102). So, for

Klein, continual projection and introjection can lead to an impoverished ego, with the ideal state being one of balance between the good and bad objects, internal representations of the life and death instincts. The death instincts conjure up anxiety and dread within the ego, alongside a fear of death or annihilation which Klein calls *persecutory anxiety*. This persecutory anxiety can lead either to a weakening of the ego, or it pushes the individual towards a wholeness of personality. The bad objects can be experienced through *depressive anxiety* (a fear of destruction of the loved object) and can either lead to a fear of the annihilation of the object, *or*, the possibility of reparation and sublimation (Klein, 1952).

Klein did not take up Freud's notion of the defusion and fusion of the instincts and only referenced this concept in passing statements, as in 'On the Development of Mental Functioning' (1958):

> I would state that in so far as Freud took the fusion and defusion of the two instincts as underlying the *psychological* conflict between aggressive and libidinal impulses, it would be the ego, and not the organism, which deflects the death instinct (Klein, 1958).

Klein's contribution to object relational psychoanalysis was immense and her ideas helped in many ways to clarify the complexities of some of Freud's ideas, which this rudimentary sketch of Klein's key postulations attempts to demonstrate.

2.9 Hanna Segal

Hanna Segal followed many of Klein's ideas in relation to the death instinct and therefore there is no need to repeat what has already been highlighted. However, Segal did attempt to clarify some of Klein's ideas further, putting forward a definition of the instincts stating:

> …the life instinct is the love of life which includes love of self and life-giving objects… On the other hand, the death instinct and envy give rise to narcissistic object relations and internal structures which are destructive and self-destructive (1983, p.272).

Segal, like Rosenfeld, saw the death instinct as a function of narcissism. Following on from Klein, she suggested that narcissism could also be a defence against envy, therefore correlating narcissism to the death instinct, and envy to a libidinal drive. But conversely,

narcissism is also a defence against the death instinct. Segal expressed the role of the death instinct in art and creativity, expressing how beauty could be a defence against it. I will refer back to her position in relation to *Aesthetics*, in Chapter 4.

2.10 Rosenfeld on Narcissism and the Death instinct

For Rosenfeld, only in extreme cases of defusion do we see a 'pure' version of the instincts and he postulated instead that what we more commonly view is the death instinct, which has been modified, 'manifested as a destructive process directed against objects and the self'. These processes seem to operate in their most virulent form in severe narcissistic conditions' (Rosenfeld, 1971, p.169). He rejects Freud's concept that there is no transference in narcissism, and further rejects Freud's ideas of primary and secondary narcissism, in favour of ideas of 'omnipotence', 'projection' and 'introjection'. Omnipotence plays a key role in narcissism, and in this way, the infant introjects the breast to feel that it possesses or master the primary object, '…the mother or breast are used as containers into which are omnipotently projected the parts of the self which are felt to be undesirable as they cause pain or anxiety' (Rosenfeld, 1964, p.332). This can lead to lack of discrimination between the self and the object because there cannot be a dependency on the object, as this would entail love and consequently pain, removing the role of aggression caused by both frustration and envy (Rosenfeld, 1964). It is worth noting here that Klein defined envy as, 'the infant's difficulty in building up his good object, for he feels that the gratification of which he was deprived has been kept for itself by the breast that frustrated him' (1957, p.180), especially with regards to the Oedipus complex. Rosenfeld felt that narcissism was an important part of the fusion and defusion of instincts and attempted to demonstrate the relationship between narcissism and destruction. This led to a postulation of the existence of a state of 'pathological fusion', where although remaining fused, the power of the aggressive tendencies over the libidinal ones, is significant. This is contrasted to a 'normal defusion' whereby the destructive instinct has been successfully neutralised. Rosenfeld also discriminates between libidinal and aggressive elements of narcissism: *libidinal narcissism* referring to the omnipotent belief in one's ability to control and master

external objects, felt to be part of the self as a result of projection and introjection. However, in *destructive narcissism*, it is the destructive elements of the self that have been idealised, and these consequently attack any libidinal aspects of the self. In other words, any attempt to make libidinal contact with an external object (a need, love or dependence) is thwarted. The outside world is devalued and the destructive narcissist has no external objects. Where they do arise, they are experienced with envy (Rosenfeld, 1964). In extreme cases, there is such violence in their destructive impulses that there is a refusal to acknowledge the parents or any need for external objects. The result is extreme self-sabotage in order to deny the external object, even to the point of suicide, 'death is idealized as a solution to all problems' (1964, p.173). This comes close to Freud's 'pure culture of the death instinct', especially as for Rosenfeld this cannot be viewed as a defusion, as the whole of the self is working in favour of the destructive impulses split off from the libidinal ones, aiming 'to triumph over life and creativity represented by the parents and the analyst by destroying the dependent libidinal self experienced as the child' (1964, p.173). Rosenfeld also notes that there appears to be a repetitive element to the projected destruction onto the analyst, an attempt to destroy their creativity (p.174). He surmises:

> It appears that these patients have dealt with the struggle between their destructive and libidinal impulses by trying to get rid of their concern and love for their objects by killing their loving dependent self and identifying themselves almost entirely with the destructive narcissistic part of the self which provides them with a sense of superiority and self-admiration (Rosenfeld, 1964, p.174).

Rosenfeld differs to Freud in regards to fusion, as for him, a state of fusion can still involve giving immense power to one's destructive impulses (or the death instinct). In fact, Rosenfeld suggested it is impossible to observe an instinctual defusion, except in suicide; instead, we witness a 'pathological fusion'. However, here I uphold Freud's notion of the defusion of the instinct – a desexualisation of the libido and the setting free of the death instinct. Rosenfeld's notion of pathological fusion is helpful to understand how we can see the death instinct taking over the life instincts, as opposed to being defused from them, a valuable theoretical consideration. However, for the Immortality Phantasy model, it is essential to remain committed to Freud's model of the defusion of instinct and to the role

of desexualised libido.

2.11 Donald Winnicott

Winnicott postulated many extremely interesting ideas, which held on to some of Freud's original concepts, but also dramatically changed many of them. A firm object relationist, he took the death instinct back to being something that developed out of destructive impulses, much closer to Freud's conceptualisation, than to Klein's. After 'The Controversial Discussions' (1942-1944), which split the object relations camp into Freudians and Kleinians, Winnicott became a member of a group somewhere between them, the 'independents'. However, despite a few similarities, the Winnicottian approach to psychoanalysis differs greatly from Freud and Klein and, regretfully, there is not the scope within this thesis to give his ideas adequate consideration. However, for the purpose of clarifying certain similarities, it is essential to briefly examine his concept of *psychic survival* in order to highlight differences to the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis. Winnicott's notion of psychic survival stemmed from his critique of Freud's instinct theory. For Winnicott, focusing on the role of the life instinct was much more important than the raging debate on the death instinct. The concept of the *survival of the object* is key. He suggests that after an identification with the object, this is often followed by a destruction of the object as a test. If a survival of the object by the subject can occur, then it is validated:

> 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' 'While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) *fantasy'*…The subject can now use the object that has survived (1971, p.90).

Winnicott is referring to the good mother, who must survive the persecutions from the infant, allowing the infant to begin its formulations of their external objects. It is this ability for the object to survive, that demonstrates the 'positive value of destructiveness' (1969, p.715).

2.12 Conclusion

Klein and her close followers greatly aided psychoanalytic development, making attempts

to stay true to Freudian theory but, inevitably, branching off in new directions. These ideas hold value in my attempt to amalgamate and include both Freud and Klein's ideas in the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis. Klein's addition of the role of anxiety, idealisation and splitting are especially valuable. Further chapters introduce us to Freudian and Kleinian ideas on creativity and aesthetics, crucial to a full theorisation on the relationship between creativity and destruction.

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMMORTALITY PHANTASY

3.1 Introduction

This thesis gives detailed consideration to some of the key theoretical movements, with regards to instinct theory, melancholia and creativity. There remains a lack of congruency within the varying schools of thought, leaving room for a new hypothesis on the relationship between creativity and destruction – one that at the same time as offering up something unique, aims to synthesise many of the existing ideas as well. I put forward an argument for the presentation of a new hypothesis to encourage a paradigmatic shift in what we hold to be knowledge of creativity and its relationship to destruction, incorporating what I propose are two key ideas that have thus far been largely excluded: *survival* and *repetition*.

Although these concepts appear elsewhere, the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis explores these ideas in more detail and holds them up as the crucial elements of creativity and destruction. My aim is to demonstrate that there is within us an *Immortality Phantasy* that can help us to further understand the role of destruction in creativity, as well as helping us to understand the self-destructive and melancholic abnormalities that seem overtly more common in creative artists than the 'normal' individual. This could be for a number of reasons, not least because they are more well-known and therefore *appear* to be more prevalent. But I propose that it is something more - that there is something within the creative artist that is in a *dependent* relationship with destruction and I have attempted to define this via the Immortality Phantasy. This hypothesis suggests that the Immortality Phantasy does exist within us all, but appears more forcefully in creative artists - or perhaps they surrender more easily to its cause.

The Immortality Phantasy can be defined as a *symbolic matrix, representing the pivotal point of defusion between the life and death instincts that allows for the release of both destructive and creative energies, leading to a necessary repetition of survival*. It is necessary to break this down into its component parts: there is a symbolic matrix - in other

words, there is a representative point of defusion, a matrix, where this defusion originates or forms. This symbolic point is where we can see the defusion of the instincts which allow for the simultaneous release of destruction and creative energies, as a combined result of *sublimation* stemming from the Oedipus complex, and *reparation* to the injured parent. So, the key elements of this idea are the tying of this point of *defusion* with *sublimation* (creativity), which leads to a release of the *death instinct* (destruction) demonstrated through a need for *survival* and the necessary *repetition* of this survival. These fundamental parts will be further explained and illustrated as this chapter develops. Within this hypothesis, there are certain suppositions that need to be explored, which have been addressed in the introductory chapter, but will be reworked here for further understanding:

- The key idea of the Immortality Phantasy suggests that *survival* is our primary desire.
- Survival is the most envied and admired attribute that one can possess.
- Survival is felt as a necessary repetition, differing from Freud's *repetition compulsion.*
- The need for repetition is responsible for the oscillations between creativity to destruction, especially prevalent in creative artists.
- The Immortality Phantasy can help to provide a model to aid our understanding of melancholia and can bridge some of the gaps in Freud's writing.
- This hypothesis can be viewed as a better model of creativity due to its inclusion of this necessary and painful survival.
- The Immortality Phantasy can aid a deeper understanding of literary criticism and can enhance a deeper, more psychological understanding of literary texts.

I aim to use this paradigm to join the psychoanalytic debate on the nature of the relationship between creativity and destruction. But first I must describe how I have come to this point and these conclusions. Many of my ideas originate from Freud's understanding of the relationship between the life and death instincts, where he suggests that in a normal state of being, the instincts are found to be fused together, so let us return to this supposition. I

will take the reader through the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, using both Freudian and Kleinian theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, to illuminate the steps along the way, demonstrating how I came to this hypothesis.

3.2 Theoretical Components

The following key points of the Immortality Phantasy will be examined:

- Sublimation
- Oedipus complex
- Defusion
- Creativity
- Destruction
- Reparation
- Repetition compulsion
- Survival

3.2.1 The Oedipus complex leads to sublimation and defusion

We have learnt in Chapter 2 that following Freud's 1923 model, the superego develops through identifications with the father, but each of these identifications leads to a sublimation resulting in an instinctual defusion (Freud, 1923, p.164). Elsewhere (Chapter 4), I examine how children's phantasies of being beating by the Oedipal parent, lead to the production of creative stories. At the same time, this highlights to us the role of guilt and punishment in creativity, in response to Oedipal phantasies. Therefore, as a result of the Oedipus complex, we see production of the first sublimations and the development of creative abilities. However, with such occurrences, there is also a defusion of instinct and production of guilt and anxiety, leading to a desire for punishment. Let us look at this another way: in his 1923 paper, Freud suggests that we have the option of neutralising or diverting the death instinct onto the external world – manifested as the instinct of destruction, also known as aggression. So, the death instinct is internalised aggression, the destructive instinct is externalised aggression. In 1923, Freud also introduced the concept

of the desexualisation of the life instinct. Freud suggested that the *original identification with the Oedipal parent leads to a sublimation*, where the libido is desexualised giving free rein to the death instinct, now defused from the life instinct. It is this point - this defusion of the instinct in response to an identification with the Oedipal parent - that I propose is the basis of the Immortality Phantasy. The free death instinct is now able to punish the ego for its Oedipal desires. We see these desires remaining active and alive through the transformation of Oedipal phantasies onto the page during the creative process. Via sublimation, a creation takes place instead of a *pro*creation – the life instinct no longer has a sexual aim, but a creative one. So using Freud's ideas, we can see where the Immortality Phantasy stems from by examining defusion and the point where creativity arises, in response to the Oedipus complex. We can also immediately view the link between creativity, guilt and punishment as the death instinct has been set free and the ego can no longer protect itself due to the desexualisation of the life instinct. The link between creativity and destruction becomes clear – creativity is released through this desexualisation of the life instinct, but the death instinct is defused and now turned against the self.

3.2.2 The Role of Survival

Now that it has been shown how destruction and creativity can be linked, we can start to view the emergence of the Immortality Phantasy. This hypothesis maintains that at this point of instinctual defusion, there emerges a phantasy of immortality which desires the repetition of survival. Within the work of Freud and Klein, there have been many inferences made about the role of immortality and the quest for survival but these have never been explored. The Immortality Phantasy hypothesis suggests that it is due to an instinctual defusion, that our quest turns from one of *pro*creation to a creative one and this results in a simultaneous release of the destructive instinct. At this point of defusion, the ego behaves as if it were immortal (procreation is no longer its aim). It does not fear destruction, this is invited in and can only serve to substantiate its claims, if the survival occurs. It now desires a destruction, whether internalised or externalised, so that it can feel the action of survival. This is demonstrated through certain behaviours: excessive

drinking, driving too fast, extreme sports, or through more extreme and psychological elements such as depressive behaviour, anorexia, drug addiction. Let me explain this further – by subjecting oneself to certain destructive behaviours, there is a twofold achievement: one is through *punishment* – necessary as a response to guilt from both Oedipal desires and the projective phantasies of the destruction of the parents. By experiencing destruction, we ensure that retribution in achieved. But, more importantly, we *survive* these attacks and through survival, our self-worth is reinforced. Survival is one of the most greatly esteemed characteristics within our society; those who have survived a trauma or an illness are lauded and held up as the greatest examples of human beings, they are revered above others. Normality does not achieve the same appreciation from others – assumptions are made about 'normal' people, regarding them as uninformed, unworldly, unable to understand, and so forth (this is discussed further in Chapter 6, on *Mrs Dalloway*). By overcoming a destruction, no matter how big or small, there is a survival achieved, which I postulate is the greatest of all our phantasies and leads to both internal and external admiration. This is because this survival is representative of a survival of the Oedipal parent; the survival of the wrath of the father; the survival of the imagined return of phantasised projections of destruction against the breast. This is the ultimate victory and can be manifested in different ways. One of the examples I have given is Jocelin's desire to survive the ultimate Oedipal parent, God. This omnipotent phantasy is a common feature of the Immortality Phantasy – it is necessary to believe in one's infallibility and to strive to achieve the ultimate survival, no matter the cost to others, as Jocelin demonstrates in Golding's *The Spire*. Of course, this notion is an unconscious one; it can be perceived as an unconscious need for the ego to satiate itself in guilt and punishment in order to feel survival. This can be acted out in the form of a real survival (after a trauma) or through the survival of the ego in response to its destructive impulses. The ego achieves this through the creative process of reparation and the integration of the lost objects back in to the self. The survival occurs in response to the fear of annihilation (especially from the Oedipal parent) and it is this survival that must be repeated to protect against future annihilation.

Kay Jamison-Redfield's book, *Touched with Fire*, demonstrates this point within the creative artist – this need for a destruction, in order to create. She highlights several examples, including John Berryman:

> And I think that what happens in my poetic work in the future will probably largely depend not on sitting calmly on my ass as I think "Hmm, hmm, a long poem again? Hmm," but on being knocked in the face, and thrown flat, and given cancer, and all kinds of other things short of senile dementia. At that point, I'm out, but short of that, I don't know. I hope to be nearly crucified (1993, p.114).

This quotation demonstrates the need to be *almost* crucified, as Berryman describes. To suffer to the extreme, but never to perish; to survive all that one can. In the subsequent discussion on creativity, we learn that there must be a threat to the good characters of the stories, but he must always be rescued, he must never actually perish and we see this reflected time and time again, on TV, in literature etc. Need we look further than children's fairy tales (modern or aged)? The heroine must nearly perish, but the love of the hero is always victorious against all attempts to the contrary. I argue that the love represents a resolution of the internal struggle, a survival demonstrative of the fusion of instincts as the life instinct is no longer desexualised. When the survival occurs, the ego is made whole, reparation with the parents is achieved. Then, there must be a choice between the possibility of procreation, or a return to creativity, ensuring the repetition of the process of defusion. *Sleeping Beauty* is *almost* killed by biting from a poisoned apple. She survives when a kiss brings her love and wholeness. *Cinderella* is mistreated by her step-sisters, but she survives their persecutions and emerges in a display of creativity at the ball. Her chance at happiness is constantly threatened but is finally hers once she is rescued by love. In *Frozen*, Elsa represses her power of destruction, rather than mastering it. She cannot avoid destruction and therefore self-imposes her imprisonment. But when she makes good object relations, most notably with the sister she has done damage too, she learns to control the destruction. The sister has survived her attacks, Elsa has survived and they are more powerful than ever. Perhaps the draw of horror films for some people is that we survive whilst others perish. This is an imperative aspect of the Immortality Phantasy – to be pushed to the limit, but to always survive; to balance on the edge of total destruction, but never to submit entirely. The Immortality Phantasy eventually, either becomes totally

weakened through procreation, or improved ego integration, or inverted so that the desire for death replaces the desire for survival.

Elsewhere, Jamison cites Tennyson, who asks, 'Oh sorrow, wilt thou live with me No casual mistress, but a wife, My bosom-friend and half of life; As I confess it needs must be?' (1993, p.120). Jamison highlights examples of the link between creativity and destruction and aims to demonstrate why, 'We have also seen that there is a greatly increased rate of depression, manic-depressive illness, and suicide in eminent writers and artists' (1993, p. 102). The Immortality Phantasy aims to join the debate, but also to give an explanatory 'why' in addition to highlighting its prevalence.

3.2.3 Repetition compulsion

In his 1920 paper, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud attempted to further develop his theory of *repetition compulsion*. Freud suggested that the goal of the 'compulsion to repeat' was to move us from being passive spectators to negative events, into active players and he introduced the hypothesis that we have an 'instinct for mastery' (1920, p.17). This demonstrates a fulfilment of the 'wish for guilt' and comes close to Klein's ideas of reparation. Freud defined an instinct (and later he specified this idea to the death instinct) as 'the expression of the inertia inherent to organic life' (1920, p.36); in contrast, external influences are responsible for the impetus towards life (the life instinct). The death instinct desires the repetition of actions over and over again and when life (or the species-preservative, life instinct) pushes for a divergence from this path, the ego stores up these repetitions for use at a later date (Freud, 1920). The organism is forced to find a longer path to death with each new disturbance from external influences. At the same time, the sexual instincts (the life instincts) through procreation, introduce a conceivable immortality into our minds, according to Freud (1920). He states, 'These germ-cells, therefore, work against the death of the living substance and succeed in winning for it what we can only regard as potential immortality, though that may mean no more than a lengthening of the road to death' (1920, p.40). However, after sublimation, the element of immortality is still desired but this time through *creation*. The death instinct desires

repetition but the life instinct, defused and desexualised, still desires and believes in the organism's immortality. The Immortality Phantasy takes up Freud's theory of the *repetition compulsion*, which has several key elements to it:

- An instinct for mastery, the "fort/da" example (1920)
- Child's play
- War neuroses
- The return of the repressed, the 'uncanny' (1919)
- The repetition of the death instinct due to external disturbances resulting in life
- Preservation against annihilation

Freud never effectively places the repetition compulsion within creativity, although his theories circle around this idea. The Immortality Phantasy aims to extend Freud's repetition compulsion hypothesis and give it its place within creative theory. However, there are key differences in Freud's repetition compulsion and the repetition involved in the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, as I argue the latter's key function is to repeat survival and the victory over the Oedipal parent. It differs further as its aim is not mastery of the survival or destruction, but to *endure* it repetitively. The destruction is necessary retribution and the survival is narcissistic victory. Following Freud's view, 'narcissism has the significance of a perversion that has absorbed the whole of the subject's sexual life' (1914, p.73), but he also postulates a less extreme version of narcissism, more common in neurotics, 'the libidinal compliment to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature' (1914, pp.73-4). In favour of the Immortality Phantasy, the narcissistic victory is self-preservative, via the path of self-destruction. Whilst this seems contradictory, it implies that by *testing* one's ability to be destroyed, and *not* being destroyed, there is a demonstration of immortality. By coming through a destructive situation, if a survival occurs, the individual is temporarily invincible, they are victorious above others, they have survived persecution – external or internal. However, the survival is temporary and must

once again be felt in order to reaffirm their goodness and overcome the untamed destruction.

Destruction stems from a need for punishment for the harm done in phantasy (or in Virginia Woolf's case, in real life) to the parents and revenge is exacted on one's own ego on behalf of the damaged object. The aim of creativity is then to make reparation, leading to survival. We desire control over the lost object – the injured parent from our Oedipal phantasies and to experience the retribution from this parent over and over as an attempt at mastery. In the Immortality Phantasy, the role of repetition is to ensure punishment and guilt that allow us a survival (of potential annihilation). However, this survival can only be demonstrated in consequence to a sublimation, which is the place where both creativity and destruction are released. Survival is a painful necessity and is explored in relation to creativity below.

3.2.4 The Role of Reparation

If we move to a more Kleinian perspective, we know that our first experiences of splitting, give rise to feelings of persecution and the potential threat of annihilation. These early experiences help to shape our future object relations and will determine how strong the persecutory anxiety experienced is. The potential for annihilation from bad or lost objects affects the strength of the Immortality Phantasy and the severity of destruction that must be endured. When we return to Churchill's quote from the opening of the thesis, we are reminded that survival and annihilation are found together - where we experience annihilation, this is accompanied by survival. The first survival is of the bad breast, but the model is set from the Oedipal parent – we survive their wrath, but we also know that we will survive *them*, in other words, we will outlive them and this forms part of the unconscious Oedipal phantasy. As we will view in Chapter 9, in Golding's *The Spire,* the protagonist, Jocelin, not only wants to take God's place (the Oedipal desire) but he wants to overthrow God, to become the ultimate father, to achieve the ultimate survival; Golding must therefore entrench his protagonist in destruction. Jocelin is full of delusions of immortality and eventually he succumbs to his destruction.

In her 1935 paper, 'A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States', Klein suggested that the infant felt the need to repeatedly incorporate the good object, because 'the repetition of the act is designed to test the reality of his fear and disprove them' (pp.147-148). In other words, the infant must experience the incorporation of the good object over and over in order to survive the bad object. Klein has highlighted three key elements of the Immortality Phantasy here. Firstly, that there must be a *repetition*; secondly this repetition is specifically designed to act as a *test*. Thirdly, the *test* is of *survival*. Survival must be felt, it must be specifically *tested* by a destruction and this must be repeated. She goes on to say, 'The anxiety enhances the repetition compulsion, and the need for punishment ministers to the compulsion' (1929, p.440). So, both Klein and Freud saw this need for a repetition, acting to fulfil the need for punishment. Klein understood that there was something in the anxiety provoked by this need for punishment that led to this repetition compulsion but she never actually hypothesised a complete theory around this point as the Immortality Phantasy does, although her theories aid our understanding of my hypothesis. 'As a child (or an adult) identifies himself more fully with a good object, the libidinal urges increase' (Klein, 1935, p.148). Klein is referring here to greed, the need to devour, but her idea is relevant in that it can be applied to the diminishing of the Immortality Phantasy by incorporating good objects, and therefore libidinalising the life instinct once again. The sublimative identification of the Oedipus complex can be replaced with a libidinalising identification when good object relations are created. In this case, the Immortality Phantasy is minimalised.

The Immortality Phantasy examines the strong ties between creativity and destruction. There must be an experience of the bad, the destructive, the anxious-making and the persecutory so that the survival is felt as a complete one – there is a survival of the bad objects, experienced in the form of guilt and shame, but ultimately of the Oedipal parent and their persecutory desires. This survival can occur within creative individuals through the transformation of these feelings onto the page so that they can be mastered and incorporated. The page represents our inner world and the struggles within it. However,

even in the act of creativity, we see a necessary destruction – the page itself may survive, but it is also destroyed, as Segal describes in reference to Adrien Stokes' work:

> …[he] emphasizes that at the beginning of every artistic creation is an act of aggression: the sculptor has to break and chop the stone, the painter and the writer feel that they defile the white canvas or paper with the first stroke of the brush or pen' (Segal, 1974, p.138).

However, the destruction also gives it potential immortality, if it represents the 'good' aesthetic, it represents wholeness, it contains both creativity and destruction, and it has the ability to survive, in perpetuity.

3.3 Omnipotent Phantasies of Survival

But why is it an *immortality* phantasy, not a survival phantasy, or a phantasy of immortality? These are crucial differentiations. There is no conscious *desire* for immortality, it is not a *wish* for immortality. It is an *unconscious belief* in one's immortality – in our ability to live forever, because we survive. 'Our unconscious, then, does not believe in its own death; it behaves as if it were immortal' (Freud, 1915, p.296) and this allows for the acting out of destructive phantasies. However, these phantasies are twofold: on the one hand, they can encourage destructive behaviour – excessive drinking, smoking, etc. - we behave as though we are immortal, 'there is no death for *me'*, only others. 'Freud very logically postulated that there is no representation of death in the unconscious. Just as it is unaware of negation, the unconscious is unaware of death' (Kristeva, 1989, p.25). It is important to stress that the denial of death is in the realm of the unconscious, not the conscious mind. I would argue that it is not a denial in terms of a nonacceptance, but instead, much like the gang member described in the introduction, there is an apathy, a necessary ignoration. Death is for the other because I have survived. Death is not feared – but it *is* kept within the realm of the other, otherwise, it becomes suicide. So, there is a denial of death, there is a belief in immortality, as this fuels the phantasy of survival and without this, the only option is to perish. Therefore, we can indulge in our wildest phantasies and the survival that we experience enforces our sense of immortality. This survival can become the addictive side of extreme sports, for example. The other side of this (and the one more interesting to psychoanalysis) is the

internalised phantasies – the self-destructive, persecutory phantasies witnessed within mental illness in varying guises, but most recognisable in the melancholic. These phantasies involve the desire for punishment, mental flagellation, but still with the desire to survive and create (until the death instinct takes over completely, or ego wholeness is achieved and the Immortality Phantasy is given up). This survival is felt as a victory over the persecutor (usually the Oedipal parent or the lost object). We have survived, we are worthy, we are invincible. This is our 'bid for immortality', as Freud terms it (1916, p.305). But how do we achieve this survival? One of the ways is that *survival occurs as a result of creative productions*.

I have argued that survival is one of the most highly esteemed characteristics – if you have survived a tragedy, then you will be regarded as more worthy of life than the next person who has not. It is not uncommon for people to (unconsciously) create their own tragedy, so valuable is the notion of 'survivor'. However, it is not a phantasy of survival solely that I am describing, which is why it cannot be so named. It is a *combination* of the desire for survival and the omnipotent belief in our own immortality. This keeps death firmly in the realm of the *other*, so that we are protected from it. This idea comes close to Freud's 'oceanic feeling' (1930, p.65), which involves the religious sense of 'eternity'. Winnicott refers to 'survival' in relation to the analyst: the patient sets up a destructiveness (failing) for them and they must survive it, before they can complete the analysis: 'we shall need to know what I am saying here about our survival of their destructiveness. A backcloth of unconscious destruction of the analyst is set up and we survive it' (Winnicott, 1969, p.715). This makes the analyst worthy. Winnicott's ideas as discussed previously (Chapter 2), do come very close to my own and can help to describe the value of survival further. The infant must test the object in the same way the patient does to the analyst. Attempts at destruction must be overcome to demonstrate worthiness and the capability for introjection. The *object* must survive. In the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, the survival must be from the *subject* - the value placed is on the self (and by society). The testing occurs against one's own ego – as Winnicott describes, destruction is set up and we must survive it.

3.4 Creativity

In Freud's 1919 paper he demonstrated that, '…it was always a condition of the more sophisticated phantasies of the later years that the punishment should do the children no serious injury' (p.180). The child phantasises that it is being punished by the Oedipal father and the necessary retribution occurs. In adults, such a retribution is intensified so that guilt and self-punishment are all consuming (in the case of the melancholic). They are no longer worthy of love, they must eventually cease to exist, give in to the inertial qualities of the death instinct, with no defence from the life instinct, survival is given up, and they must perish. We have learnt from Freud that these phantasies of self-destruction are the same ones that can lead to the production of creative stories and an organisation of the internal world on the page.

Anna Freud described the content of the phantasies as narrated by a young girl, which she felt to be 'typical': the young man (the hero) must enter into a situation with a bad person, be pushed to the limit of their anxiety, but then find a 'solution of conflict' (1923, p.96): the fusion of the life and death instincts, the good and bad players united on the page, but ultimately, the survival of the good. When overplayed in the girl's mind, the phantasy was weakened and lost its power so that it needed replacing. Therefore, it would be modified and repeated so that she could once again feel the repetition of the fearful situation, anxiety and then the resolution. I argue that she desires the consequential *survival*. Adler has suggested that there is something in the need for mastery and the repetition of this mastery that 'persists in addiction or is transformed into art' (1986, p.191). The repetition compulsion highlights for us this recreation of a negative situation so that it can then be regulated. The artist creates a destructive situation which they must then attempt to master and control on the page. But the destruction, which we can see in so many artists in the form of addiction or melancholia must be dramatically indulged. I use the word 'indulge', not to suggest that depression or addiction is a choice per se, but to demonstrate that it is a satisfaction of the *need* for punishment that the ego has placed upon itself. There has been damage done to the loved object (intensified if the object is lost in reality through a death, or trauma) and the individual must feel the full weight of

their destructive impulses to fully pay for their crimes. The anxiety felt at this point can lead to a severe depression, a mourning of the object, or an attempt to replace it in addiction (this could also be seen as an attempt to master, control and incorporate the object). However, at some point, reminiscent of the first survival of the Oedipus complex, the Oedipal or lost object must be survived, or given in to (pure death instinct and suicide). By creating, following on from Klein's theories, there is a reparation that occurs and we see an attempt to master the death instinct and bind it back to the life instinct, hence neutralising its destructive powers. This creates a survival and the melancholia is relieved, albeit temporarily, and as we know from the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, this is necessarily repeated. So, creativity is both a defence against, and the cause of, destructive impulses, making healthy creativity extremely hard work. It is of course achievable – artists who have firmly introjected their good objects can avoid the pitfalls of the need for destruction – they can greatly diminish their Immortality Phantasy, although the need for survival remains. For others, they are content to allow their work to provide the survival on their behalf. However, this latter idea can either lead to the healthy projection of the Immortality Phantasy outside of the self (see Chapter 5 on Golding), or reveal the cessation of survival, the cessation of being (like Virginia Woolf in Chapter 6).

What is the advantage of using the Immortality Phantasy as an explorative tool for literary texts? Does it provide a better model for understanding the relationship between creativity and destruction than other models? I will argue for the Immortality Phantasy in the testing sections of the thesis, stressing its uniqueness in highlighting the painful need to repeat a self-destruction, the necessity of experiencing a survival - the creative artist is bound to repeat the victory, desperately trying to master the feeling of wholeness from the creative activity, but in each fresh creation is a defusion that they must again survive and overcome. As Segal suggests, objects are reinstated in the ego and recreated on the page (1952), 'the loss of the object was always felt as an imminent threat to survival' (p.202). Through finding the object again and recreating them on the page, the survival is felt. 'All artists aim at immortality' Segal suggests (1952, p.207) – the ultimate prize for an artist is

to know that their work will remain for generations to come; this is the ultimate narcissistic phantasy.

The Immortality Phantasy hypothesis has aimed to demonstrate a new place for a theory of defusion within the model of creativity. This state of defusion is responsible for the release of the death instinct to be turned against the self, and for the desexualisation of libido, moving one's aims towards something non-sexual and usually creative. Following Freud's theory that this stems from Oedipal identifications, I have suggested that the survival of the Oedipal parent needs to be repeated. Following on from Klein, the fear of loss stemming from the depressive position must be overcome by reintegrating the object and making reparation for the damage done to it in phantasy. This is felt as a survival of the persecutory anxiety experienced and comes as a result of the completion of a creative act (when the wholeness and reparation has been completed). Where there is an actual loss (a parent has died) the survival becomes even more important, but the feeling of loss and the fear of annihilation, alongside the need for self-punishment becomes intensified, due to severe feelings of guilt. The creative and reparative act becomes even more important to reintegrate the ego, but this is usually accompanied by more severe destructive impulses and is prevalent in the melancholic. It becomes necessary to feel the destruction in order to feel the creativity. This symbolic point of survival must be repeated to keep the ego alive and it is this idea that I have termed the Immortality Phantasy. Very creative individuals often demonstrate this in the extreme, swaying between destruction and creativity to test their existence (survival) and I propose that this is responsible for the oscillation between mania and melancholia. The survival is repeated over and over, until the death instinct is fused once again, or in its purest form eventually takes over completely. I argue that perhaps everyone has an Immortality Phantasy to a degree, although it is noticeably given up after a procreation, in favour of a creation. I argue that the narcissistic need for survival is projected onto the child at this point – the ultimate reward becomes their survival.

This symbolic matrix representing the point of defusion of instinct helps to explain the observable link in creative people to a very real need for destruction, ascribing the need for survival as the crucial element of the Immortality Phantasy.

CHAPTER FOUR: MELANCHOLIA AND CREATIVITY

4.1 Introduction

Melancholia is an essential part of a study of creativity due to its link to destruction, thus a theoretical study can aid our understanding further. As this is primarily a Freudian/Kleinian thesis, their approaches are the principle theoretical considerations I follow here, although others theories will be mentioned briefly. I refer explicitly to Virginia Woolf in this chapter, as her severe battle with melancholia has been widely documented and is relevant to this discussion, especially to act as a preface to an examination of *Mrs Dalloway,* in the following chapter, to test the value of the Immortality Phantasy as a new psychoanalytic contribution to literary criticism.

4.2 Freud on War and Destruction

Freud's views on war and destruction deserve acknowledgement in this thesis, due to their relevance concerning mourning, melancholia, and destruction. The first I refer to is a relatively unknown exchange between Freud and Einstein, entitled *Why War?* (1933), in response to the events of World War One. Einstein was one of the several members asked by the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation, part of the League of Nations (the precursor to the UN) to comment on a topical issue and discuss this with a person of their choosing. Einstein chose Freud and the two debated the issue of how to promote peace, offering their thoughts on how the perils of war could be avoided in the future. Each wrote a letter to the other, which was printed in a pamphlet at the Hogarth Press[7]. The aim was to produce something that both served the league, but offered something stimulating intellectually and culturally.

The question Einstein proposed was as follows: 'Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war?' (Einstein & Freud, 1933, p.199). Einstein concluded

[7] It is interesting to note that the Hogarth Press was the publishing house founded by Leonard and Virginia Woolf in 1917.

that men had innate tendencies towards (and enjoyment from) aggression, '…man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction' (1933, p.201). Einstein's letter suggested to Freud that he might be able to shed light on the intricacies of the workings of the inner mind and instinctual conflicts, which he himself could not explain. In his response, Freud states that the original need for violence in men (as a mark of superiority), can only be quelled by the setting up of a community that is stable, strong and representative. Uniting a group of like-minded people:

> Violence overcome by the transference of power to a larger unity, which is held together by emotional ties between 1its members. What remains to be said is no more than an expansion and a repetition of this (Einstein & Freud, 1933, p. 205).

Freud suggests that war has self-preservative elements which incorporate the natural aggression of men and the common cause that they are fighting for. The putting outside of our natural aggression is somewhat beneficial for men, Freud says, and saves us from having to keep it inside, turning it against ourselves. Aggression is essential to our being – anything else is an illusion (p.212), '…there is no question of getting rid entirely of human aggressive impulses; it is enough to try to divert them to such an extent that they need not find expression in war' (1933, p.212). There are two possible options that can give us a mutual tie that will operate against aggression: the first is a mutual loved object – the reuniting of aggression and Eros, or identification (we can think of religion as an example of this). We require the subservience of instinct in favour of the master of reason – a utopian image, he admits (p.213). Freud also then asks why we react so badly to war? We rebel, he concludes, because we are still at heart protectors of life and the possibilities of more evolved wars could lead to the destruction of mankind. Freud's conclusion is that the Utopian image and the fear of future wars will be enough for mankind to become pacifists (1933, p.215) – although, as he admits, his answers to Einstein's question have been largely unsatisfactory.

Freud wrote three key papers on his thoughts about war: 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915), 'On Transience' (1916) and the above discussion with Einstein which came much later on in 1933.

In his 1915 paper, Freud comments on the difference of the First World War to others – the cruelty, the horror, the suffering, the death, but above all, the *disillusionment* that this brought. It was the civilised world falling apart, regressing to the barbaric stages we had passed through. There is a conflict in wartime between instinctual life and civilisation. The second half of Freud's paper addresses our attitude towards death. Freud draws a supposition, '…that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality' (1915, p.287). Freud also lays the foundations for his ideas that will develop in to a hypothesis on mourning, reminding us that once someone dies, our world is lost alongside them, 'we will not fill the lost one's place' (1915, p.290). The great loss that death provides us leads to a day-to-day denial of it, in order to protect ourselves against the unimaginable. However, as Freud notices, this is not the case in our relationship with literature:

> It is an inevitable result of all this that we should seek in the world of fiction, in literature and in the theatre compensation for what has been lost in life. There we still find people who know how to die—who, indeed, even manage to kill someone else. There alone too the condition can be fulfilled which makes it possible for us to reconcile ourselves with death: namely, that behind all the vicissitudes of life we should still be able to preserve a life intact… In the realm of fiction we find the plurality of lives which we need. We die with the hero with whom we have identified ourselves; yet we survive him, and are ready to die again just as safely with another hero (Freud, 1915, p.291).

Our enjoyment of the literary, stems from our ability to experience tragedy whilst still preserving ourselves. However, as Freud reminds us, in wartime our experience of death and our relationship to it changes entirely. His ideas on immortality and survival are discussed again in the follow up paper, 'On Transience', where Freud acknowledges our 'demand for immortality' (1916, p.305). This refers to a desire for the beauty of the world to remain as it is without change, achieved through the creation of art. Where immortality is threatened, an object becomes less valuable. For Freud, this must be addressed through the work of mourning; but these ideas lose their place in his overall theories of life and death instincts, or creativity. In my Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, I return to these ideas and seat them within Freud's instinctual framework. I argue that our unconscious

relationship to immortality is crucial to our survival and therefore, our relationship to our own destruction.

4.3 The Freudian Model of Melancholia

I would like to move on to Freud's paper, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), which continued along his theme of disillusionment found in the previously mentioned papers and was influenced by his response to war. In the introduction to this 1917 paper, Strachey informs us of a manuscript sent to Fleiss (around 1895) which contains the origins of the Oedipus complex, but also some original thoughts on melancholia and mourning:

> Hostile impulses against parents (a wish that they should die) are also an integral constituent of neuroses. They come to light consciously as obsessional ideas. In paranoia what is worst in delusions of persecution (pathological distrust of rulers and monarchs) corresponds to these impulses. They are repressed at times when compassion for the parents is active—at times of their illness or death. On such occasions it is a manifestation of mourning to reproach oneself for their death (what is known as melancholia) or to punish oneself in a hysterical fashion (through the medium of the idea of retribution) with the same states [of illness] that they have had (Freud, 1917, p.240).

We can certainly keep these ideas in mind when we think of Virginia Woolf and how Freud might have analysed her, had he been granted the opportunity. Although mourning and melancholia are separate 'conditions' (Freud, 1917), the source is the same – a reaction to a loss (be it country, ideal or object); however, melancholia is the pathological reaction to this loss, instead of the normal reaction of mourning. Melancholia involves a withdrawal from the external world and normal life, beyond that of the work of mourning. What makes it pathological is when libido remains withdrawn (Freud, 1917) and the ego cannot find its way back to reality. In melancholia, however, it is more about the feeling of loss (perhaps not an actual loss). The patient becomes almost unaware of exactly what they have lost – but the feeling is perpetual. Regarding melancholia, Freud writes:

> …one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost either. This, indeed, might be so even if the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him. This would suggest that melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious (1917, p.245).

However, perhaps the greatest difference that Freud describes between the two states is that in mourning, the world is the place that has become empty, depressive. Most alarmingly, in melancholia, it is the ego that is empty and depraved (Freud, 1917). At this point Freud had not developed his paradigm for his instinct theory into its oppositional components of life and death instinct, but with retrospective knowledge, we can understand that Freud is suggesting that the ego is now under the sway of the death instinct:

> This picture of a delusion of (mainly moral) inferiority is completed by sleeplessness and refusal to take nourishment, and—what is psychologically very remarkable—by an overcoming of the instinct which compels every living thing to cling to life (1917, p.246).

Let us set this against the idea that Strachey pulls up in his introduction – that as a result of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex and regressive identifications, the superego is formed (1917, p.242) – the ego has desired the death of the Oedipal parent, leading to an element of obsessional neurosis in all of us. However, in the event of real death, the hostile wishes are repressed (Freud, 1895), leading to self-punishment and a susceptibility to melancholia. Freud develops these ideas further in this paper, suggesting that after a disappointment from a loved object (including death), this leads to a broken object relationship. In normal cases, the withdrawal of libido from this object is then cathected onto other objects. However, in the melancholic, libido is withdrawn from the object choice and put onto the ego, leading to a narcissistic object choice. In addition, the remnants of the object are kept in the ego, resulting in an identification with the lost object forming in the superego (Freud, 1917, p.249). Any feelings that remind the ego of this original loss, no matter how small the disappointment, can lead back to these states of impoverishment and melancholia. Freud continues:

> The melancholic's erotic cathexis in regard to his object has thus undergone a double vicissitude: part of it has regressed to identification, but the other part, under the influence of the conflict due to ambivalence, has been carried back to the stage of sadism, which is nearer to that conflict. It is this sadism alone that solves the riddle of the tendency to suicide which makes melancholia so interesting—and so dangerous (Freud, 1917, p.252).

It is the identification with the lost object and the punitive superego that wins out over the more protective narcissistic ego. It is no great insight into Virginia Woolf to diagnose her as melancholic, as she fits Freud's model of melancholia from beginning to end and this

has not gone unnoticed by those with an interest in her work and psychoanalysis. However, the melancholic model Freud has set up is nonetheless extremely useful in our analysis of Woolf and is the framework of choice for critics examining Woolf and her work. Freud acknowledges a circulatory pattern, where there is the potential to rather frequently, turn melancholia into mania for a period, before reverting back to melancholia.

4.4 The Kleinian Model of Mourning

I would like to visit Klein's model of mourning and its relationship to melancholia, as her key paper, 'Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States' (1940) was something of a continuation of Freud's paper on 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917). It is also a precursor to much of the current literature on mourning and melancholia, influencing the framework used to examine manic-depression in literature (and especially anyone wanting to engage Woolf's writing with psychoanalysis). To paraphrase Klein, the first appearance of mourning is in relation to the mother's breast which is felt as a loss of goodness and love. Consequently, the baby enters in to the *depressive position* (Klein, 1940), feeling that its sadistic phantasies of destruction against the mother have caused the loss of the loved object. This is further exasperated by the onset of the Oedipus complex (the Kleinian Oedipus complex occurs much earlier than in Freud's model), which now threatens the love of both parents, causing pain and fear for the infant. In normal situations, this will be worked through using various mechanisms (Klein, 1940) - the parents are internalised as 'inner objects' (Klein, 1940), alongside phantasy and experiences from the external world, to form the basis of the ego:

> The visible mother thus provides continuous proofs of what the 'internal' mother is like, whether she is loving or angry, helpful or revengeful. The extent to which external reality is able to disprove anxieties and sorrow relating to the internal reality varies with each individual, but could be taken as one of the criteria for normality. In children who are so much dominated by their internal world that their anxieties cannot be sufficiently disproved and counteracted even by the pleasant aspects of their relationships with people, severe mental difficulties are unavoidable (Klein, 1940, p. 128).

In Klein's model, we can see how for Virginia Woolf, the death of her beloved mother could enforce within her mind feelings of guilt, sorrow and a profound sense of loss. These

feelings which occur in the normal infant are removed through the establishment of good objects, which serve to remind and reiterate the ability for goodness and good relationships. But ‘unpleasant experiences’ lead to feelings of persecution and annihilation (Klein, 1940, p.128). One of the ego’s first defences against the depressive position is termed a ‘manic defence’ by Klein,

> The fluctuations between the depressive and the manic position are an essential part of normal development. The ego is driven by depressive anxieties (anxiety lest the loved objects as well as itself should be destroyed) to build up omnipotent and violent phantasies, partly for the purpose of controlling and mastering the 'bad', dangerous objects, partly in order to save and restore the loved ones. From the very beginning, these omnipotent phantasies, both the destructive and the reparative ones, stimulate and enter into all the activities, interests and sublimations of the child (1940, p.131).

The child has omnipotent phantasies, both destructive and reparative in their nature, ‘All this leads to the need in the child—and for that matter to some extent in the adult also—to repeat certain actions obsessionally (this, in my view, is part of the repetition compulsion)’ (Klein, 1940, p.133). She also introduces the idea that within the act of reparation can be the desire to master and humiliate the object, which can be achieved through several mechanisms, including sublimation. This desire can overwhelm the goodness of the act of reparation, leading to its failure and consequently to feelings of persecution and anxiety:

> The effect is that the reparation to the loved objects, which in the depths of the mind are the same as those over which he triumphs, is again thwarted, and therefore guilt remains unrelieved. The subject's triumph over his objects necessarily implies to him their wish to triumph over him, and therefore leads to distrust and feelings of persecution. Depression may follow, or an increase in manic defences and more violent control of his objects, since he has failed to reconcile, restore, or improve them, and therefore feelings of being persecuted by them again have the upper hand… (Klein, 1940, p.134).

Mourning allows for the reigniting of infantile psychoses, but eventually, reality testing wins out. In addition, it can provoke in the individual fresh sublimations, which can lead to artistic creativity in an attempt to preserve the lost object (Klein, 1940, p.143). Klein’s superego is made up of both the good and bad inner objects from childhood, including the parents (the lost objects) in the process of normal mourning. But it is also adaptable, incorporating and introjecting other objects that become relevant in the individual's life

along the way. In conclusion, the manic-depressive is unable to overcome the infantile depressive position and therefore cannot establish good objects later in life. The work of mourning has failed.

In her 1935 paper, 'A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States', Klein puts forward the idea that the 'denial of psychic reality', is an attempt to keep the bad object away and can lead to severe adult psychoses. The bad object is kept away through a process of projection and paranoia, where the bad objects have been transformed into something formidable (for example, 'infantile dread of magicians, witches, evil beasts etc. (Klein, 1935, p.146)). The defence is the annihilation of these dreaded objects as a means of protecting the good object, essential to ego survival. Following on from Freud, Klein reminds us that in melancholia we experience the lost or longed for object, being taken up by the ego. Mania, on the other hand, is related to denial and can be characterised through a '*sense of omnipotence*' (Klein, 1935, p.161), with the desire to master and control its internal objects for two reasons: firstly, to deny the importance of the internalised good object and secondly, to deny the danger to the good objects, from the bad (1935, p.162). Through control of the objects, the manic can avoid the damage of the bad objects to either the self or to the good objects. 'This *disparagement of the object's important and the contempt for it* is, I think, a specific characteristic of mania and enables the ego to effect that partial detachment which we observe side by side with its hunger for objects' (Klein, 1935, p.163).

4.5 Hanna Segal on Mourning

Hanna Segal uses Klein's model of object relations and their relationship to mourning, taking her ideas further towards a paradigm for creativity. She sets up a framework in her paper, 'A Psycho-Analytic Approach to Aesthetics' which reveals that creativity is an attempt to re-create lost objects, 'guilt gives rise to the need to restore and re-create' (1952, p.198) and 'In the process of mourning it is these earliest objects which are lost again, and then re-created. Proust describes how this mourning leads to a wish to re-create the lost world' (1952, p.199). Segal engaged with Freud's ideas on sublimation, arguing that, not

only could sublimation be the result of the giving up of the instinctual aim, but that this could only happen through the work of mourning:

> The giving up of an instinctual aim, or object, is a repetition and at the same time a re-living of the giving up of the breast. It can be successful, like this first situation, if the object to be given up can be assimilated in the ego, by the process of loss and internal restoration. I suggest that such an assimilated object becomes a symbol within the ego. Every aspect of the object, every situation that has to be given up in the process of growing, gives rise to symbol formation. In this view symbol formation is the outcome of a loss, it is a creative act involving the pain and the whole work of mourning (Segal, 1952, pp.202-203).

So, for Segal, the repetition that occurs is the renunciation of the first good object, which becomes a symbol formation if mourning is successful.

4.6 The Role of Mourning and Melancholia in Post-Kleinian Theory

Sanja Bahun demonstrates that, 'Since the subject and object are no longer psychologically divided, the melancholic can never fully identify what he/she has lost; cognitive inaccessibility is the crucial trait of melancholia' (Bahun, 2013, p.25). This reminds us of Klein's 1929 paper, 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse', where she looks at a case study of Ruth Kjar, who cannot identify the cause of her sudden bouts of melancholia, 'There is an empty space within me, which I can never fill!' (Klein, 1929, p.441). She has no knowledge of why there is this empty space, nor how to fill it. Only through the act of creation – painting on her own walls, to recreate in phantasy, her lost mother. Ehrenzweig suggests that there is an,

> …almost biological rhythm between mania and depression, where mania appears on the same level as depression, as a fundamental human attitude. Once we accept this equal status of mania, we are able to discern cooperation rather than antagonism between the polar attitudes: creative depression would lead to an horizontal integration between ego nuclei split vertically on the same structural level, creative mania supplements this healing process… (1957, p.209).

Kristeva puts forward her suggestions on the relationship between art and melancholia, suggesting that the tragic both informs, and spoils the creative process:

> … if loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the work of the imagination and nourish it permanently as much as they threaten it and spoil it, it is also noteworthy that the work of art as fetish emerges when the activating sorrow has been repudiated. The artist consumed by melancholia is at the same time the most relentless in his struggle against the symbolic abdication that blankets him… Until death strikes or suicide becomes imperative for those who view it as final triumph over the void of the lost object (1989, p.9).

Kay Redfield Jamison offers insights into the work of manic-depression and comments especially on its temporal relationship to creativity. She suggests that the artist must withstand certain emotions that push them to the edge of darkness. Some artists are,

> …privy to their unconscious streams of thought, but they must contend with unusually tumultuous and unpredictable emotions as well. The integration of these deeper, truly irrational sources with more logical processes can be a tortuous task, but, if successful, the resulting work often bears a unique stamp, a "touch of fire", for what it has been through (Jamison, 1993, p.104).

For Jamison, there is something in the pain of melancholia that allows for the creation of perhaps more insightful and more honest productions than someone who is free from melancholic suffering:

> The use of the mild melancholic states to recall earlier and more painful times, but at a distance, can allow a measured tapping into deeper emotional pools, as well as a more controlled access to the backrooms of the unconscious mind…. it is undeniable that familiarity and sadness and the pain of melancholy…can add a singular truth and power to artistic expression (1993, p.120).

The wealth of literature available on melancholia provides scope for a lengthy and informed discussion, which I have attempted to give a sample of here. The ideas I have presented are valuable going forward when we examine the Immortality Phantasy, especially with regards to Virginia Woolf as a case study, but also to any examination of the extraordinary relationship which creativity and destruction are bound together in.

4.7 An Examination of the Freudian Approach to Creativity

Psychoanalysis has much to offer to a theory of creativity, with a multitude of theories that can aid our understanding of some of the pain attached to creativity. Interestingly, Freud's contribution was relatively limited and it was Anna Freud who attempted to assemble her father's ideas and take them further. Freud first postulated a limited number of theoretical contributions in his 1908 paper, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming'. For Freud, the opposite of play is reality, but the later replacement of play is phantasy - the writer acts like a child at play, free from the reservations or constraints of censorship, with the play being given life through language (Freud, 1908), 'The motive forces of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfilment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality' (p.146). Freud suggests that the activation in present time of a wish, will return us to a past time (usually infantile) where this wish was satisfied, and therefore we attempt to build a future where we can repeat the satisfaction of the wish, tying together past, present, and future. However, Freud warns, 'If phantasies become over-luxuriant and over-powerful, the conditions are laid for the onset of neurosis or psychosis' (1908, p.148). This sets up a framework for our understanding of the potentially destructive nature of creativity and its relationship to melancholia. A precursor to our enjoyment of literature is the infallibility of the hero, the protagonist. Freud highlights how so often we see the hero beaten and battered, only to be exalted again on the next page, '"Nothing can happen to *me*!" It seems to me, however, that through this revealing characteristic of invulnerability we can immediately recognize His Majesty the Ego, the hero alike of every day-dream and of every story' (1908, p.150). Freud repeats this idea in 1914, tying it to narcissism.

In his 1919 paper, 'A Child is Being Beaten', Freud once again returned to the role of phantasy in the formation of creative stories. This was arguably the closest he came to developing his ideas on creativity, although it was more a commentary on the aetiology of perversion. In this paper, Freud put forward an explanation of the production and

development of certain phantasies that laid the groundwork for the development of a theory of creativity[8]. Freud discussed the role of phantasy in a child's mental development and suggested that the use of creative phantasies could have dramatic consequences on the mental organisation of an individual. The reason behind this he credited to the complex formation of the antagonist – the *Oedipal parent*. The beating phantasies he examined appeared to lay down the foundations for an individual's ability to create later in life. He proposed that phantasies could either be 'subjected to repression, be replaced by reaction-formation, or be transformed by sublimation' (Freud, 1919, p.182). These phantasies were the first step on a creative journey and often developed out of reading other's stories:

> The child began to compete with these works of fiction by producing his own phantasies and by constructing a wealth of situations and institutions, in which children were beaten, or were punished and disciplined in some other way because of their naughtiness and bad behaviour (1919, p.180).

This suggests a phantasy of punishment emerges in young children, although as Freud points out, 'the punishment should do the child no serious injury' (1919, p.180). The punisher is only later revealed as the Oedipal parent, suggesting that creativity stems from the Oedipus complex. Therefore, it is accompanied by guilt and a need for punishment (that we can later see manifested in melancholia).

Freud suggested that the indulgence in the phantasy of a child being beaten could be found at the root of a great number of adult illnesses. This phantasy evolves from, 'a child is being beaten', to 'my father is beating the child' and then, 'I am being beaten by my father'; the latter is no doubt a result of the need for punishment in response to Oedipal desires, a necessary masochism as such. However, the phantasy can further develop into one of punishment of an-other, 'My father does not love this other child, *he loves only me*' (1919, p.187), a position of mastery, control and a move towards Oedipal victory. However, this phantasy must eventually be repressed with the dissolution of the Oedipus

[8] As a technical point, 'a theory of creativity' and 'creative theory' are not the same thing. The former puts forward theoretical speculations on the origins of creativity. The latter suggests a theory that has creative advantages. However, the terms are used interchangeably for the ease of understanding and fluidity in this thesis, to describe a theory on the *origins of creativity*.

complex, giving rise to a consequential guilt. Freud maintains that, even when the phantasy appears to be sadistic, it still maintains its masochistic elements due to the production of guilt, 'The transformation of sadism into masochism appears to be due to the influence of the sense of guilt which takes part in the act of repression' (1919, p.194).

> For in our opinion the Oedipus complex is the actual nucleus of neuroses, and the infantile sexuality which culminates in this complex is the true determinant of neuroses. What remains of the complex in the unconscious represents the disposition to the later development of neuroses in the adult (Freud, 1919, p.193).

Freud is cautioning us that an unsuccessful dissolution or repression of the Oedipus complex, can lead to severe neuroses in adults. In addition, Freud warns of the danger of other marks left behind:

> In this way the beating-phantasy and other analogous perverse fixations would also only be precipitates of the Oedipus complex, scars, so to say, left behind after the process has ended, just as the notorious 'sense of inferiority' corresponds to a narcissistic scar of the same sort (1919, p. 193).

A narcissistic scar in response to guilt, can lead to a 'sense of inferiority' (Freud, 1919), which could help to explain some of the destructive tendencies of creative individuals perhaps. However, Freud does not endeavour to theorise this further, within this paper or elsewhere. Even when he starts down a creative line of enquiry, he pulls himself back, as though he is not equipped to deal with it. Only in 'On Transience' (1916), does Freud postulate anything that may help us in our efforts to uncover the roots of creativity. Freud suggested that creativity could in part be a 'bid for immortality' (1916, p.305):

> The proneness to decay of all that is beautiful and perfect can, as we know, give rise to two different impulses in the mind. The one leads to the aching despondency felt by the young poet, while the other leads to rebellion against the fact asserted (p.305).

Freud tells us of his poet friend who demands immortality, who cannot bear the idea of all that is beautiful slipping away and consequently his enjoyment of beauty is limited. 'What spoilt their enjoyment of beauty must have been a revolt in their minds against mourning' (p.307). They were prematurely experiencing mourning, already trying to replace the loved object.

It was Freud's daughter, Anna Freud, who tried to develop her father's ideas of the 'beating phantasy' to conceptualise a complete theory of creativity. In her paper, 'The Relation of Beating Phantasies to Day-Dream' (1923), Anna Freud focused on the 'typical' daydreams and phantasies of a young girl, which were split in to 'beating phantasies' and 'nice stories'. The beating phantasies were very often accompanied by a reproachful guilt, leading the child to experiment with different characters in the story, to alleviate some of this guilt. However, it remained a permanent consequence of any phantasy:

> Every re-activation of the phantasy meant a serious struggle with strong opposing forces and was followed by self-reproaches, pangs of conscience and a short period of depression. The pleasure derived from the phantasy was more and more confined to the climax itself, which was preceded as well as followed by "pain" (A. Freud, 1923, p.92).

This decrease in the pleasure associated to the phantasy is largely responsible for its subsequent repression, or could lead to the production of a modified phantasy: the creation of 'nice stories'. Such stories were not accompanied by an auto-erotic act and therefore were free from a sense of guilt allowing for a freedom in the daydream (A. Freud, 1923). Analysis uncovered the content and sub-structure of these phantasies, 'The phantasies of beating were to her the personification of everything she considered ugly, prohibited and depraved, whereas the 'nice stories' stood to her for beauty and pleasure' (1923, p.93). Anna Freud noticed that the little girl of her analysis fought hard to separate the beating phantasies and the nice stories. However, through development and the repression of the beating phantasies, the stories merged together. The girl usually allocated two main figures: the young prisoner – an appealing young man, versus the Knight – an evil, persecutory figure. 'This furnished a basis of an apparently irreconcilable antagonism between one character who is strong and mighty and another who weak and in the power of the former' (1923, p.94). I would argue that we can see these characters as representations of the life and death instincts struggling on the page. In the various make-ups of the story, the Knight is always close to killing/hurting/torturing the young man, 'He nearly kills him through imprisonment in the dungeon of his castle, but has him nursed back to life again before it is too late for recovery' (pp.94-95), demonstrating the apparent

need for the destructive phantasy to accompany the creative, before resolution can be achieved. Here, Anna Freud noticed the development of a creative pattern:

> …antagonism between a strong and a weak person; a misdeed—mostly unintentional—on the part of the weak one which puts him at the other's mercy; the latter's menacing attitude giving rise to the gravest apprehensions; a slow and sometimes very elaborate intensification almost to the limit of endurance of the dread and anxiety; and finally, as a pleasurable climax, the solution of the conflict, i.e., pardon for the sinner, reconciliation and, for a moment, complete harmony between the former antagonists (A. Freud, 1923, p.96).

For the young man, a punishment or self-punishment was an essential part of the story. But we must return to Freud's observation: '…it was always a condition of more sophisticated phantasies of later years that the punishment should do the child no serious injury' (Freud, 1919, p.180). The same can be observed within these stories – there cannot be a permanent injury or death associated to the phantasy[9]. In addition, Anna Freud noticed the need for a repetition to occur:

> The final result of this transformation was that the whole story was rendered unfit for further use, and had to be replaced—at least for a period of some weeks—by another story, which after a certain length of time met the same fate (A. Freud, 1923, p.96)

Anna Freud hypothesised that this occurred to prolong the enjoyment from the phantasy, by experiencing it anew. I would contend that the feelings of punishment, anxiety and guilt produced within the stories needed to be experienced repeatedly. She further observed that the recurrent theme of the stories, or modified beating phantasies (also viewable within modern day film and television), remained at all times, 'the phantasy of love that was hidden' (p.99). We can easily see that this evolves from Oedipal relationships, later repressed and represented by other characters alongside punishment and guilt. She summarises the role of the Oedipus complex in relation to the stories:

> Afterwards repression of the Oedipus complex forced the child to renounce most of these infantile sexual ties... While the phantasies of beating thus represent a return of the

[9] This forms a key element of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, demonstrating the role of survival in the production of creative writing.

> repressed, i.e. of the incestuous wish-phantasy, the nice stories on the other hand represent a sublimation of it... (1919, p.99).

It is this idea precisely that can help to explain how and why forbidden love and the phantasy of punishment, remain the most popular of thematic conceptions. The Oedipal phantasy has been retained by the creative artist for their own use, so we see the story as an amalgamation of the repressed Oedipal phantasies and the sublimated nice stories. And, it is this step from story to creative achievement that Anna Freud based the crux of her theory on towards the end of her paper, 'By renouncing her private pleasure in favour of the impression she could create in others she turned from an autistic to a social activity' (1923, p.102).

Anna Freud's theory of creativity achieves two things: firstly, an accurate representation of the role of the Oedipal parents, demonstrating their modification through the creative process. She informs us that 'writing was a defence against over-indulgence' (1919, p.101) in the beating phantasy, the Oedipal phantasy. The little girl learns to control and master the phantasy by putting it down on the page and transforming the characters into those outside of the Oedipal triangle, in an attempt at repression or modification. Secondly, she highlights that there is a great-esteem within society for creative artists and part of the desire of the individual to put down their phantasies on to the canvas or the page, is due to the wish to be discovered and their creative genius to be uncovered (1919, p.102). This suggests a narcissistic element to creativity, which we could say follows on from Rosenfeld's libidinal narcissism: the need to control and master objects of both the internal and external world, especially the Oedipal parents. This fits in to the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, which suggests that the ultimate desire is to survive the Oedipal parents - to overthrow them, to outlive them.

4.8 An Object Relational Approach to Creativity

Klein's approach to creative theory differed greatly from that of Anna Freud and was a major point of contention between the two schools of psychoanalytic thought[10]. Klein's

[10] Culminating in *The Controversial Discussions* between 1942 and 1944.

approach maintained an object relational standpoint and followed on from much of her earlier work. In her 1935 paper, Klein informed us how we can see the creation of witches, monsters etc. as projections of bad internal objects, dreaded objects that conjure up our fear of annihilation and can be responsible for the basis of paranoia. Klein reminds us that the infant:

> …finds himself constantly impelled to repeat the incorporation of a good object, partly because he has forfeited it by his cannibalism – i.e. the repetition of the act is designed to test the reality of his fear and disprove them (Klein, 1935, p.147).

Klein's ideas on creativity are discussed at length in her 1929 paper, 'Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse'. Klein immediately acknowledges that there is something immensely pleasurable in destructive behaviour, or *primary sadism*, a precursor to the Oedipus complex. Klein repeats the story line to an opera by Ravel, '*Das Zauberwort*', where the child demonstrates the movement of the mother from 'good' object to 'bad' object, triggering his sadistic episode. Klein further describes the reason for the child's destructive outburst, in some ways following on from Anna Freud's commentary. Klein informs us:

> The anxiety enhances the repetition-compulsion, and the need for punishment ministers to the compulsion (now grown very strong) to secure for itself actual punishment in order that the anxiety may be allayed by a chastisement less severe than that which the anxiety-situation causes him to anticipate. We are quite familiar with the fact that children are naughty because they wish to be punished… (1929, p.440).

In other words, there is a need for us to master anxiety, stemming from damage done to loved objects, demonstrated through the need for punishment, which must be repeated to resolve the original anxiety. Klein uses a separate example to demonstrate her point further, this time involving a woman called Ruth Kjar, who appears in an article by Karim Michaelis.

Ruth Kjar, despite wanting for nothing, was prone to fits of extreme depression, nearing a suicidal melancholia, '"there is an empty space within me, which I can never fill!"' (Klein, 1929, p.441). One day, Ruth paints on the blank space of a wall in her house, demonstrating an artistic talent she never knew she possessed. Klein remind us of the

feelings of anxiety that arise in young girls in response to the sadistic desires accompanying the Oedipus complex, 'to rob the mother's body of its contents, namely, the father's penis, faeces, children, and to destroy the mother herself' (1929, p.442). When the mother cannot be seen, a fear of retribution and therefore intense anxiety, arises:

> The presence of the real, loving mother diminishes the dread of the terrifying mother, whose image is introjected into the child's mind. At a later stage of development the content of the dread changes from that of an attacking mother to the dread that the real, loving mother may be lost and that the little girl will be left solitary and forsaken (Klein, 1929, p.442).

Upon closer inspection of the painting content, Klein reveals a variety of female relatives – representations of her mother. This is the process of reparation, Klein informs us, 'to make good the injury psychologically done to the mother and also to restore herself…' (p.443). In one picture, the mother is worn out, near to death, representing Ruth's sadistic attacks upon her. This is juxtaposed against another painting of the mother, this time at her most beautiful and fully restored, relieving Ruth of her (depressive) anxiety. Klein concludes:

> The case of Ruth Kjar shows plainly that this anxiety of the little girl is of great importance in the ego-development of women[11], and is one of the incentives to achievement. But, on the other hand, this anxiety may be the cause of serious illness and many inhibitions[12] (Klein, 1929, p.443).

Klein's ideas are further demonstrated by Hanna Segal, who highlights the act of creation as a movement through the depressive position, where the infant is beginning to perceive whole objects, no longer part objects, leading to feelings of hatred and envy and an attack in phantasy. The 'fragmented' or 'destroyed' parents are introjected, leading to 'feelings of mourning, loss, guilt and a longing to undo the damage' (Segal, 1974, p.138) and the need for reparation, 'To begin with, the creative artistic process lessens the guilt of the original destructiveness by real creation…' (p.139). There is a symbolic recreation of the internal world for the artist in each creation, an attempt to repair the damage done

[11] This is manifested differently in a male child, appearing as a 'castration anxiety' but with similar consequence.

[12] This reminds us of Virginia Woolf whose anxiety and reparation will be discussed in Chapter 6.

to the parent, a demonstration of the need for reparation. The lost/dead object can be restored, given new life, through creativity; or they become a tool used to punish and induce guilt. Segal concludes that, even though creativity may succeed, there is the permanent threat of its collapse, that its work will fail, and that the author will fail as a creative artist.

In her 1994 paper, 'Salmon Rushdie and the Sea of Stories', Segal discusses Rushdie's self-proclaimed fear of not be able to write, reflected in his story. It is an exploration of 'the struggle to resolve the inner conflict between creative and anti-creative forces in all artists', (Segal, 1994, p.612). She asks:

> The good is understandable. But what is the Evil, and what is the nature of the solution? …I think that the Evil in this story represented what Freud described as the death instinct…represent[ing] Salman Rushdie's inner world, the attack is on his own sources of creativity (Segal, 1994, p.614).

Death here is a symbol of Freud's silent inertial instinct – an attack on creativity. And the solution? 'Splitting, denial and idealisation', Segal postulates (p.614), an idealisation of beauty and ugliness. She suggests conflict resolution is possible if the individual, 'mobilises the life instinct, the wish to live' or 'reunites his parents' (p.617).

Riviere, in her 1952 paper, 'The Unconscious Phantasy of an Inner World Reflected in Examples from English Literature', reminds us of the marked difference between Freud's 'superego' and Klein's 'inner world'. Freud's concept is based on the father, who becomes a formation of our *conscience*. Klein's inner world, however, references the feeling of a person(s) being an actual *part* of ourselves (Riviere, 1952, p.160). All external people (objects) are felt as good and bad and are therefore incorporated (and projected). This results in everything we experience being split and felt to be 'good' and 'bad' as well. It is the poets and writers, Riviere explains, that have best learnt to represent this internal world, externally, on our behalf. In a large amount of poetry, Riviere notes that the fear of loss is described, as an attempt to 'possess and incorporate' it (p.165), a protection against the fear of total annihilation. Riviere also subscribes to the view that the greatest fear of all is the loss of life:

> All fears are intrinsically related to the deepest fear of all: that in the last resort any 'loss' may mean 'total loss'... All fears come back to the fear of death: to the destructive tendency that might be called the capacity for death in oneself, which must be turned outward in aggression if it is not to work out in and on oneself. Yet in turning this destructive force outward the loved and needed objects become its target and so the danger of their loss arises. Faced with the loss of them and their death, as a result of one's own destructiveness and hate, one's own death appears imminent… (Riviere, 1952, p.165).

Denial is one of our strongest defences against the knowledge of death.

Gilbert J. Rose in his book, *Trauma & Mastery in Life and Art* (1987), makes a strong attempt to understand the creative process and the distinguishing features it upholds to separate it from the mere mortals and everyday thoughts. For Rose, such a separation is made by the containment of knowledge by the artist and it is this knowledge that separates 'pathological thought' from 'creative imagination' (p. viii). The artist has a superior knowledge of the human condition, or certainly a superior ability to create form for these emotions, 'The artist immerses himself in sentient life, welcoming the excitation in order to master it through aesthetic form. He attends, selects, and integrates it into the forms most likely to lead to a successful aesthetic solution' (1987, p.111). The novel allows for the recreation of the artist's inner world and the resolution of internal conflicts. 'Some artists seem to be able to confine the creative process to creative work; others – and some of the greatest, Picasso among them – appear to be ruled by it' (1987, p.135).

In *Solitude* (1997), Storr helps to remind us that although not all writers or poets who have lots a parent, fall into the pits of madness, or suffer the loss as a 'tragedy', but there is an overwhelming large number of poets and writers who have succumbed to some form of mental disturbance (with or without the loss of a parent). Storr also provides an extensive list of struggling artists:

> Cowper is not alone amongst poets in having suffered from a bereavement and recurrent episodes of severe depression…. William Collins, Samuel Coleridge, Edgar Allen Poe, John Berryman, Louis MacNeice, and Sylvia Plath all lost a parent before they reached the age of twelve, and all suffered well-attested period of depression (1997, p.138).

In addition to those already mentioned, poets who suffered from recurrent episodes of depression include Christopher Smart, John Clare, Gerald Manley Hopkins, Anne Sexton,

Hart Crane, Theodore Roethke, Delmore Schwartz, Randall Jarrell, and Robert Lowell (1997, p.142). Storr's theories reiterate much of Freud and Klein's ideas, neatly synthesised to explain creativity:

> We can now…understand that the creative process can be a way of protecting the individual against being overwhelmed by depression; a means of regaining a sense of mastery in those who have lost it, and, to a varying extent, a way of repairing the self damaged by bereavement or by the loss of confidence in human relationships which accompanies depression from whatever cause' (1997, p.143).

But there are still gaps in theory when we consider these ideas. I have proposed and provided evidence to demonstrate that we must add the quality of survival to any theory of creativity to form a whole picture of what occurs from the beginning to the end of life, and how disruptions along the way, can distort our Immortality Phantasy and our necessary survival repetitions.

4.9 Aesthetic Pleasure

I would like to briefly discuss the role of aesthetics in our artistic appreciation, especially the role of beauty and ugliness, as representations of the life and death instincts. The novels I have chosen as 'tests' for the Immortality Phantasy are those that can be described as a 'good' aesthetic, implying they have the sufficient ability to represent our inner world through a presentation of symbols (words) in a unifying and gratifying manner. The structure of the sentences and the content of the story, are pleasing to us as readers for several reasons, which are explored below.

In his 1908 paper, Freud pointed out how a story told by a friend containing an unpleasurable subject matter, could induce horror and disgust. Yet, the same story, told by a creative artist, could be greeted with approval and enjoyment. How does this come about? 'The writer softens the character of his egoistic daydreams by altering and disguising it, and he bribes us by the purely formal—that is, aesthetic—yield of pleasure which he offers us in the presentation of his phantasies' (1908, p.153). For Freud, the aesthetic brings pleasure by allowing us to act as voyeurs to other people's phantasies and

this has the added advantage of allowing our inner world to be lovingly recreated on the page by the creative writer[13]:

> …our actual enjoyment of an imaginative work proceeds from a liberation of tensions in our minds. It may even be that not a little of this effect is due to the writer's enabling us thenceforward to enjoy our own day-dreams without self-reproach or shame (Freud, 1908, p.153).

But Freud's explanations did not go so far as to explain *why* we gain pleasure, suggesting instead that this was the artist's best kept secret. Later, however, in his 1914 paper, 'The Moses of Michelangelo', Freud did attempt to explain this somewhat, '…an effective expression of the intentions and emotional activities of the artist' and elsewhere '…what he aims at is to awaken in us the same emotional attitude, the same mental constellation as that which in him produced the impetus to create' (1914, p.212).

Ehrenzweig (1949) suggested that our appreciation of the aesthetic is tied up to a sexual voyeurism, 'The artist projects order and beauty into the external world precisely because his unconscious vision tends to dissolve all differentiation and order into the chaos of the pan-genital vision' (p.108). In other words, there is the desire to transmute everything into a genital representation, but the movement into beauty attempts to alleviate this need. Segal's model suggests the necessary work of reparation:

> The aesthetic pleasure proper, that is, the pleasure derived from a work of art and unique in that it can only be obtained through a work of art, is due to an identification of ourselves with the work of art as a whole and with the whole internal world of an artist as represented by his work. In my view all aesthetic pleasure includes an unconscious re-living of the artist's experience of creation (Segal, 1952, p.204).

So, *our* enjoyment comes from the ability of the artist to harness *their* inner world and present it to us in a way that can create a harmony within us, to help us in our own struggles. The reparative act can occur on our behalf. A tragedy can give pleasure, Segal hypothesises, because of its ability to represent 'the achieving of an impression of

[13] The words 'artist' and 'writer' are used here interchangeably, especially as it is my contention that for a theory of creativity to succeed, it must refer to all genres: music, art, literature etc. All creative theory within this thesis is intended to represent all genres of creativity, even if not explicitly implied.

wholeness and harmony…There can be no aesthetic pleasure without perfect form' (p.204). The perfect form is achieved by adhering to strict rules on time, place, content etc. Through this order, the artist has presented the darkest elements of the depressive position and relayed them to us with order, a process similar to the work of mourning, allowing us to reintegrate our own internal objects (Segal, 1952). However, we can also view this a different way, in more blatant terms of 'beauty' and 'ugliness'.

For Segal, both the beautiful and the ugly are essential to the aesthetic experience. Whilst the beautiful represents the whole and complete, and ugliness usually the broken, the destroyed, she also notes that, in tragedy, a gifted artist can make something ugly, beautiful. In her later 1952 paper, she realised that there must be something in art that expresses the instincts, a crucial theorisation:

> …to realize and symbolically to express depression the artist must acknowledge the death instinct, both in its aggressive and self-destructive aspects, and accept the reality of death for the object and the self (Segal, 1952, p.206).

So, this helps us to understand why both ugliness and beauty are needed for a whole aesthetic experience – ugliness represents the death instinct and its destruction; beauty is the whole, the life instinct, and the artist's job is to demonstrate 'the conflict and union between these two' (Segal, 1952, p.207). She concludes by suggesting that art is perhaps the truest reflection of the death instinct – it is given free rein on the page but under the control of the life instinct and creation (p.207).

Donald Meltzer examines an example of the depressive position, which he has observed in borderline and psychotic patients – the 'failure of the apprehension of beauty through emotional response to its perception' (1973, p.225). In other words, they did not recognise beauty or respond to it in the same way as healthy individuals did. Beauty brings forth both comfort and terror, representing both the loved object and the 'narcissistic pull of destructiveness' (p.228) and '…the apprehension of beauty contains in its very nature the apprehension of the possibility of its destructiveness', as a result of the depressive position (1973, p.229). Meg Harris Williams describes,

> [The] demonstration of a reciprocal affirmation of life between self and object, the poets, with their aesthetic and meaningful models of the essential aspect of human experience known as inspiration, can act for us like Bion's "thinking breast" or mother, who, in her reverie, can mentally digest the fear of death…' (2010, p.30).

Rickman in his paper, 'On the Nature of Ugliness and the Creative Impulse' (1940) suggested that we must be able to see representations of anxiety and guilt and the 'underlying impulses of destructiveness' in art, as we do in everyday life:

> It is even possible that by representing in a neutral medium the interplay of creative and destructive instincts the artist can help us to comprehend a better solution of the conflicts that press within us than we could do unaided (Rickman, 1940, p.295).

The artist shows us how to 'triumph over the death instinct', a mastery of the death instinct on our behalf (Rickman, 1940). He sees polarities in love and hate, and creativity and destruction, representing our internal struggles. His paper details some of our responses to various aesthetic representations: *A missing part*, as in a statue, can cause changes in our aesthetic appreciation, mainly due to an identification with the object. The statue represents an internal mutilation of our own and therefore changes our enjoyment (Rickman, 1940). *An unfinished work* can evoke feelings of frustration, there is no whole. *Sensuous pleasure* – 'such art is a 'flight to beauty'; it reminds us of the struggles of the psychotic… so that he may cherish the illusion that evil does not exist…' (Rickman, 1940, p.305). *The solution of conflict* – the artist attempts to overcome their anxiety and guilt on the page; creative and destructive forces are viewed battling it out through the various mediums. *The 'eternal' factor* – the immortality of a piece of art, its ability to continue affecting generations of its viewers:

> The immortal work of art is not one which has merely survived through the ages from the carelessness and indifference of other people, but is a living proof that the artist himself has stayed the course of havoc and has himself made life come out of dust and confusion (Rickman, 1940, p.308).

The primary role of beauty is the reduction of anxiety and pain, Rickman describes; it has the 'power to convey the feeling that struggle is over, that peace has come at last'. Despite depression, anxieties, pain, it is the witness that life has won over death; that good has won over evil (1940, p.310). If this is the power of 'beauty', then what is the role of the 'ugly'?

The nature of ugliness arouses feelings of disturbance, of fear and foreboding within us, it evokes chaos and childhood phobia and phantasies, Rickman says. 'I believe that the fear which ugliness rouses is due to the irrefutable evidence which it provides that the will to destructiveness has been let loose' (1940, p.311). The ugly is representative of the death instinct. Rickman concludes:

> Our need for beauty springs from the gloom and pain which we experience from our destructive impulses to our good and loved objects; our wish is to find in art evidence of the triumph of life over death; we recognize the power of death when we say a thing is ugly (Rickman, 1940, p.312).

Lee suggests in his paper, 'Spirituality and Beauty in Artistic Experience' (1948), that the role of beauty is to restore wholeness, perfection and aliveness to the chosen object of their art which they have in phantasy destroyed and now must lovingly recreate. 'The inner sense of beauty in inspiration and creation results from this magical regeneration of the object and the artist's loving union with it' (1949, p.520). The mind achieves wholeness by transforming the experiences of guilt and destruction into an aesthetic production; the object has been lovingly restored. Julia Kristeva, suggests that 'There might thus be something that is not affected by the universality of death: beauty. Might the beautiful be the ideal object that never disappoints the libido? Or might the beautiful object appear as the absolute and indestructible restorer of the deserting object?' (1989, p.98). She goes on to suggest, '…beauty emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live' (1989, p.99). So, perhaps we can apply this to the aesthetically beautiful, or 'good' writing, for example, defined by its ability to transform loss into something alive. She suggests that, 'art seems to…secure for the artist and the connoisseur a sublimatory hold over the lost Thing' (1989, p.97). It is this 'lost Thing', the lost object from the original Oedipal identifications, I have suggested, that is searched for in creativity and also needs to be reintegrated repetitively in order to feel the survival of its wrath. Kristeva supports this idea, '…is the beautiful object the one that tirelessly returns following destructions and wars in order to bear witness that there is survival after death, that immortality is possible?' (Kristeva, 1989, p.98). This idea is viewed through

good literature, great works of art, and no doubt in our search for the celebrity ideal and their mask of perfect beauty. Beauty reminds us of survival against destruction.

Hagman, in his 2002 paper, 'The Sense of Beauty', defines beauty as '…*an aspect of the experience of idealisation in which an object(s), sound(s) or concept(s) is believed to possess qualities of formal perfection*' (2002, p.662). Different to other thinkers, Hagman highlights the process of idealisation that accompanies beauty and the potentially negative side of this, 'beauty results from this dialectic between an inner readiness for idealisation and the encounter with an object that is "worthy" of the projection' (2002, p.668). But this idealisation can also stimulate feelings of impossibility, 'the simultaneous sense of the ideal both recovered and lost'. Following on from Segal and Lee, Hagman noted the power of beauty 'to alleviate anxiety regarding death and feelings of vulnerability associated with mortality' (2002, p.672) – beauty can enhance our illusion of immortality. Hagman follows up his essay on beauty, with 'On Ugliness' (2003), an area he contends has been largely neglected up to now. Hagman defines ugliness and our reaction to it in the following way:

> *Ugliness* results from the emergence into consciousness of certain fantasies that alter the person's aesthetic sense in such a way that the formal qualities of the experience, the shape, texture, and color, appear to become the sources of our most disturbing and repulsive feelings (2003, p.959).

He equates ugliness to the breakdown of sublimation and to a disruption caused by disturbing phantasies, stemming from the 'return of the repressed' but also from 'an unexpected shattering of the desired aesthetic organization by threatening fantasy and anxiety' (2003, p.960). Furthermore, Hagman reminds us, 'from a psychoanalytic perspective, ugliness is not a quality of things; rather, it is a psychological experience that is felt to be external to the self, although its source lies primarily in fantasy and psychological conflict' (2003, p.961). The ugly represents the unharmonious, the destroyed, anxiety and danger. The ugly can simulate repressed areas of ourselves that we do not like, it can represent the potential for harm to loved objects and the failure to integrate these loved objects. Concerning sublimation, the ugly represents, 'the return of

the repressed fantasies related to oedipal desire and retribution…In other words, ugliness may be associated with the disruptive emergence of sexual fantasy in which libido and aggression are expressed in a manner resulting in psychic conflict' (p.970). Fear and horror can result in a confusion between inner and external objects, leading to a terror of both self and the other, Hagman says, concluding in depression and chaos.

To conclude, we say that the *ugly* is a representation of the death instinct, the destructive, an incompleteness, a failure; contrasted against *beauty* – the idealised, the whole, the integrated. I would argue that it is impossible to create something that contains only the beautiful and that Segal is correct: both the representations of the life and death instincts are necessary for the whole aesthetic experience. It is my contention that the balanced instincts on the page are representatives of the healthy vision of Freud's *fusion*, but it is the artist who must have suffered through a *defusion* of instinct, to present this harmony to us. This is what makes creative endeavours so painful, such a struggle. The desire to create something whole, fundamentally starts with a destruction (a defilement of the canvas, of the marble, the page). Ultimately, we seek a survival, of the destruction of the bad object, of the Oedipal parents. The Immortality Phantasy aims to both synthesise and supplement the existing theories of creativity and aesthetics.

Part Two:
The Application Of The Immortality Phantasy To A New Psychoanalytic Contribution To Literary Criticism

CHAPTER FIVE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM GOLDING'S 'THE SPIRE': USING THE HYPOTHESISED IMMORTALITY PHANTASY AS A GUIDE TO FURTHER OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NOVEL

'…if you believe in God, it is not necessary to believe in yourself, and you can envisage your complete extinction with great cheerfulness…'
(Golding in Haffendon, 1985, p.111)

5.1 Introduction

William Golding's novel, *The Spire*, was written in 1964, receiving critical acclaim for its originality and insight, despite being less widely known than his more popular novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954). Its exploration of the link between creativity and destruction is appropriate material for discussion in the context of this thesis and it is for this reason I have chosen it as a literary case study.

Golding was an extremely intelligent and creative man, boasting skills in acting and music, as well as writing. His mother was a suffragette and his father a school teacher. It was on his return from World War II – where he participated in the D-Day landings, that he began writing his first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, published in 1954. Whilst *Lord of the Flies* concentrates on the collective destruction of a group, *The Spire* focuses more on the destruction of an individual as a result of their painful need to create. Being such a creative person himself, it is recognised that there were autobiographical elements within the latter novel. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1983, and was knighted by the Queen in 1988.

I have chosen to use *thematic analysis* (a type of qualitative analysis) to conduct a hypothesis testing in this chapter, with the aim of demonstrating the relevance of my Immortality Phantasy as a way of explaining some of the key ideas in William Golding's novel, *The Spire*. Using this novel to analyse the workings of the unconscious and creativity has been previously attempted by Hanna Segal and, therefore, I will follow her

model of thematic analysis, which she successfully conducted. However, before examining her work and ideas, I will briefly examine relevant elements of Golding's own life through Carey's detailed biography (2010). This is followed by both a synopsis of the novel and a review of some of the key papers on *The Spire,* outside the realm of psychoanalysis, in order to present a full overview of Golding's novel.

5.2 Methodology

A thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used forms of analysis for data in psychology and as a method of qualitative research. The idea is to look for common themes and patterns within the given data that can be grouped together to highlight key ideas drawn out of certain texts (usually responses to an interview or questionnaire). However, the psychological data statistics and figures are replaced with the undercurrent ideas and unconscious motivations of psychoanalysis.

In William Golding's novel, the themes of destruction and creativity are so brilliantly illuminated that it seems prudent to apply this form of analysis. 'The text is explained as a self-contained structure, and aspects of its form and content are studied in analogy to some mental phenomenon or repetition of a family relationship' (Baudry, 1984, p.573). He continues, 'The aim is to describe certain organizers and patterns in the text, using data which a non-analyst might well overlook' (p.573). Baudry suggests that thematic analysis is best used only in our quest to see patterns in the behaviour of a character, which leads us to logical conclusions, rather than as an interpretation of the inner workings of the character's mind; 'This method of dealing with the structure of the novel and issues of poetic licence broadens the psychological understanding' (1984, p.575).

Thematic analysis is not a common methodology, although such an analysis has been explicitly carried out by Hanna Segal. I would like to put forward the key points taken from Segal's 1974 paper on *The Spire,* reducing them to a set of steps that can be followed in order to carry out a successful thematic analysis.

- Brief synopsis highlighting only the relevant characters and key events

- Extraction of symbolic ideas from the text (i.e. the spire represents the phallus)
- The postulation of key psychoanalytic ideas to help us make sense of the text
- A set of questions and hypotheses
- Introduction of other sources that highlight key issues
- Illustration from the text to substantiate claims made by the hypothesis – the gathering of evidence to support claims

To fulfil the aims of this thesis, I also attempt a comparative study, asking the question: can my hypothesis bring more to our understanding of the novel than Segal's can?

5.3 Golding Biography

Sir William Golding was born in September of 1911 in Cornwall. Best known for his literary exploits, especially his novels, he was also adept in poetry, music (especially piano), acting and sports, alongside mechanics, sailing and archaeology. As mentioned, I will rely on John Carey's biography, *William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies* (2010), to briefly explore factual and crucial episodes throughout his life, especially concerning the progression of his creativity and other events that determined the state of his inner world.

Golding was a fiercely private man, who insisted upon any biographies to be written only after his death (Carey, 2010). Despite this, he was also meticulous in the recording of his life, including,

> …unpublished novels, both complete and fragmentary, early drafts of published novels, numerous projects and plans, two autobiographical works, one of them concentrating on his relationships with women, and a 5,000 page journal which he kept every day for twenty-two years (Carey, 2010, p.ix).

Dream diaries were an additional method of record. His childhood reflections are at time contradictory – hindsight reveals it to be a happy one; more timely accounts reveal extensive sadness (Carey, 2010, p.29). He has a brother, Jose, five years his senior and

viewed as a frightening figure to the young Golding (p.26). Certainly, physical contact was minimal – almost non-existent from his parents, contrasted against the more violent physical elements his mother occasionally presented, 'In one of Golding's adult dreams about his mother she appeared as the Principle of All Evil warring against God' (Carey, 2010, p.21). The occasional violence of his mother manifested in his own behaviour at a young age, leading to a lack of friendship accompanying a strong desire for mastery (Carey, 2010). Musical and literary pursuits provided him with relief and a container for emotion, in the absence of play with other children. This was later accompanied by sporting prowess and a talent for acting. A stand-out event recalls memories from his days at Marlborough Grammar School (1920s) when he witnessed the astonishing power of his father as a teacher:

> It was spell-binding, but also, for a son who would himself become a teacher, intimidating, as Golding's reminiscence suggests: "It was marvellous teaching, and I don't know that we – I - ever recovered from it (Carey, 2010, p.31).

Perhaps we can draw parallels here between *The Spire's* protagonist Jocelin, and Golding himself, struggling for mastery through their creative endeavours against their fathers (God and Alec Golding). In his sixth-form years, he makes his first attempt at poetry:

> The shortcomings of this were evidently pointed out by someone – perhaps Jose, perhaps his father – for he complains of the 'unkind' criticism it has received, and feels that he has 'suffered too severe a reverse to write any more poetry a while yet' (Carey, 2010, p.37).

However, he makes a repeat attempt soon after, which is more successful and 'from now on he would think of himself a poet' (p.37). But it also instilled in him 'this wish for aesthetic privacy characterized by the adult Golding as well as the adolescent' (p.37). Golding later attended Brasenose College at Oxford University, which whilst supporting some elements of his creativity, also further nurtured his social insecurities and distaste of the class system. It was here that he had a chance encounter with a refugee from Nazi occupied Germany: Albert Einstein (Carey, 2010, p.43). Due to language conflicts, there was no great exchange between the two men, to Golding's regret.

The Second World War affected people in differing ways, but interestingly, for Golding, it highlighted his own potential for aggression and sadism, reflected in his

attempted rape of a university girlfriend, Dora (Carey, 2010, p.46), and his sympathies not with the Nazi manifesto, but with the capacity of mankind to inflict terrible ills upon others, ''I have always understood the Nazis because I am of that sort by nature'. He adds that it was 'partly out of that sad self-knowledge' that he wrote *Lord of the Flies*' (Carey, 2010, p. 82). Golding further commented that, 'Had I been in Germany I would have been at most a member of the SS, because I would have liked the uniform and so on. I think maybe in *Lord of the* Flies I was purging myself of that knowledge' (Haffendon, 1985, p.115). Throughout the war, he was active on several different Navy ships, sending him on a journey of emotion, ranging from sadness at leaving his family, to marvelling at the beauty of the natural world, and also to a gratitude and understanding of comradery (2010, p.97). Post-war, Golding returned to his teaching position and his home life in Salisbury. Having been absent from the home during the war, his sudden and dominating reappearance led to complications in the development of his relationship with his son (p.112).

The inspiration for his writing of *The Spire*, was 'The daily experience of watching the rebuilding of Salisbury cathedral's spire from his classroom window…' (Carey, 2010, p. 250), although Carey also credits Dorothy Sayer's play *The Zeal of Thy House*. Whilst the novel was initially designed to be "funny", he assured his editor, 'not savage/tragic stuff'… modest in length' (Carey, 2010, pp.250-251). A move to America brought him fame and glory and confidence, leading to a desire to make *The Spire* a 'proper book' (p.263). When he set about writing it, he completed the first draft within a fortnight, with a comically and quickly dismissed title of, *An Erection at Barchester* (Carey, 2010, p. 263). However, the process of re-writing was a laboured task and Golding was riddled with insecurities about his novel and his abilities. Many drafts later, the release of the book met with mixed reception. But perhaps his complications with this book are associated to his own Immortality Phantasy, reflected through Jocelin's. In an interview with John Haffendon (1985), he states, 'The point of a novel like *The Spire* is founded, I suppose, in a writer's hubris – in the sense that he thinks or believes that his book will outlast his own life' (p. 109). Golding remains committed to Jocelin's vision which prompted him to build the spire, 'But of course my own personal belief is that Jocelin was used to make the spire,

and that his original vision was absolutely right' (Haffendon, 1985, p.109). Perhaps this demonstrates Golding's belief in his creativity as bearing on him a right to destructive behaviour, a right to seek mastery of others and an omnipotence in the immortality of themselves through their work. This is further demonstrated when he says, in an interview with Baker:

> The mystery about the spire is (a) that anyone got so vain that he should wish to build it, (b) it's still there and (c) that, although I'm sure it wasn't meant to be, it's extraordinarily beautiful. You see, it has all these things that are very mysterious. It's the best we can do and, ah well, you have to write what it's like for corrupt human beings to do that (1981, p.150).

When Baker asks him if this refers to the artist, Golding agrees that it does, further highlighting his narcissistic side to creativity and his omnipotent belief in his own survival (1981, p.150).

5.4 A Brief Synopsis of the Spire

Golding's novel is an imaginary account of the construction of the spire of Salisbury Cathedral, set in the 13th Century. Golding lived and worked in Salisbury, with a view of the cathedral's spire in eyeshot, begging him for a story, on the ludicrous bravery of the master builder who built a spire on a swamp, to be told. To Golding, anyone brave enough to volunteer for such a dramatic challenge was a character that deserved attention and exploration; 'I had to invent the circumstances as far as I could and the sort of person who would do it' (Golding in Baker, 1981, p.148). Golding's story is his own version of events that take place.

The novel explores the cost of the creativity through its main protagonist, Jocelin who is Dean of the cathedral and acts as a warning to its audience of the potential for destruction that can accompany such extreme creative feats. We see Jocelin embark on a journey where he is led further and further into isolated madness, putting the building of his spire before all else and above all others. Descriptions given in the novel, such as 'Jocelin's Folly', 'no foundations' and 'the four pillars' act as navigational aids to remind us of the close link between the characters of the novel and the building itself. The four

pillars are represented by the other four main characters of the book (Pangall, his wife Goody, her lover Roger Mason and his wife Rachel). These characters are gradually drawn into Jocelin's world of destruction, despite their protestations. As Jocelin's spire is built higher and higher, the danger and apprehension amongst those in the church and within the novel grows and Jocelin is begged to stop his endeavour. However, he believes that he has been chosen by God to complete his work but we quickly see that the spire is representative of Jocelin's own sexual desires and insecurities, and God becomes lost in his own narcissistic omnipotence. There are many occasions within the novel where Jocelin reminds himself that he must go and pray, only to be immediately distracted by something more pressing. This demonstrates his weakening attitude towards God. When he finally does pray, he notices an 'angel' warming his back – a sign from God that encourages his work. However, reality is very different: we find out later that his 'guardian angel' is actually consumption (tuberculosis), rotting away his back and slowly killing him. In Jocelin's omnipotent phantasies, God then sends a devil to him at night to keep him humble as he is tortured by sexual dreams, especially involving Goody. Goody moves from being his phantasised child – innocent and pure – to his phantasised lover as she becomes involved with Roger Mason, the master builder and she is seen in a new light. Representing his four pillars, each is led into their own path of destruction and eventual demise. Pangall, the faithful servant of the church, has his creativity stunted, not only by his own impotence, but also by Jocelin's refusal to allow him to be useful in the building of the spire, and he is eventually destroyed by the army of men as he predicted he would be. Following the movement of the earth, there is a climactic moment which is the first step towards the destruction of all four pillars and this is contrasted in the novel with the moving of the pillars as the 'earth creeps'. Jocelin hears a commotion coming from around the pit:

> In an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing, he caught how a man danced forward to Pangall, the model of the spire projecting obscenely from between his legs – then the swirl and the noise and the animal bodies hurled Jocelin against the stone, so that he could not see, but only heard how Pangall broke – He heard the long wolfhowl of the man's flight down the south aisle, heard the rising, the hunting noise of the pack that raced after him (Golding, 2005, p.90).

Pangall is chased out of the building site by the spire itself, by Jocelin's creation and his devil army. Father Anselm later informs us that he has run away and left Goody and we do not hear from Pangall again. Jocelin's response seals their fates: 'Let it be so. Cost what you like' (2005, p.35). The spire is valued above all else and he is happy to throw his old friend away in favour of his creation. He laments but acknowledges his destiny, reiterated later on: 'I didn't know how much you would cost up there, the four hundred feet of you. I thought you would cost no more than money. But still, cost what you like' (p.35). He has no foundation to build his spire – he believes he was chosen by God but the reality is that the king owed a favour to his Aunt in return for an episode of good love-making and she chooses to make him the Dean of the cathedral and fund his dreams. Jocelin's delusions of grandeur evolve and increase over the course of the novel. He no longer serves God's purpose, but his own narcissistic desires and his eventual destruction is inevitable. By the end of the novel, he is broken, both physically and mentally.

Roger Mason is the master builder, a gruff, sturdy man who leads the army of builders. Roger tries continuously to alter Jocelin's plans, to stop his foolish creation, deeming it impossible. But Jocelin will not listen. For the first part of the novel, there is a power struggle between the two men. There are several points where we see Jocelin slowly but surely gaining power over him, the first being when Roger tries to quit, having found work elsewhere. Jocelin reminds him that he is bound under contract and he has ensured that the job is no longer available. Once Jocelin discovers the affair between Roger and Goody, and that Roger is caught in a net, Roger is thrown further in to his service. He is a sexually potent man who, not only manages to seduce Goody, but also impregnates her, making him both the master builder and the epitome of potent creativity. But Jocelin owns him, controls him and is elevated by this idea, taking him one step closer to God (we are reminded of Golding's desire for mastery). At the end of the novel, in a final act of desperation and reparation, he goes to seek forgiveness from Roger, who is himself ruined, living as a drunk in squalor around New Street, a place of rapists, prostitutes and murderers – the place his army of builders have been staying. Roger receives him at first but is

eventually too tormented by the sight of him and throws him out. He is attacked by the locals, who like Miltonic hell hounds, tear him almost apart. But he cries out, '"My children, my children"' (Golding, 2005, p.215). He remains desperate to be the Father, the virile creator, the patriarch of all. But this phantasy is mismatched to the reality. Instead, they turn *him* in to the child, leaving him 'crawling', helpless and 'naked'. But he almost accepts his defeat, 'I am naked, he thought, that was to be expected' (p.216). The symbolism of his being naked and childlike is amplified further by his final interaction with the young sculptor – his 'son' and his love:

> At one point he began to think about his tomb and managed to send for the dumb man. Through an interminable succession of time and gap he got him to understand what he wanted; himself without ornament, lying stripped in death of clothing and flesh, a prone skeleton lapped in skin, head fallen back, mouth open...They stripped him for the young man (Golding, 1982, p.219).

This is contrasted with the head back, mouth open pose of the powerful symbols of Jocelin's head that was to adorn the spire. The young man is his final creator – Jocelin, naked, becomes his creation, his son. The dumb man in his silence, has survived and is the only one. Roger too has reverted to infancy. After a failed attempt by Roger to hang himself, Rachel in her final act of desperation, curses at Jocelin, explaining: '...blind and dumb – I have to do everything for him, everything! Do you understand? Like a baby!' (Golding, 2005, p.220).

It is widely assumed that Jocelin's spire eventually falls down to echo his own destruction, although it must be noted that this is not explicitly stated in the novel. By the end, it is still standing against all odds, as Salisbury cathedral still does despite its difficult up-bringing. Therefore, we must assume that Jocelin's creativity does last, although at the expense of his own body. Golding has found a resting place for the duel between creativity and destruction – the constant reminder of survival, but also of destruction. The ever-present threat of destruction remains, but this only enhances the Immortality Phantasy and the strength of the repetitive, internalised survival.

5.5 An Examination of Key Characters and Themes

Following on from the synopsis, it is important to highlight and play close attention to some of the key themes, ideas and moments in the novel, in order to give the reader a full appreciation of the developments that occur and some of the ideas I will be testing through Immortality Phantasy, later on.

5.5.1 The Spire as Phallic

There can be no doubt that Golding needed his readers to understand the symbolism of *The Spire* as Jocelin's desired or phantasised phallus. He crudely and explicitly demonstrates this when see him holding up the model of the spire, whilst, 'God the Father was exploding in his face' (p.7). This immediately belittles the role of God, as he is sexualised and controlled symbolically by Jocelin. We recognise the spire as phallus straight away:

> He took the white spire and jammed it firmly in the square hold cut in the old model of the cathedral.
> 'There'...
> The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread... And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire (Golding, 2005, p.8).

Whilst the spire itself is a phallic symbol, the cathedral is feminised, and the jamming in of the spire is like a rape on the cathedral, perhaps representative of Golding's own potential for sadism. It lies helpless on its back, with the violating phallus protruding grotesquely out of it - perhaps a premonition of the defilement of the cathedral that is to take place.

5.5.2 Jocelin's Inner World

The exploration of Jocelin's inner world is key to our understanding of the novel. Early in the novel, we are made aware of Jocelin's view towards his church and his followers. He feels that he is their great leader – his feelings are of love, no doubt, but also a sense of ownership, 'My place, my house, my people' (p.8), he predicts their movements, knows

what they will do next. In the early stages of building, Jocelin overhears two of the deacons gossiping, describing an arrogant man who is both 'proud' and 'ignorant' (p.13). Jocelin does not realise (or chooses not to realise) that this contempt is aimed at him, as he is too wrapped up in the excitement of his spire. Ironically, he implores, 'Who is this poor fellow? You should pray for him, rather' (p.13). The words are both ironic and prophetic and act as another warning from Golding. But, as if to compound his narcissism and to reaffirm his commitment, Jocelin receives a Holy Nail from the Lord Bishop in Rome, which will be placed at the top of the spire, as a symbol of its completion when the time comes. His faith is cemented that he is on the right path and God has chosen him, despite the opposition that he continues to face: 'Joy carries me up in one pan, and Anselm sinks in the other. There is the Nail and my angel. There is the chancellor and the master builder and his wife' (2005, p.49). And we know that Golding has supported this view – this creative feat *is* bravery, but is also an attempt at mastery, is an act of sadism and a letting loose of the internal destruction on the outside world. As the foundations fail - the four pillars are not strong enough to support the building, reflected in the breakdown of relationships with his personal four pillars (Pangall, Goody, Roger, Rachel) - Jocelin's happiness returns unexpectedly and manically, 'It seemed suddenly to Jocelin that now he loved everybody with ease and delight. He was filled with excitement' (p.70). Despite the tragedy of events that have occurred in the process, the building work can fatefully resume: 'So Jocelin clasped his hands, lifted his head and included the boys and the dumb man and Roger Mason and Goody in one tremendous ejaculation...' (2005, p.71). All these characters represent his confused sexuality – homosexual, heterosexual, incestuous, forbidden - they are all moulded in to one under the spire – his sexual desire. The spire is a container for all his creative *and* destructive desires and it bends and sways under the pressure of such a task. We continually wonder if it will be a 'good enough mother' to Jocelin, to borrow a Winnicottian idea. Can it withstand his projections (physical and emotional)? If the spire survives, so will Jocelin, despite his follies. Roger Mason becomes a symbol of the point of defusion between the life and death instincts. He fulfils all Jocelin's phantasies on his behalf – both in building the spire and in his sexual activity with Goody. But in doing so he also makes Jocelin impotent, 'So he would watch the

master building climbing heavily and carefully from stage to stage, his T-square under his arm, and a lead plummet hanging from his waist' (1982, p.73). He is potent creativity. Jocelin must overthrow him, destroy him and reclaim his omnipotence through his spire.

With the progression of the novel, we see the close relationship between Jocelin's paternal instincts and his lustful ones, wrapped up within his feelings for the spire, 'He understood that all small things had been put in one side for him, business, prayer, confession, so that now there was a kind of necessary marriage; Jocelin and the spire' (Golding, 1982, p.93). The spire is wife and child. It has replaced his love for God in every way now – he has found his creativity *and* his reproductive creativity within spire. It is wife, child and mistress and with this new marriage, he can overthrow God – will the Oedipal battle. God (and his duties to God) are an inconvenience – almost an irrelevance. And his relationship with the dumb sculptor only compounds these feelings in Jocelin, only encourages his narcissism: 'By each wooden form, lay a stone head shouting silently and exulting in the height of heaven and the brightness' (1982, p.104). These statues are of himself - idols and symbols; they have replaced the ones representing God and demonstrate to Jocelin that he has reached the status of the Almighty, 'I would like to see the spire to be a thousand feet high, he thought, and then I should be able to oversee the whole country...' (1982, p.106). Jocelin's phantasised ideas of grandiose develop alongside the novel.

As the building deteriorates and so does the master builder due to both scandal and the awful conditions, Jocelin himself becomes much more involved in the day to day building of the spire and takes to climbing it in times of sorrow. With the destruction of Goody and Roger and the pending threat of the building's collapse, he ascents with hope, to be nearer to God – not for comfort, but for power. His feelings have become so confused – he wants a mother, but despises the mother. He is potent father, close to an Oedipal victory, but his creativity is under threat. He is a child – scared and alone. The spire is all things to him – his inner world is a place of chaos and confusion. But he knows that his child – the model spire, is born out of destruction and this is symbolised further by the destruction of Goody and Roger's child, and Goody's own death (p.137). But the spire

remains, climbing higher and higher, the threat of destruction looming above, Jocelin now believing himself to be God-like. Up there in his spire, surrounded by his devils, he is a leader. The building, a symbol of his phallus and his power, is eventually wrapped up in a 'skin', and its status is sealed. Eventually, however, reality catches up and he is forced to address his duties that he has ignored for so long. There is a pertinent moment when one of the members of the Chapter both infantilises and feminises him at the same time and he is brought crashing down to reality, 'Someone pulled the skirt of his gown back and down so that it hung as it did in the old days' (Golding, 1982, p.161). They humanise him, humiliate him. He is reminded of his mortality on earth, in contrast to his phantasies of immortality. He is a fool who has lost his mind and everything he ever had. But still he convinces himself it is God's work he is doing. This drives his narcissism, for he has been chosen by God. Jocelin understands the destruction he has caused - he is honest and aware of the path he has chosen and those he has dragged down with him, but it was out of necessity, it was a *vision*. His world is finally devastated beyond repair when his Aunt delivers the final blow, informing him that his position in the church was simply the consequence of her love-making with the King. Jocelin was chosen out of pity, as a joke, as a result of adultery. This is a very real destruction for Jocelin and finally destroys his will – the vision which assuaged his guilt, allowed him to avoid the necessary reparations, allowed him to climb up to and overthrow God, was a lie? He is not chosen. He is nothing and now he has nothing. He has no choice but to throw himself in phantasy down into the pit – joining the dead and the devils:

> Then all things came together. His spirit threw down an interior gulf, down, throw away, offer, destroy utterly, build me in with the rest of them; and as he did this he threw his physical body down too, knees, face, chest, smashing on the stone. Then his angel put away the two wings from the cloven hoof and struck him from arse to the head with a whitehot flail (Golding, 1982, p.188).

His God has deserted him, has been destroyed in his phantasy and reality. His angel sodomises him and, finally, Jocelin breaks into pieces, his internal and external world too fragmented to mend. Now he must lie almost paralysed, tormented in his bed, waiting for his death and the fall of the spire. His excessive creativity has ensured his total destruction

and Jocelin eventually succumbs to death. In his final thoughts, he laments, '*There is no innocent work*' (1982, p.222).

5.5.3 The Four Pillars

Golding allegorises the four pillars of the church crossways, as the two couples who must withstand Jocelin's projections of destruction. We see the collapse of the couples along with the demise of the building.

Goody: Jocelin's relationship to Goody is extremely complex and has many different levels. I contend that his love starts out as genuinely paternal, only to be warped once Goody loses her innocence. She is introduced to us through Jocelin's eyes, 'I shall see, as I see daily, my daughter in God' (p.11) and he refers to her as 'Pangall's wife', not by her name – demonstrating elements of ownership. Goody starts off as a child for him that he loves, adores and wishes to protect. But when he learns of her affair with Roger, she becomes moulded with the devil and his attachment to her becomes eroticised. There is a blurring of the lines between love and incest as she moves from child to lover in his phantasy. She is part of the confused Oedipal relationship (God as the father, Jocelin as the father) that develops and frays throughout the novel. At the beginning, she is the only woman he can tolerate (the female according to Jocelin is highly unpleasurable). Rachel is too loud and brash, 'not like silent Goody Pangall, my dear daughter-in-God' (2005, p.43). But Goody's position is slowly lost during the course of the novel – first by her affair with Roger, but then by the attack on her by the army. She has lost her innocence:

> There was a fall and tangle of red hair on green cloth with the stone pillar behind it. This worried him endlessly for however much he tried he could not recreate the peaceful woman behind the hair, the woman as she was... (Golding, 2005, p.91).

A pregnant Goody has her final moment of ruin when Jocelin finds Rachel leaving her cottage, having discovered the affair with Roger. When Jocelin enters her cottage, she screams in fear, inducing her labour. Her dignity, her baby and her life all wash out together, with the army completing the destruction they started at the base of the spire:

> The workmen were holding up white, thin legs in the air, there was a white belly jerking and screaming under them, and there was blood over the money on the floor so that the world spun...but the hair and blood blinded the eyes of his mind (Golding, 2005, p.137).

This lasting image tortures him throughout his days. Goody's role in the novel is small, yet significant.

Pangall: Our first introduction to Pangall is immediately wretched. The men who are building the spire have taken to torturing Pangall on a regular basis and he fears for his life. Already one man had been killed in a fight, "One day, they will kill me" (p.14), he warns Jocelin with fatidic accuracy. But Jocelin is irritated by his pathetic complaints and insists that the work must continue, 'So that this house will be even more glorious than before' (p.15). 'By breaking the place down? ...My great grandfather helped to build it' (p.15), Pangall reveals. Jocelin is, not only destroying Pangall himself, but also his legacy, his immortality, 'Pangall's Kingdom' (p.17). His pleas to Jocelin fall on deaf ears. Pangall's destruction ensures Jocelin's own survival and that of the army of builders, as by torturing Pangall, they believe they are keeping away bad luck. He is a part of the cathedral - someone they can project their own fears and concerns about their undertakings. He is the cathedral - his destruction happens in conjunction with the building. In addition, Pangall had wanted to be a part of the creation – using his own holy men, not the devil worshipping army of builders that destroy the cathedral. But Jocelin refuses and in doing so makes him impotent – he removes Pangall's creativity, destroys his Immortality Phantasy. Later in the novel, to assuage some of Pangall's fury, Jocelin shares with him his vision, his wish to create something lasting, his own legacy that Pangall's sons will admire in years to come. In an attempt at compassion and father-like understanding, he says: 'In God's good time you will have sons...' (1982, p.62). But Pangall cannot have children and feels that Jocelin in mocking his impotence, 'Do *you* make a fool of me too?'.

Roger Mason: Roger Mason acts in part, as Jocelin's phantasy and perhaps even his ego ideal. He is Jocelin's main opponent in his battle for omnipotence, as he represents both sexual potency and creative potency. But when Jocelin discovers his affair and sees him trapped in a net with Goody, he delights that even Roger can be beaten, 'I do what I must do. He will never be the same again... I've won, he's mine, my prisoner for this duty'

(2005, p.88). Jocelin declares himself the victor, revelling in the thrill of beating Roger since he has defiled the heart and body of his precious Goody. And his triumph is even more appealing as with it, Jocelin has captured Roger's creativity. Now it cannot escape and it will do his will, in the name of Jocelin's own creativity, no matter the consequences.

Rachel Mason: Rachel is Roger Mason's wife and is despised by Jocelin for being too opinionated and confident – characteristics intolerable in a woman, according to Jocelin. But at the same time, Jocelin seems to admire the relationship between her and Roger in the beginning – their peaceful co-existence, their 'revolving around each other' (p.45). Jocelin has many encounters with Rachel, but one which he finds particularly disturbing: his discovery of the affair between Goody and Roger. This shakes Jocelin severely so that like the cathedral, we see his own feeble foundations exposed, 'Then an anger rose out of some pit inside Jocelin' (p.58). In the same paragraph, we see Rachel, cradling a baby in her arms on her way to a christening, demonstrating both the productive and destructive sides to creativity, also shown through potent sexuality versus impotence,

> Rachel, face shaken like a windowpane in a gale, was explaining to him why she had no child though she prayed for one. When she and Roger went together, at the most inappropriate moment she began to laugh – *had* to laugh – it wasn't that she was barren as some people might think... (Golding, 1982, p.59).

She is not infertile, but is simply unable to create. Roger and Rachel cannot create a child and he learns soon after that neither can Goody and Pangall. The women cannot become mothers and are, therefore, obsolete. They cannot be parents, but he can through a new parent/child dynamic, the spire. God has given him their creativity.

The Dumb Sculptor: Although he does not make up one of the four pillars, it is relevant here to discuss the role of the young sculptor, who appears to encourage Jocelin's narcissism. Perhaps as an attempt to keep him as his mirror image or ego ideal, Jocelin does not acknowledge the name of the young man who creates the sculptures of his face, to adorn the top of the tower. In his sculpting, he has attempted to give the impression of speed to the statues and flatters Jocelin's ego:

> Rushing on with the angels, the infinite speed that is stillness, hair blown, torn back, straightened with the wind of the spirit, mouth open, not for uttering rain-water, but for

> hosannas and hallelujahs.
> Presently Jocelin lifted his head, and smiled ruefully.
> 'Don't you think you might strain my humility, by making an angel of me?' (Golding, 2005, p.24).

He adulates Jocelin, his sculptures reflecting Jocelin's innermost desires and projections, only intensifying his omnipotent narcissism. This is further compounded after the sculptor saves Jocelin's life, during the attack on Pangall:

> 'My son. I owe my life to you, it seems'. He is my son, he thought, and she is my daughter. But the red hair fell and blinded him, so that he shut his eyes and groaned. Then he discovered how tired he was and his bed drew him. That night his angel came again; and after that, the devil tormented him a little (Golding, 2005, p.96).

The young sculptor now fulfils his need for a son (a creation) and a (narcissistic) love interest. It is my contention that Golding meant for us to view Jocelin's physical love for him as a representation of his narcissism, rather than a demonstration of any homosexual inclination. Their love does not abate - it is the sculptor who is there for Jocelin's final moments and who will sculpt him in his honesty and death, as well as his narcissism and life: creativity against destruction.

5.5.4 The Army and the Pit

It is important to look at these two aspects of the novel, as both the army and the pit are symbols of Jocelin's inner world, throughout the novel. We are introduced to the group of workers as dangerous, violent and blasphemous men, who torture Pangall and pollute the air with their filthy voices. They are referred to as the master builder's 'army', due to their numbers and force. For the first half of the book, they remain Jocelin's primary problem due to their blasphemous singing, their riotous behaviour and their treatment of Pangall, at least allowing all involved a place to project their fears and concerns, before Jocelin internalises them. Following instructions, they open up a large pit (the 'cellarage') underneath the cathedral, in order to check the depth and strength of its foundations. But the pit and its stench of dead bodies, becomes symbolic of the destruction that is to follow, it comes to represent hell – the hell Jocelin has created in his attempts to reach God. He asks, 'Did you dig the pit for me, too, Roger? A pit to catch a dean?' (Golding, 2005,

p.39). It is next to the pit that he received his message from God and it becomes more and more a part of him as the smell of rot and destruction fills the air he breathes:

> It seemed to Jocelin that his first whiff of the pit began something new. Now he noticed how everywhere in the cathedral, the smell of stale incense and burnt wax had been joined by this more unpleasant odour. For the water, with guessed-at stealth, had invaded the graves of the great on either side of the choir or between the arcades of the nave... 'Here where the pit stinks, I received what I received, all those years ago, and I fell on my face. It is necessary always to remember' (Golding, 2005, p.53).

It is a sad reminder of Jocelin's delusions that he has invaded the graves of the dead in his church, the 'great', to build his Folly - a delusion born above the dead. In the filth and decay he has created, 'The model stood on the trestle table, and it seemed like the only clean thing in the building' (p.55). His delusion always remains intact. The more destruction there was in the air, the more of an infant it became to him, the more he needed to protect and nurture it:

> ...Jocelin stopped by the model, to encourage himself. He detached the spire with difficulty, because the wood was swollen, and held the thing devoutly, like a relic. He caressed it gently, cradling it in his arms, and looking at it all over, as a mother might examine her baby" (Golding, 2005, p.56).

Once again, we see the blurring of lines between father-like sentiments for object and person, being quickly replaced by sexual feelings. The symbolism of the spire stuck within the cathedral is potent – the destruction has been done; he can remove it - with difficulty - but he cannot undo the violation. Once again, these feelings diminish his relationship to his own father, God:

> He heard the maul sounds from the roof, and all at once he was excited by the thing in his arms...He felt life. He lifted his chin, opened his eyes and his mouth and was about to give thanks.
> Then he stood, saying nothing.
> Goody Pangall had come out of Pangall's kingdom (p.56).

Jocelin learns of the affair between Goody and Roger and a personal pit opens up inside him – his feelings of life are replaced by darkness. Roger has created the pit for him. The pit becomes ever more threatening as the earth beneath it begins to move:

> Some form of life; that which ought not to be seen or touched, the darkness under the earth, turning, seething, coming to the boil... Doomsday coming up; or the roof of hell down

> there. Perhaps the damned stirring, or the noseless men turning over and thrusting up (Golding, 2005, pp.79-80).

The pit acts as a constant warning of the looming dangers. The earth is creeping. They all scream, 'Fill the pit! Fill the pit! Fill the pit![14]' (p.81). They must fill the pit with whatever they can get their hands on, 'So as the edge of the crowd came back – two hands bore a head of Dean Jocelin and hurled it into a pit' (p.81). Jocelin has been sacrificed, as he prophesised to Roger Mason. A symbol of his narcissism and omnipotence, tossed into the pit of destruction – his projection has not survived, death is implied. In lieu of the scene of terror that unfolded, Roger begs Jocelin to give up his tragic endeavours. However, Jocelin cannot, destruction is too warped into his creative ambitions, 'I see now it'll destroy us of course... The thing can be built and will be built, in the very teeth of Satan' (p.88).

Towards the end of the novel, we see a change between Jocelin and Roger, 'Now if I told him to build a thousand feet high, he would do it. I've got what I wanted' (p.139) and the army now look to him as their leader. They have moved from being the devil worshipping, air polluting murderers of the beginning of the novel, to his new church, his world. And he has become their God. They can act out his creativity for him and are essential to his survival. The builders who remain with him become his sons, calling him 'Father' and in return, '…my children!' (p.173). He has given up all else to be with them, including his church and God. All that matters is his creation, and to achieve this he has joined the ranks of the devil. But it seems he has not just forgotten about God, he is becoming the anti-God, '...understanding how the fear had come with the singing [pillars], and driven the diminished congregations from the Lady Chapel. (They are the little ones, the littles one, little ones)' (p.141). He has finally destroyed all worship at the church once and for all. He has driven God out entirely. He has destroyed his children, his 'little ones' replacing them with, '…the great ones; the builders' (p.141). The only singing left within the building is from the pillars – the godly singing has ended, even the blasphemous songs

[14] This chanting is reminiscent of the pivotal scene in *Lord of the Flies* where they similarly roar, "Kill the Pig", over and over. It might have been Golding's intention to remind us of this, to demonstrate what a significant moment this is.

have ceased. It is only the pillars and the intimidation of destruction that remains – a constant song of anguish and warning. But Jocelin embraces this destruction. It is a necessary part of his creativity.

5.6 Critical Literature on The Spire

This brief section offers up some of the most relevant articles on Golding's novel, as literary criticism, rather than psychoanalytic exploration. This aims to give a well-rounded vantage point on how the novel was received and how others have interpreted some of Golding's ideas. This includes at the end, an interview with Golding himself, not as an attempt at psychobiography, but instead as a further commentary on the novel from an authoritative voice.

Gregor & Kinkead-Weekes produced an article entitled 'The Later Golding', as part of a collection of papers on *Twentieth Century Literature*, published in 1982. This was an influential piece within the literary world and aimed to give an overview of the development of Golding's writing in the progression of his years. Authorities on Golding, they were close friends of his family (Carey, 2010, p.349), but were also involved in the creative side through both critiquing and supporting his endeavours. The authors begin by suggesting that the four novels written prior to *The Spire*, act as precursors in so far as this novel allows for the resolution 'of all those paradoxical demands of the Golding imagination' (Gregor & Kinkead-Weekes, 1982, p.109). The authors highlight the sophistication of Golding's work, as it brings together complexities and simplicities, realities and mysteries. They examine how Golding maintains certain parallels in his work as he builds up his writing to the climax of the novel, alongside the building of the spire; 'The structure was perfectly reflected in the details, every height being made to reveal a new depth, the multiple patterning used to defeat rigidity of pattern and make possible a glimpse of mystery beyond' (1982, p.109).

Gregor & Kinkead-Weekes are sensitive to Golding's creative processes, noting that due to the lack of success of his novel *The Pyramid*, he would wait ten years before releasing two novels conjointly. They view *The Spire* as a literary triumph:

> The massive structuring and patterning of *The Spire* was a basis and preparation for a single moment of perception at the very end. It was necessary to exhaust all the "languages" of the spire, to know everything, in order for Jocelin to be able suddenly to focus its wholeness for a moment, and cry "Now I know nothing at all" (Gregor & Kinkead-Weekes, 1982, p.110).

Here, they demonstrate how the entire novel, with Golding and Jocelin's creativity aligned, leads up to this climactic point at the end of the novel when Jocelin must admit his defeat, as Golding had had to do with *The Pyramid*. It seems his spire climbed higher than his pyramid could.

The original paper by these two authors was written in 1967, before Golding had won his Nobel Prize for Literature (1983). The two had a firm friendship with Golding that allowed for personal insights to be added to their work. Ian Gregor died in 1995, leaving Kinkead-Weekes (who died in 2011) to update and revise subsequent versions, notably the 2002 edition, *William Golding: A Critical Study of the Novels*, which I would like to refer to now, bringing in some of their updated views of the novel. Here, Kinkead-Weekes & Gregor, observe the paradoxes involved when reading and re-reading the novel. They note that whilst on the one hand the novel appears to be straightforward and simple, it is equally and paradoxically complex and loaded with meaning, 'extreme clarity accompanied by extreme opacity' (2002, p.171). Another paradox is between the beauty of the church and its pillars and windows, reflected against the 'crookedness and suffering' dictated in the story (2002, p.172). Is Jocelin 'a saint or a destructive monomaniac' (2002, p.175), Kinkead-Weekes & Gregor ask, maintaining their search for paradoxical components. The authors juxtapose Jocelin's character as full of 'warmth', but also containing an all-consuming 'pride' and we are reminded of 'angel' versus 'devil' (2002, p.176). I would make the addition of mortality versus immortality and Kinkead-Weekes & Gregor remind us of the impotence of Pangall, against the coital powers of Roger Mason, 'To these intimations of mortality Jocelin's attitude is one of uncomprehending revulsion' (2002, p.176). The immortal desires of Jocelin have come face to face with the disgusting revelations about the mortal fallibility of those around him. This is highlighted when we contrast the scene of the 'singing pillars' with the 'dumb sculptor' whose works of art and

creativity are tossed into the pit of destruction (2002, p.178). The authors continue their contrapositioning:

> The first four chapters are intensive, the next four are extensive… 'Up here' there is growth, certainty, happiness; 'below' is darkness, incomprehension, distraction… A sense of claustrophobia gives way to relief as the novel opens out, as Jocelin climbs away from the nave (Kinkead-Weekes & Gregor, 2002, p.179).

But the crucial element of their argument, and perhaps an idea that supports the Immortality Phantasy, is that 'The cellarage cannot be ignored by climbing into the tower' (2002, p.179). The foundations of destruction, cannot be ignored by narcissistic attempts at creativity. 'In Pangall, Misshapenness and Impotence are ritually murdered' but he cannot be disregarded. The destruction associated to Jocelin's desire to reach God, his desire for omnipotence, contains murder, fear, anxiety. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor conclude that, 'Golding sets a whole series of patterns at war in order to convince us that none will do' and 'For Jocelin there are explanations…But we have to be made to know and understand them' (2002, p.201). These ideas are carefully navigated by the author himself, as Golding reveals through the novel, his fears of the failure of his own creativity and his own potential for destruction.

In 1990, Ronald Granofsky produced a paper called, '"Man at an Extremity": Elemental Trauma and Revelation in the Fiction of William Golding' for *Modern Language Studies*, looking primarily at the idea of 'elemental trauma', alongside Golding's 'revelation impulse'. Granofsky, an authority on classical English literature, begins with a quotation from Golding which states in part, 'What man is, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn to know and that - I do not say this lightly - I would endure knowing' (Golding in Granofsky, 1990, p.50). Granofsky cites this quote in order to demonstrate the ability of Golding to explore the psyche of man, especially within extreme circumstances. Granofsky refers to certain 'revelations' that Golding makes (p.51), usually with regards to the outlook on life that the main protagonist has. This appears to be the key element of his texts – some sort of revelation that influences the main character and those around him.

> What I wish to suggest in the following essay is that Golding's symbolic use of the four elements in at least four of his novels is an attempt to apply modem psychological insights and a pre-Socratic Greek view of the cosmos to an essentially Christian concept of revelation leading to salvation (Granofsky, 1990, p.51)

Granofsky is referring to the four elements of fire, earth, air and water, with one of the four novels being *The Spire* and each of the novels demonstrating 'man at extremity'. He goes on to say, 'In each of these four novels, there is an emphasis on one particular element as the physical source of the symbolic representation of the psychological crisis of the protagonist' (1990, p.52). So, he suggests that there is a pattern within Golding's work where the protagonists are represented psychologically by the elements and the author points out that we can see water through his tears of joy and the sadness of Pangall, fire in Jocelin's heart, through his determination, earth – through the dust that fills the air of the cathedral and air being 'symbolically opposed to the earth' (p.58). Therefore, Granofsky suggests that Golding uses these elements to demonstrate to us the state of the inner world of Jocelin, and how the elements can be used to affect those around him:

> The prevalence of dust in the air also suggest the commingling of earth and air, the physical and the spiritual…however, the commingling is a spurious one, as Jocelin attempts to replace the physical with the spiritual by the sublimation of his sexual drive in the worship of God. Earth is the element of the body and its passions, air is the element of the spirit, and water is the element of the mind and those thoughts of impulses buried deep within the subconscious (Granofsky, 1990, p.59).

Granofsky has highlighted Jocelin's lack of physical intimacy that he so desires, replaced by a spiritual relationship with God. However, we see how this becomes mixed up with the development of the novel - the phallic representations of the spire are clear to see and Granofsky emphasises Jocelin's faux worship of God, in favour of his own desires and sublimatory needs. His juxtaposition of ancient philosophy with more modern psychological ideas, gives the reader an interesting set of tools with which to attempt an understanding of Jocelin, his decisions, and his desires.

Derek Roper's piece, 'Allegory and Novel in Golding's "The Spire"', published in 1967, for *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature,* reminds us of the negative reception to Golding's work as Roper suggests, 'Despite high praise from a few, most critics have been disappointed by Golding's latest novel' (1967, p.19). Roper justifies his

remarks through the suggestion that although it is a very allegorical tale, it lacks the aesthetic qualities to portray the spire accurately and more importantly, his lead characters are not adequately explored and come across as boring and stereotyped (1990, p.23). He accuses Golding of being unoriginal in his treatment of Goody's death and Roger Mason's decline and of leaning too heavily on the unsubtle allegory that he attempts. For Roper, the novel verges on unoriginal and is criticised for its heavy-handed symbolism.

Finally, it is necessary to give Golding's own voice a brief appearance, in order to understand his personal associations to *The Spire*. The interview with Golding was conducted by James R. Baker in 1981 at Golding's home in Salisbury, also for *Twentieth Century Literature*. What is immediately striking about Golding's interview is the sense of humility he shows about his creative endeavours, putting down his acting and his identity, 'What a bore I must have been over a period of about sixty years, solemnly quoting Shakespeare to people' (1982, p.132). This demonstrates his interests in all areas of creativity – his passion for words and for the theatre. However, this contrasts with the confidence and perhaps pride that he demonstrates later with regards to the success of his novels. It appears that Golding does not enter into the realm of the destruction that his protagonist Jocelin does, perhaps because he displays an acute awareness of the close relationship between creativity and destruction in *The Spire*, which is a tragic warning against over creativity. Golding reveals that the idea of original sin is a key component of his stories – man's ability to turn away from God and towards sin, leading to the breakdown of society. Golding suggests, 'Now with our awareness of ourselves as individuals inescapably comes in this other thing, this destructive thing, the evil, if you like' (1982, p.135). He examines the notion that it is our intelligence that can be responsible for our downfall, coupled with our selfishness (p.135) and that only through control of these aspects can we survive. For Golding, the building of the Spire is an undertaking that only a narcissistic, madman could do. But, nonetheless, he does not see its building as anti-God. He suggests that it is a necessary journey for someone human to build monuments (especially to God), even for selfish reasons. He reminds us, '…it's extraordinarily beautiful. You see, it has all these things that are very mysterious. It's the

best we can do and, ah well, you have to write what it's like for corrupt human beings to do that' (1982, p.150). Baker then asks Golding: 'Would it be pushing it too far to suggest that *The Spire* is a sort of portrait of the artist… (1982, p.150). Golding agrees, suggesting that his sympathies within the novel lie with Jocelin, and this selfish necessity he has to create something. In the interview, Baker pushes Golding towards an acknowledgement of the struggles of the artist:

> All art, therefore, ends in a kind of failure in so far as it is a record of our experience…It is the problem of the artists; it is the problem he must always wrestle with when he creates form… It seems to be that you often evade this problem of the falsehood of art or of artistic form by giving the responsibility to a character persona… (1982, p.151).

Golding's response echoes that of Jocelin, 'Yes, there's no innocent work…' (p.151). Golding suggests there is a selfishness and struggle to all elements of work, especially creative ones and it is interesting to the reader that he chooses to echo the same words he has given to Jocelin just moments before his death and destruction.

In the conclusion of the interview, Golding demonstrates that which I hold to be at the basis of the Immortality Phantasy, the desire for survival, especially of one's creative work. The phantasy of immortality for one's creations far supersedes the desire for one's own immortality, perhaps another reason why the artist can indulge their Immortality Phantasy so strongly and allow themselves to perish, seemingly more readily. Golding states, 'No, I hope devoutly that there is no survival after death. I don't wish to live with myself for eternity' (Golding, 1982, p.143). Once his death occurs, he no longer craves a survival as he has achieved this in both his life and legacy:

> BAKER: I think you've been given that power and that your visions have been effective and that they will endure in this thing we call literary history.
>
> GOLDING: As long as they endure somewhere. I suppose it's one's bid for immortality, a poverty-stricken bid when one thinks of some poetry and some theatre, but if novels are what you write, that's what you write. You can't win 'em all (1982, p.170).

5.7 Hanna Segal on The Spire

I would like to follow with a close reading of Segal's paper, 'Delusion and Artistic Creativity: Some Reflexions on Reading "The Spire" by William Golding' (1974). I have chosen to look at Segal due to her use of *thematic analysis*: using the text to support certain psychoanalytic ideas - in this case on the depressive position and reparation. I aim to follow her model for my own analysis, using the Immortality Phantasy as my tool of exploration. This is with the explicit intention of being able to set Segal's ideas against my own, to test if one can provide a more explanatory tool than the other.

According to Segal, the spire which Jocelin attempts to construct, represents a phallic offering to God. Jocelin manipulates the characters within the novel and one particular couple he voyeuristically observes are Goody and Roger, 'Their union results in a baby, but this is not allowed: the baby dies and kills Goody in the process…The sexual parents, manipulated by Jocelin, are not allowed to build a baby: they are only allowed to build Jocelin's spire' (1974, p.137). Segal suggests the spire is a sign of omnipotence, Jocelin's desire to 'reach heaven and stand forever as an object of universal admiration' (p.137). Through the building of the spire, Jocelin must destroy his parents in phantasy (represented by the two couples), 'Jocelin's building of the spire is the building of a delusion – the delusion that the parents never had potency, or creativity' (p.137). 'Wherever the signs of sexual potency are found they are destroyed anew' (Segal, 1974, p.137). The parents cannot have sexuality, there can be no baby. Segal demonstrates the extremity of this denial when, at the end of the novel, Jocelin's aunt informs him that his appointment as Dean of the Cathedral was solely due to a favour she requested after an occasion of lovemaking with the king:

> Confronted with this knowledge, he realizes that the whole foundation of his inner world, represented by the cathedra, was false. He has to admit that the sexual parents existed and that it is he in his own mind who has murdered them. The spire sways and threatens to collapse. Despair sets in, and the collapse of his omnipotent fantasy becomes the collapse of himself, as he had developed no other relation to his internal parents that he could turn to: 'they never taught him to pray' (Segal, 1974, p.138).

She notes Golding's reference of the spire as phallus, highlighting that it is this part of the building that is used to drive out Pangall. She explains:

> Heterosexually the spire-penis is meant to reach Heaven-mother (after Goody's death Jocelin has a fantasy of the spire reaching Goody in heaven and she is confused in his mind with the Virgin Mary). Seen homosexually the Spire is an offering to God the Father. His relationship with God is felt in quite physical terms. The angel that warms his back, and becomes later indistinguishable from the devil, is felt as a sexual penetration by God (Segal, 1974, p.137).

Segal offers up a demonstration of some of the sexual themes that run through the book, later contrasting them with Jocelin's denouncing of sexuality. It is impossible for him to accept sexuality in case it undermines his creativity:

> This building, of his own self and his own omnipotent potency, is done on the basis of the total destruction of his parents. His parents are represented by the two sterile couples, Pangall and Goody, Roger and Rachel (1974, p.137).

These are the symbolic four pillars that he has built his spire on but they are 'hollow'. Segal suggests that it is through Jocelin's manipulation that the couple of Goody and Roger come together, caught in his controlling tent and she says (p.137) that through projective identification he can achieve control over them and sexual gratification

Another theme that Segal draws upon is that of delusion: Jocelin's phantasy that led him to build his ill-fated spire, 'the delusion that the parents never had potency or creativity' (1974, p.137). However, once again, she ties this to the attempt of Jocelin to halt any sexual activity in phantasy or reality between anyone else, lest it cost him the creativity needed for the spire. Segal ties this cluster of issues to the potential struggles of the author, William Golding:

> But, as in every work of art, the novel contains also the story of its own creation and it expresses the problems, conflicts and doubts about the author's own creativity. The agonizing question that the artist poses himself is: 'Is my work a creation or a delusion?' (1974, p. 138).

Segal questions the relationship between Jocelin and the author, concluding that '...the artist's work, in particular, has one of its roots in destructiveness' (1974, p.138). She cites Adrian Stokes who suggests that destruction must occur, before creativity can, be it the

staining of the white paper or the breaking of stone, 'and from that moment they feel committed to the restoration represented by completing the work of art' (1974, p.138).

Segal highlights splitting in infants as the point of ambivalence and crucial to the start of reparation:

> As at that early stage of development the infant feels his wishes and fantasies to be omnipotent, he feels that the parents thus attacked become fragmented and destroyed, and he introjects them as such into his internal world (Segal, 1974, p.138).

Segal compares this idea to Jocelin's 'cellarage', the pit at the bottom of the spire, unleashing the stench of dead bodies. But with this phantasised destruction, the infant also feels guilt and seeks to bring about reparation and restoration to the damaged parents (Segal, 1974). She suggests that the creativity of the artist is their attempt to make whole again their damaged parents and the fragmented inner world. However, whereas the artist must make reparations, Jocelin has no such desire - he expects the destruction of the parents. Segal adds, 'The delusion-formation on the other hand, perpetuates the guilt by repeating the crime, as in Jocelin's case his repetitive destruction of the parental sexual couple and their cild [*sic*]' (1984, p.139). But she returns once again to her understanding of the differences between Jocelin and his ways, and the artist in their bid for reparation. She suggests that for Jocelin, he lives, breathes and becomes the spire. There is no separation. The artist, on the other hand, has the ability to symbolically represent elements of his internal world. He does not wish to escape truth and realities as Jocelin does, but to be in 'search of the psychic truth', understanding both his external and internal world (Segal, 1974).

> Jocelin is wholly narcissistic; his creator is obviously aware of the reality of human relationships and capable of reintegrating what has been split and destroyed in the act of writing his book. Where Jocelin's spire will soon collapse, William Golding's cathedral and spire stand complete (1974, p.140).

Segal's paper is an effective attempt at giving a brief examination of some themes within the novel, but also in how the main character warns its author (and the reader) against the perils and dangers of omnipotent narcissism and over consumption in their work. My own opinion formed of Jocelin is slightly more delicate than Segal's: successive

reading of the book exposes a more sympathetic view of Jocelin to emerge, backed up further by Golding's own vehement support of Jocelin's vision being real, as previously mentioned. It is possible with enlightened understanding to view the web of creativity that Jocelin is stuck in – his compulsion to create against all adversity. In contrast to Segal, I do not see him as 'voyeur', receiving sexual gratification from the affair of Goody and Roger. This affair deeply pains him, perhaps due to the narcissistic injury it has caused, and conversely to Segal's opinion, I think it is precisely because he *cannot* control it, that it hurts him so thoroughly. The remaining part of the chapter uses the Immortality Phantasy as an explanatory tool to discuss the crucial themes highlighted in the novel.

5.8 Creativity and Destruction: The Immortality Phantasy within The Spire

I have hypothesised in this thesis, that there exists within us an *Immortality Phantasy*. This complex idea proposes that there is a symbolic matrix, representing the pivotal point of defusion between the life and death instincts, which allows for the release of both destructive and creative energies. Following this hypothesis, in response to the first identifications made with the Oedipal parent, a necessary desexualisation of the libido occurs, a sublimation of the life instinct, allowing for a healthy integration of the parent in the superego. With this occurrence, the death instinct, now defused from the life instinct, is also allowed free reign within the ego, usually seeking retribution for its Oedipal desires (becoming the destructive instinct). The sublimation allows for the release of creativity, in place of a sexual act, but it is also accompanied by the destructive instinct. The more creativity that occurs, the freer the destructive instinct is to administer its punition against the defenceless ego, in response to its Oedipal desires. Where the defusion occurs, this symbolic point, is the enjoyable point where destruction and creativity are released and we can repeat this in a variety of actions. We crave the repetition of this excitement, this original defusion, mainly because when we have survived the wrath of the Oedipal parent and the destruction that accompanies sublimation, our goodness and our strength are reinforced. But where object relations are not built on solid foundations, there is the desire to over create, accompanied by destruction, as seen in Jocelin – the survival can be clung on to, but the repetition diminishes the power of the ego to defend against the destruction

and the death instinct can emerge victorious. The Immortality Phantasy, moderated by a secure ego, allows for a survival to occur and to make attempts to reunite the destructive and creative energies into a fusion of instincts. However, with inadequate object relations – usually stemming for damage in parental (especially Oedipal) relationships, the Immortality Phantasy grows in strength, the oscillations between creativity and destruction grow. It is this moment of defusion between the life and death instinct, as a result of making identifications with the Oedipal parent and desexualising certain aspects. My hypothesis suggests that when this occurs, the Oedipus complex is not properly repressed, as the repetitions of the defusion and the sublimation are constantly repeated and are released as creativity. With the constant sublimation of the life instinct, the death instinct is given free rein to seek retribution from the ego for its Oedipal desires. In a desexualised form, we see the transmogrification of the original Oedipal phantasy into creative acts (literature, art, music). Perhaps the most distressing element, however, is the acceptance that the father cannot be overthrown – there is a reality acceptance that you cannot destroy the father and the ego must come to terms with this. However, *survival* of the retribution of the parents and their wrath at the Oedipal phantasies of destruction becomes the reward and this is the repetition that is held on to. The feeling of survival. The re-enactment of this struggle is responsible for the oscillation between mania and melancholia in the creative artist, and their creativity and destruction that so often accompanies them. This symbolic point of survival must be repeated for the ego to survive. The act of creation is an attempt at reparation and to make whole the injured parent, attacked in phantasy. They must survive the retributions of the parent and accept the consequences. However, this survival must be tested through destruction. The Immortality Phantasy is the desire for survival over a destructive situation in consequence of the Oedipus complex and sublimation. The desexualised libido is useless to defend itself against the perils of the death instinct (destructive instinct), but *is* useful as creative energy, as it is the ego's last defence against destruction. But what about the role of survival? Is there evidence to support this key concept of the Immortality Phantasy?

Having explored *The Spire* in detail, there can be no doubt of the interconnection between creativity and destruction. The two sit hand in hand, via a number of themes – Jocelin's building (extension) of the church, alongside his destruction of the church; his relationship to God and his relationship to the devil; his desire for life and his hatred of it. Perhaps one of the most potent themes running through the novel is that of the Oedipal relationship that Jocelin has with God and the subsequent relationships that develop as a result of this. Oedipal relationships and identifications lay down the foundations for our ability to create and our subsequent relationship, as well as dictating the strength of our Immortality Phantasy. There appear to be two primary parental figures that feature in Jocelin's life: God and his Aunt. His Aunt appears as a highly eroticised character who is only recognised for her love-making and desire to be buried in the church. Little more about her is known but we can take these ideas as a starting point. Equally, we know little about God in respect to Jocelin's relationship to him. Jocelin wants to be the good son and build himself a platform to worship him from but we soon realise this has little to do with God and he is pushed further and further out of Jocelin's mind and his life. He is in awe of his Aunt's sexuality – it both amazes and repulses him – disturbing his ideas on sexuality and his relationship to love. In his waking thoughts, sexuality is forbidden and taboo. However, as he becomes more and more exposed to it during the building of his spire, the more he desires it against his wishes; the destruction associated to sex is released via his creation. His phantasies are given away through his erotic dreams, brought on by the devil (representing the feminine parent, the ultimate tormentor), pitted against God (the father he must overthrow). God is the Almighty, the ultimate omnipotent power and force that Jocelin has been forced to worship his entire life. Now, he seizes his chance to overthrow God, to survive the wrath of the Oedipal father. However, his Aunt, through her sexuality (and perhaps as part of her own reparation and guilt), exalts Jocelin's position at far too young an age, she pushes him, extends him, too high, too fast, as he does his spire. Jocelin identifies with her a*spir*ations so that he himself becomes the ultimate 'Father' within the church, before he can process his relationship to his own father. It is his belief that to identify with the elusive God, he must build him a spire, a place where he can be worshipped from up high, he claims, but in truth, Jocelin wants to worship him from a

more equal level. His first true identification with his father is through his model spire – the beginnings of the idea that will take him up to his father. There is a *sublimation* that occurs – his love for his father, no doubt ambiguous in his Oedipal developments, is now transplanted onto the model spire, a creation, his desexualised love projected onto an inanimate object. Although the spire itself is now eroticised, his life instinct has been desexualised as a result of this sublimation. There is a defusion of instinct that occurs concurrently with the release of creativity: the destructive instinct. The death instinct has been turned against Jocelin's own ego, kept both inside to become destructive energy and outside, against his four pillars, and it is this point – this sublimation and this release of destructive energy that Jocelin wrestles with throughout the novel. The two are inextricable and the stronger his creative desires grow, the more forceful the destruction that occurs. In place of sexuality is the symbolic creation of a giant phallus, to demonstrate his own potency, his omnipotence. His desire is to over throw his father, God - his Oedipal wishes are disguised but not resolved and his confusion over sexuality (his over sexual aunt, but his abstemious father) are manifested in the complicated object relations that he fails to form.

When the erotic instinct is desexualised, sublimated (put in to something inanimate), the destructive instinct which has been turned against the ego is given free rein to torture and destroy. Freud warns of the dangers of the 'pure life instincts', as well as 'pure death instincts' (1924, p.164), the latter of which is more obviously seen in suicide or murder. But what of the pure life instincts? I would contend that Freud may be referring to an *over creativity*, as perfectly demonstrated by Jocelin, leading to the same inevitable conclusions as the pure death instincts, disguised as a different path. The higher he builds, the more he opens himself and those around him up to destruction. In times of manic creativity, the destruction is projected onto those around (or in the case of manic-depressive writers, onto the page). The recipient here is Roger Mason – the ultimate creative master who is trapped in Jocelin's madness, forced to create that which will destroy. And, with the destruction of Goody, Roger falls into a deep melancholic depression that leads to his eventual attempt at suicide. Jocelin's ego remains under the

sway of the pure life instinct, creating his spire no matter the consequences. But his creativity is hand in hand with destruction – the two are inseparable and Jocelin's physical well-being becomes worse and worse. He neglects his body, his work and his God. He denies his parents, he denies sexuality. He is slowly creating a nothingness for himself. The spire is an illusion, a phantasy, and the threat of its collapse exists both in the real world *and* in his phantasy life. This continual state of defusion is extremely dangerous, unsustainable, and Jocelin's death is inevitable.

Part of my hypothesis suggests that if the Oedipus complex is not fully repressed, or if there is a breakdown in primal object relations, excessive sublimation occurs. The identification made with the Oedipal parent, should lead to the development of the superego. In this case, Jocelin is internalising the idealised, absent and knowingly punitive father figure of God. He has no relationship model to follow, his projections of fear and anxiety have never been received by a good mother. Instead, they are transferred into God, who is then internalised, with disastrous consequences. His desperate attempts to create reflect his attempts at identifications with God, but this identification is itself warped, as he wants to become God, to become Father to those around him. To dominate through his creation. A phantasy that he too can become immortal, can survive all others. The pit swallows his objects one by one, but not him. He survives them, only reinforcing his omnipotence, his narcissism and his Immortality Phantasy to its extreme. The Oedipus complex is not properly repressed and the repetitions of the defusion and the sublimation need to be constantly *repeated* throughout life and are released as creativity. The necessity of this repetition stems from an avoidance of dealing with the complications of passing through the Oedipus complex and creativity moves from a passive action, into an active necessity. Under the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, extremely creative people *need* to create. It becomes an obligation, a way of life, a requirement to repeat these sublimated identifications with the punitive aspect of the Oedipal parent. In Jocelin's case, this is God's omnipotence. He desires God's omnipotence and God is the ultimate creator. Therefore, Jocelin *needs* to create - the creative act is compulsory for him. He knows the destruction that it opens him up to, but it is unavoidable, 'cost what you like' (Golding,

2005, p.35). Further exemplified, 'Where have I come to, he thought dizzily. What am I about to do? But what else can I do?' (2005, p.87). Jocelin must see it through to the inevitable destruction.

I would like to explore the idea of Oedipal desires and the themes of children and marriage a little further. Throughout the novel, Jocelin confuses his paternal and sexual feelings, especially highlighted by his feelings for Goody and the dumb sculptor. For him, building the spire is a replacement for reproduction. Jocelin has shown his contempt for childbirth, 'All at once it seemed to him that the renewing life of the world was a filthy thing' (Golding, 2005, p.58). He kills off Goody's child in phantasy, as this potential creation of his child-in-God and the master builder, would have undoubtedly been more powerful and omnipotent than Jocelin could ever be. He must remain desexualised in order to maintain his creative endeavours, but the spire can remain a symbol of his phallus sticking way into the sky, demonstrating his sexual potency, when he has none. He has always thought of Goody as a daughter; but when she is given sexuality through her affair with Roger, she becomes symbolic for him of lust and the devil, with her flaming red hair. Pangall was not a threat, as he is impotent, and neither is Rachel, as she always laughs at the crucial moment. But the combination of Roger and Goody horrifies Jocelin to his core. It would have destroyed him had he not been able to cling to his spire. And he does just this – he clings to it like it is his child, reminding himself that it is his creation, his own child, his power, born out of his desire for omnipotence:

> Jocelin stopped by the model, to encourage himself... and held the thing devoutly, like a relic. He caressed it gently, cradling it in his arms, and looking at it all over, as a mother might examine her baby (Golding, 2005, p.56).

But no sooner has he thought of the spire as mother, than he quickly dismisses the idea, 'Only he did not care to think of a mother. If he did, Goody with her hidden red hair would stab his mind and prick tears out of his eyes' (p.112). Goody has soiled his vision of a mother, an already fragile view. And his role as 'Father' came about only as the result of an affair between his Aunt and the King. Woman do not aid his creativity, he does not need them, especially in their failures of procreation. Therefore, Jocelin quickly replaces Goody with the dumb sculptor – silent, adoring, 'With a sudden rush of love, Jocelin threw

his arms round the young man and embraced him, clinging to him as a pillar on a tree. My son, my son!' The sculptor reflects the desired parts of himself, humble, containing his creations. He appeals to Jocelin's narcissism and his Immorality Phantasy. The sculptor will provide eternal survival: Jocelin – exalted to Godly levels, mouth open. Even in death the sculptor is there with him, ensuring his immortality through his tomb. Jocelin can accept him as a son, as he poses no threat to his creativity, he aids it, evolving his narcissism, leaving Jocelin free to love and cherish him. Creativity is the most esteemed of characteristics to Jocelin, contrasted to his disgust and fear of reproductive creativity.

We accept from Freud that with the sublimation (desexualisation) of the life instinct, the death instinct is given free rein in the ego to punish it and seek retribution for its Oedipal wishes (to overthrow the father). We see both the fear of retribution and the necessary acceptance that the father *cannot* be overthrown. I propose through the Immortality Phantasy that, ultimately, we all desire survival and that this can be achieved through creative endeavours, in place of an actual survival. Conversely, extremely creative people often phantasise the survival of theory creations, over their own survival, as described earlier by Golding himself. If Jocelin can overthrow God, he has survived the *ultimate* Oedipal parent. When he finally admits he cannot survive God, he gives in to the destruction he has wreaked on himself and an acceptance, almost welcoming, of death follow. His death is an acceptance of retribution and punishment for his actions, and for trying to overthrow God. The immortality phantasy suggests that, through the creative acts that occur as a result of sublimation, something tangible is laid down, demonstrating that, although the ego is (almost willingly) being punished by the critical superego (as a result of the feared retribution from the punitive parents), it is also *surviving*. Survival becomes the ultimate reward, with creativity used as a survival mechanism *against* the destructive instinct that terrorises the ego. When creativity stops, there is no longer any protection and the individual can succumb to its total destruction. But it is this *survival* that then becomes desired and needs *repetition* and the only way to do this is through a re-enactment of the struggle between the life and death instincts, essential to the creative artist. Jocelin reflects this idea as he confides to Roger:

> You and I were chosen to do this thing together. It's a great glory. I see now it'll destroy us of course. What are we, after all? Only I tell you this, Roger, with the whole strength of my soul. The thing can be built and will be built, in the very teeth of Satan (Golding, 2005, p.88).

This example demonstrates how aware he is of the relationship between creativity and destruction, as so many creative artists are. They are conscious of the ability of destruction to take over and it is this idea that makes their creations, their tangible demonstrations of survival, so important. For Jocelin, creating the spire will be the ultimate demonstration of his survival as he would have achieved his creation against all odds and all beliefs, 'So this is how I shall be built in, two hundred feet up, on every side of the tower, mouth open proclaiming day and night till doomsday?' (2005, p.24). He demonstrates his narcissistic belief in his immortality - Jocelin will be immortalised through his creation, even though it will destroy him. There is a telling point in the novel, when these same heads in stone that the dumb sculptor has canonised Jocelin through, are thrown in to the pit in order to stop the movement. The pit swallows them up, as it will Jocelin. But he survives this and the sculptor simply makes more, encouraging Jocelin's omnipotence rather than dissuading him. It is representative of the need to identify with the father, to master the Oedipus complex by overthrowing the father and by cementing one's place as the creative father that will live on for eternity. At the same time, Jocelin has finally managed to control the master builder as the puppet of his creation, and revels in this victory:

> Then Jocelin understood that it was partly the power of his own head that was thrusting the master builder up, up, and would continue to do so, until by some contrivance of his art, he swung the great cross into place, four hundred feet in the air at the spire's top (Golding, 2005, p.94).

This would be his crowning moment – he has survived God. God has set him a task that the world wants him to fail, but if he achieves it, the ultimate creation, then he is one with God. He has changed the Oedipal landscape – he has overthrown his father, he is now the Father of the church. It is the ultimate test of survival – the Immortality Phantasy completed, but we know that destruction is inevitable. As his spire climbs higher and higher, his narcissism increases and he becomes tangled in the world of the characters that he draws up with him, 'I never knew how much it would mean, he thought. I tried to draw

a few simple lines on the sky; and now my will has to support a whole world up there...' (pp. 95-96). His creativity has taken over all else. Jocelin demonstrates the narcissistic *need* to create and the pain that so often accompanies this. It is a chore to do the work, but it is essential. It is a reliving of the survival over the Oedipal parent and it is for this reason that omnipotence or narcissism so often accompanies the creative act. It is often unpleasurable, but compelling, and we can witness the need to experience the defusion of instinct repetitively – it is the Immortality Phantasy at work.

5.9 Conclusion

The critical Oedipal theme of the novel runs all the way through, tying up Jocelin's relationships to the other characters in the novel. We learn a lot about Jocelin by understanding his Oedipal beginnings, his complicated relationships between desiring a child and fear of having his creativity robbed, alongside his quest to be *the* father and defeat his father, God, by becoming the ultimate creator. At the end of the novel, he discovers that he is not worthy to be called Father; he was never chosen by God; his elevated position was through his Aunt's immoral sexuality; there is nothing left for him but total destruction: pure death instinct. His creations have been phantasies, his folly; he has no potency, no creativity. It has all been false and he succumbs to a necessary death. There is no longer an Immortality Phantasy to push him forward and his death is welcomed. It is a tragic ending to a tragic story of delusion and destruction.

Examining Golding's novel using the paradigm of the Immortality Phantasy, allows for a more sympathetic and more involved reading of the novel, especially with regards to Jocelin's relationship to his creativity and to God as the father. My hypothesis links creativity to destruction, via an exploration of the critical relationship between the life and death instincts, and the need for creativity to enforce a necessary and phantasised destruction, usually in retribution for failed or damaged object relations. This is most noticeably demonstrated through a desire for survival, where the individual has survived the wrath of the Oedipal parents, or the transference of destruction that they have internalised as deserved. This survival must be repeated as often as possible for the fragile

ego and this is achieved through the survival of *destruction*. In the creative individual, this is modified and we see that destruction is necessary.

Via the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, we can use literature to highlight and demonstrate this symbolic matrix that represents the pivotal point of defusion between the life and death instincts, which allows for the repetition of the Immortality phantasy – a result of Oedipal identifications that leads to creativity through sublimation, but also the release of the defused death instinct and the resulting destruction. Through this postulation, we can understand where Jocelin's excessive desire for creativity and the accompanying destruction has come from, and understand his need for survival through the Immortality phantasy. This is a unique approach and it is my contention that it offers more of an understanding of the story and the role of the characters in the novel than Segal's analysis can, and is consequently more useful for literary criticism. The illumination of the central relationships, and a more sympathetic approach to Jocelin, using the hypothesis of the desire for survival to understand his motivation, allows the Immortality Phantasy approach to achieve more explanatory revelations than Segal's model does. The Immortality Phantasy gives us additional tools to dig our way through Golding's novel, which skilfully warns us of the danger of excessive creativity, and the impossibility of extracting it from destruction.

CHAPTER SIX: A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHICAL EXPLORATION OF MRS DALLOWAY, BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

'The beauty of the world…has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish'
(Woolf, 1929)

6.1 Part 1: An Introduction to the Aims of this Chapter and to Virginia Woolf

6.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to test the value of using the Immortality Phantasy as a framework to examine the role of creative activity, asking if this hypothesis can bring something new to the work of Virginia Woolf, more than other theories can? I have opted to use *psychobiographical analysis* for this task, as the close links between her own creativity and destruction cannot be ignored. Does the analysis of elements of her own life, allows for enlightenment of the characters on the page? I focus especially on her novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, written in 1925, revealing the characters on the page to be representations of her internal state and the conflict between creativity and destruction. The chapter is split into two halves, one examining the background to the writer, drawing on the expertise of well-known Woolf scholars; whilst the second tests the validity of the Immortality Phantasy as a tool to advance the psychoanalytic exploration of the novel, enriching our experience of both plot and character.

To carry out a successful psychobiographical analysis, I have followed the examples of others who have attempted to do the same thing (Sigmund Freud and Alma Halbert Bond, amongst others). This methodology offers up a psychological evaluation of some of the most important events of an individual's life and it is an exemplary method to find links between creative artists and their works. However, psychobiographical analysis is not without its critics, who often point out that psychobiography too readily matches personality to the artist, often with little evidence. We have the desire to fit the subject to

our theory or hypothesis, to find evidence where perhaps there is none. This is a pitfall I will maintain an awareness of.

In the study of *Mrs Dalloway*, I will use Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith as the representations of creativity and destruction, respectively. I have chosen these characters because they demonstrate key components of the plot and are crucial to the climax of the novel: Clarissa's party. Septimus's suicide is one of the most impactful episodes in the novel and, as almost all Woolf scholars notice, he serves as the female protagonist's complicated double. I have attempted an analysis of *Mrs Dalloway* (using the chosen characters) from a Freudian angle, combined with a Kleinian perspective, against an analysis using the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis.

6.1.2 Psychobiography as a Psychoanalytic Methodology

One of the greatest and most challenging aspects of a psychoanalytical study, is that there is no set methodology for doing a validity test on any hypothesis. Unlike some of the sciences, we cannot show that the results explicitly prove or disprove a hypothesis – every result is subjective in many ways and the pitfalls are numerous. This chapter will be presented as a psychobiography. The characters in literature are assigned the same qualities as real people and a character's behaviour is explained, 'through a "discovery" of his unconscious motives, treating the text as a case study' (Baudry, 1984, p.569). Within the realm of psychobiography, there are an additional set of problems, especially in relation to transferences, reductionism, and depersonalisation. As Sanja Bahun warns:

> Animated by the vicissitudes of Woolf's mental health, psychobiographical assessments of her work often neglect the realities of text as well as those social contexts that do not conform to the inevitably limited interpretation posed by a symptom-driven biography. Once transformed into a 'damaged thing', Virginia Woolf becomes an easy prey to simplistic arguments (Bahun in Randall/Goldman, 2012, pp.100-101).

Bahun highlights the possible oversimplification of treating text as a case-study, or immediately projecting onto writing, suitable psychoanalytic labels that do not take into account the actual texts we examine:

> Unsurprisingly, then, scholars commonly option [*sic*] for either Freudian or Kleinian reading, pitching their theories of subjectivity against each other and sometimes unwittingly replicating an obsolete vision of psychoanalysis as a series of disengaged cliques or conceptual niches (2012, p.102).

So, how does one protect themselves against Bahun's critique of psychobiography? To engage with Freud or Klein is an essential part of a defence of theoretical development. To avoid the 'cliques' and 'niches' she describes, involves 'a negotiation of both psychoanalytic frameworks – and of, I would add, many other psychoanalytic discourses' (2012, p.102). Psychoanalysis should be used sensitively to navigate and aid our understanding of Woolf, with the intention of highlighting new ideas or readings within her work; but the pitfall of inserting Woolf's life or writing into a psychoanalytical framework for paradigmatic ease, must be avoided. The validity of psychobiography as a methodology has always been questioned, ever since it was pioneered by Freud in his 1910 paper on Leonardo de Vinci (making up part of a larger methodology called *Psychohistory*). The main criticisms are due to its attempt to match up personality to the artist, as well as for being too 'reductionist'. I have also looked briefly at the work of Alma Halbert Bond and her book, *Who Killed Virginia Woolf: An Autobiography* (2000), as although not the only attempt to connect life and literature, this is a clearly defined attempt at a 'psychobiography' and was chosen for this reason.

Freud would later team up with Bullitt to offer a psychobiographical study of Woodrow Wilson, something Freud later regretted and refused to be associated to. This sharp turn around demonstrates the difficulties associated to this mode of study, mainly criticised for its attempt to too readily match personality to the artist, becoming too reductionist. Freud does defend the methodology, however, by demonstrating that an intuitive psychobiographical interpretation is a valid tool of exploration, as it offers up insights into the mind of the subject beyond the scope of a normal biography. In the case of Leonardo da Vinci, he uses the knowledge of the artist's homosexuality, his scientific abilities and his artistic productions to put forward an informed image of the painter, his childhood, and especially the development of his sexuality through the relationship to his parents. He concludes:

> This interpretation by the psychological novelist cannot be put to the proof, but it can claim so much inner probability, and is so much in harmony with all that we otherwise know of Leonardo's emotional activity, that I cannot refrain from accepting it as correct (Freud, 1910, p.105).

Alma Halbert Bond presents a well-organised psychobiography of Virginia Woolf, offering up some interesting insights into her life and putting forward a valid interpretation of key events and characters that defined her life, behaviour, and eventual death. As she describes:

> Since we do not have "the patient", Virginia Woolf, before us to confirm or deny our speculation, we, like the psychoanalyst, will attempt to use her writing and the anecdotes about her as free associations to help understand certain problems in her personality (Bond, 2000, p.37).

However, her book leans heavily on the psychogenesis of her manic-depression as being a response to the roles of her family and loved ones. Whilst this may be accurate, there is much less attention paid to the role of creativity as a method of escape, catharsis, and reparation. Her texts are not examined in much detail, unless they offer a direct evidential link to an idea Bond is surmising, which I argue largely ignores a whole aspect of Woolf's life. I aim to demonstrate more of an understanding of the characters on the page as crucial representations of elements of Woolf's own life world – internal and external and potentially leading us to a more informed understanding of her suicide. I argue that Virginia Woof provides an incredibly valuable example of the enduring relevance of Freud's instinctual model, aiding an understanding of the relationship between creativity and destruction.

Following the examples of Freud and Bond, I have determined my own methodological outline, breaking down aspects of Virginia Woolf's life into the following subcategories:

- *The Troubled Life of Virginia Stephens*: exploring her childhood, focusing on key events and characters from this period.

- *Becoming Virginia Woolf*: her adult life and relationships, including a discussion of her sexuality.

- *Creative endeavours*: this section explores Woolf's relationship to the efficacious Bloomsbury Group, the setting up of the Hogarth Press, her relationship to Freud and her many other creative endeavours.

- *Melancholia:* Virginia Woolf's relationship to destruction. This includes a discussion of her depression and her periods of institutionalisation. This will be supported by exerts of text and diary entries.

However, I have differed slightly in my approach to psychobiographical analysis to both Freud and Bond, as I strive to 'test' whether my Immortality Phantasy hypothesis aids our understanding of creativity better than other theories do. Does my hypothesis bring something to literary criticism that other theories do not? To ensure I achieve this, I have added a close analysis of the final scene, considering aspects of Woolf's own creativity and destruction and exploring how we can examine these extremes in relation to the chosen characters. This analysis uses the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis as its guide, revealing the repetitious elements described in the hypothesis, the painful struggle of creativity, and the role of survival. This is then set against a Freudian/Kleinian analysis to allow for a comparison of effectiveness in revealing the underlying subtleties of the text.

6.1.3 Virginia Woolf

I have chosen to explore Virginia Woolf in this thesis, as, not only is she a prominent, successful writer, but she exemplifies the complexities of creativity and is as known for her episodes of mania and melancholia, as she is for her creative writing. To the advantage of the Woolf fan, there is a large array of both primary and secondary source materials available for the study of her life; from diaries and letters, to numerous biographies. In addition, she greatly blurs the lines between fiction and autobiography in her novels so that

we can view many of the places or characters she describes, as representations of her real life.

Freud died two years before Virginia Woolf, in 1939, the only year that they met, despite their close associations. It is reported that Freud gave Woolf a narcissus on this one occasion, demonstrating his analysis of her symptoms. Berman suggests in *The Talking Cure* (1987), that it was a tragedy for Woolf that, despite printing all of Freud's work, she did not engage in psychoanalytic therapy, instead she was 'treated' by the Sir George Savage, a well-known psychiatrist who it is said the character of Sir William Bradshaw is based on, in *Mrs Dalloway* (Berman, 1987, p.329), 'The results were catastrophic…Woolf bitterly resented the prohibition from work, and her long history of psychiatric treatment – none of which involved modern depth psychology – contributed to her despair' (Berman, 1987, p.329). Despite their lack of a personal relationship, the two writer's lives were certainly intertwined and there is no doubt that Woolf would have read much of Freud's work, especially as the Hogarth Press was responsible for printing his life's work. There is much speculation about why the two did not engage in discussions about life, or letters back and forth as both were so fond of doing. Hinshelwood, in his paper 'Virginia Woolf and Psychoanalysis' (1990), sheds some light on this and recalls how despite her less than complimentary remarks about both Freud and psychoanalysis in her diaries, this was more a reflection on Woolf herself than on psychoanalysis, or her feelings towards it:

> This, however, is less telling evidence than appears at first sight since she was scathing about everyone and everything in her diaries. It was part of her relentless internal destructiveness which no doubt could be related to her manic-depressive illness. It was not specific to her knowledge of psychoanalysis (Hinshelwood, 1990, p.367).

Hinshelwood draws a conclusion that there can be no doubt that the Woolfs and many of the Bloomsbury set were well acquainted with Freud and his writing. It is certainly known, that Leonard Woolf read some of Freud's work, raising the notion that Leonard turned to Freud in order to look for solutions to Virginia's psychosis and that Virginia turned away from Freud, in fear of him achieving success in curing her madness (Hinshelwood, 1990).

The ‘disease’ was her identity - part of her necessary, repetitive, circulatory relationship with creativity. Hinshelwood offers an additional explanation, concerning sexuality:

> The Woolfs, like many of the others who retained merely a 'cultural' interest in psychoanalysis, whether they were for it or against it, did not seem to consider psychoanalysis as a therapeutic tool, and certainly not one they might avail themselves of. Keynes and Lytton Strachey's suspicions of the attitude to homosexuals may have significantly affected other members of the Bloomsbury Group, including Virginia with her uncertain sexual inclinations (Hinshelwood, 1990, p.369).

In addition, Hinshelwood suggests firstly, that Virginia Woolf’s framework for creating her novels was her own version of an analysis – a psychological paradigm simply approached in a different way. Her insights came through storytelling, not analysis. Secondly:

> Alix Strachey (1972) regarded Virginia Woolf's creativity as somehow especially related to her madness and her capacity to be swept away by fantasy. She believed that Leonard Woolf made a decision against seeking a psychoanalysis for Virginia Woolf (Hinshelwood, 1990, p.370).

This suggests that Leonard too, felt that Virginia’s creativity and destruction were tied together and that by removing her madness, she would lose her creative abilities.

To aid my complex navigation of the events of Virginia Woolf’s life, I have chosen a biography by Hermione Lee. Lee has, not only written extensively on Woolf to much critical acclaim, but she is well known for her study of women’s literature and maintains a sensitive view of Virginia Woolf’s life, sustaining a balance between the necessary inferences made as a result of life events, whilst attempting to avoid jumping to conclusions too readily. I have chosen her above other biographers because of her style of writing – well written and extremely detailed. It is also clearly organised so that it is easy to trace the key relationships and the most significant events in her life. Lee has been selected over the most popular choice of biographer, Quentin Bell, who has the advantage of knowing Virginia Woolf intimately, as he is the son of Vanessa Bell - Virginia’s beloved sister. It could be argued that he has knowledge of the family that no one else does. However, this carries a danger of subjectivity with it – he was personally involved in

matters of the family and therefore his view will no doubt be informed by his experiences and by his relationship to his mother. Thus, to avoid any potential pitfalls associated to this closeness and to follow perhaps a more objective view, I have chosen Hermione Lee over Quentin Bell.

6.1.3.1 The troubled life of Virginia Stephens

Virginia Woolf, was born Adeline Virginia Stephens in 1882 to a wealthy and creatively gifted family, but her life was anything but happy and content. Instead, her childhood was plagued by illness, death and tragedy, leading to a preoccupation with death and suicide in her adult life and subjecting her to a lifetime battle with depression. Even before she was born, her parents suffered from an over exposure to death which changed the course of their lives and consequently Virginia's. Adeline was a name given to Virginia in memory of her troubled Aunt, who died just before Virginia was conceived. The name Virginia was added later, both as a nod to the affluent Lady Somers, but also an attempt to remove the stigma of death associated to the name Adeline (Lee, 1997). Her mother, Julia, bore seven children in all – three from her first marriage to Herbert Duckworth – who died whilst she was pregnant with Virginia's half-brother Gerald (who would later go on to abuse Virginia). Her father, Leslie Stephens, also suffered the loss of his spouse, Minny. Together, they had one daughter, Laura, who was to cause considerable strife for Virginia and her family for the rest of her life. Virginia refers to her very little and saw her as something irritating, embarrassing, and irrelevant. She showed the girl very little kindness. It is open to interpretation whether Laura was mildly retarded, perhaps autistic, or simply a little girl who struggled greatly with the loss of her mother at such a young age and who was a misfit in her new family. Either way, she cut a tragic figure and provided acute stress for the family. Even when Virginia was born, her mother was away a lot, tending to sick relatives before they died, on account of her (limited) nursing skills. Julia suffered from the continual death of family members for the first 10 years of Virginia's life. Her father on the other hand, suffered and struggled greatly with his creative endeavours, although they also made him extremely well-known and wealthy. His greatest literary

attempt, the *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)*, robbed him of his health and put a great strain on his relationships with his wife and children.

Virginia had a complex relationship with her siblings, perhaps because they all suffered from the same melancholic afflictions, no doubt from shared family tragedy. The youngest brother, Adrian, perhaps felt the deaths within the family the deepest and was prone to severe depressions. Her older brother, Thoby was, on the whole, emotionally absent to Virginia, although she adored him. It is suspected that he attempted suicide on several occasions as a young boy. Lee notes that he was stabbed through the femoral artery in his leg by a boy at school, although it was later revealed that this was with his permission. On several other occasions, he was found trying to climb out of the top windows at school. Vanessa, her oldest sister, was closest to Virginia. They were both creatively gifted (Vanessa was an accomplished artist) and therefore competitive with each other. They remained devoted to one another throughout their lives, albeit alongside periods of estrangement and hostility. The Duckworth children (from Julia's first marriage) were always kept at arm's length by the Stephens' family. Their half-brother, George, suffered greatly from the loss of his father at such a young age and therefore became extremely dependent and protective of his mother. Virginia demonstrated a fondness for him in her early life, but retrospectively in adulthood, he was remembered as a more villainous character whom she often satirised in her writing. Her half-sister, Stella, was something of an enigma to Virginia and was to some extent idolised for being a gentle, caring and beautiful girl. As a young woman, she was a strong social activist, doing much to help the poor in London, although this did not garner any respect from Virginia, who saw it as a waste of time – demonstrating her occasional lack of sensibility. Finally, Gerald – who was a rotund and rather pathetic child in Virginia's eyes, also suffering from an infantile dependence on his mother, as a result of the death of his father, which he maintained throughout his life.

With so much exposure to death for the parents and all of the children, it is no wonder Virginia maintained a preoccupation with it for the course of her life. However, their lives were to be plagued by much more tragedy. When Virginia was aged thirteen,

her beloved mother Julia died and she suffered the first of her many breakdowns. Woolf had adored her mother to such an extent that many suggest it disturbed the formation of her later relationships. Two years later, her half-sister, Stella, who had in the meantime become Virginia's surrogate mother, also passed away. She was to lose her father at aged twenty-two, which would lead to the first of her institutionalisations. Tragically, her brother, Thoby, died soon afterwards. So, Virginia Stephens' early life was shrouded by tragedy and death. The family had a cloud of melancholia over them that appeared to touch them all at some point in their lives. Death was a normal and sad part of Virginia's existence and no doubt influenced her lifelong battle with depression, as well as the formation of her relationships and the basis of her writing.

6.1.3.2 Becoming Virginia Woolf

Leonard Woolf was brought up in a relatively affluent lifestyle, until the sudden death of his father left the family penniless and opened Leonard up to a new world of economic strife (Lee, 1997). This left Leonard with little respect for women and Lee informs us that he wrote as a youngster in his notebook, 'Half the vileness of men is due to the fact that in childhood their natures are moulded in the hands of women' (Lee, 1997, p.299). His attitude towards women was clearly suggested in both his fictional work and his diary, making no attempts to hide his disdain. Consequently, his sexuality appears to be confused, although unlike many of his peers (at school and later at Cambridge), he did not appear to readily partake in homosexual activities, which was rife and indeed almost expected. Apart from the odd homoerotic, chauvinistic comment within his writing, there is no evidence to suggest that Leonard was actively homosexual and perhaps the label of 'asexual' is more accurate.

When Virginia Stephens was introduced to Leonard Woolf, it was certainly no great love affair. In fact, it is widely known that Leonard was more taken with Vanessa than Virginia. It was Lytton Strachey - a dear friend of Leonard's, a founder of the Bloomsbury Group and openly homosexual - who initiated an interaction between them, but it has been argued that their relationship was more of an arrangement to benefit Lytton

and Vanessa (who would be relieved of the burden of Virginia's 'madness') than of their love for each other. Lee describes Leonard's role:

> From 1912 onwards, when Leonard Woolf rather than the family became her close observer, her state of mind comes much more fully into focus. Leonard made Virginia's illness one of his life's works. He studied her mind for nearly thirty years, he says, 'with the greatest intensity'. And he documents her illness with the same scrupulous integrity, exhaustiveness and attempt at objectivity that he would apply to the minutes of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee…. From his minutely kept diaries…from his anxious and responsible letters at the time of her breakdowns, and from his memoirs, which circle repetitively and insistently over the story of her illness, a careful, clinical narrative emerges' (Lee, 1997, p.178).

It is also known that Virginia's fondness for Leonard prevented her from attempting suicide much sooner.

It has often been noted in diaries and by those who knew them that the couple were not very sexually active and it was more of a burden than an enjoyable act. Her relationship to sex suffered greatly for several reasons, one likely being due to her intense feelings for her mother, and the female deaths in her family that affected her feelings towards men and is possibly accountable for her relationship with Vita Sackville-West? With regards to Vita, perhaps Virginia was looking for a replacement mother after losing her own and then Stella so quickly? Perhaps to make reparations? According to Lee, 'Until Virginia was about sixteen…her knowledge of sex came entirely from reading about sodomy in Plato' (1997, p.125). In addition, there is the well-recorded sexual abuse that occurred at the hands of her step-brothers, George and Gerald Duckworth. Virginia claimed that after several parties George would undress her and fondle her. There is a scene within *The Voyage Out*, which is said to represent one of Virginia's interactions with George, and as Lee suggests, sets the tone for her lifelong lack of sexuality: 'Certainly this novel about the death of childhood and the confused awakening of adult sexuality ends with a sense of loss and grief' (1997, p.154). Later:

> When she is writing a memoir for herself, in her last years, it is noticeable that the whole business of George's sexuality…goes unmentioned. But then the memoir breaks off; and three months later she kills herself. If George's abuse is thought to explain her life and her

> death, there may be something sinister and telling about her silence at this point.' (Lee, 1997, p.155).

In 'A Sketch of the Past' from *Moments of Being* (2002), Virginia recalls one particular incident with Gerald:

> Once when I was very small Gerald Duckworth lifted me onto this, and as I sat there he began to explore my body. I can remember the feel of his hand going under my clothes; going firmly and steadily lower and lower. I remember how I hoped that he would stop; how I stiffened and wriggled as his hand approached my private parts too. I remember resenting, disliking it… (Woolf, 2002, p.82)

However, there is also a debate over the extent of the abuse. Could it have been fantasised by Virginia? There is always the question as to whether she is a reliable witness even to the events in her own life, substantiated by one conversation with Stella, after their mother died, that she recounts also in 'A Sketch of the Past':

> When Stella asked me to forgive her for having given me that shock, I cried – we had been crying off and on all day – and said, 'When I see mother, I see a man sitting with her'. Stella looked at me as if I had frightened her. Did I say that in order to attraction to myself? Or was it true? I cannot be sure, for certainly I had a great wish to draw attention to myself (p.107).

In addition, she had enjoyed removing the censorship from biographies she wrote on others, especially revealing the exploits of homosexual relationships (notably Roger Fry). As Lee observes, 'Virginia Woolf and her contemporaries are poised on the edge of the revolution which has turned biography into the iconoclastic, gossipy art-form it is now…' (1997, p.12). Perhaps therefore, one should take caution when laying too much of the blame about her sexuality at the hands of the Duckworth boys. However, at the same time, perhaps the truth is irrelevant and we must attend to Woolf's testimonies as both real and accurate, as they are legitimate testimonies in her mind and therefore *are* relevant to subsequent events in her life and certainly her frigidity going forward. Such an example was put forward by Freud in his paper, 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905), examining the case of 'Dora' and the sexual 'abuse' she has suffered. Here, he warns that whether an abuse is phantasised or real, the impact on the individual is the same and therefore needs to be taken as a real event, which it is in the mind of the individual.

During this period, Freud moved on in his theory of neurosis which involved the 'seduction theory' to, from 1897 onwards, the belief that there was a phantasy form of seduction that could be found in all children. However, this was also seen as a key part of hysteria, as Freud informs us in a footnote, 'I have already indicated that the majority of hysterical symptoms, when they have attained their full pitch of development, represent an imagined situation of sexual life – such as a scene of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, childbirth, confinement, etc.' (Freud, 1905, p.103).

Leonard was also an author and his first writings were said to be heavily influenced by Conrad and Kipling, after he was an 'employee of the Colonial Civil Service in Ceylon' (Lee,1997, p.298). It was well-documented that he had a strained relationship with his mother and from a young age was dissatisfied with religion and politics. The Woolf family were also thought to be intellectually inferior to the successful Stephens family and provided an academic ticket for Leonard that he could not achieve alone. In addition, Bond suggests that Virginia's madness was essential to their acceptance in the Bloomsbury Group and therefore perhaps not totally discouraged by Leonard. So, Leonard and Virginia's relationship appeared to be mutually beneficial. Their passions were reserved for other endeavours – in Leonard's case, this was intellectual pursuits; in Virginia's case, apart from her fits of psychosis, her greatest love affair was with Vita Sackville-West.

Vita too was a professional writer and her opinion mattered a great deal to Virginia. Their relationship lasted nearly ten years. Interestingly, amongst biographers, this relationship is the most widely speculated on, each with their own interpretation of the relationship. For Lee, it was Virginia who remained the more sensible in the relationship, with a mix of uncertainty and an inability to adequately express her love for Vita. Lee suggests that their letters demonstrated sexuality, love and passion, but Woolf's own diary was much more censored (Lee, 1997). Conversely, in Bond's mind, the relationship was much more one sided, with Virginia's love for Vita outweighing Vita's for her. She states that when Vita found other lovers after just a few months, Virginia was heartbroken and it led to one of her many breakdowns. Bond argues that this relationship was reminiscent of one with her mother, 'who replaced Virginia at eighteen months with her baby brother'

(Bond, 2000, p.119). However, she argues that the relationship managed to make an amount of reparation for previous female relationships and the hurt surrounding them. There can be no doubt either way, that Virginia's relationship to Vita was extremely important and we can see it exemplified in *Mrs Dalloway*, through the relationship between Clarissa and Sally Seton.

6.1.3.3 Creative Endeavours:

Coming from a literary family was an advantage for Virginia Woolf. She had been a part of the family's creative pursuits from a young age, starting with the *Hyde Park Gate News*, a compilation of stories and events from the Stephens' lives. Growing up, she was surrounded by academics and poets, which led to her becoming part of 'the Bloomsbury Group', an influential collection of individuals who represented a shift in both cultural and artistic paradigms. The group was started primarily by Thoby Stephens, Leonard Woolf, and their friends from Cambridge, including Lytton Strachey, around 1899. As a group of artists, writers and philosophers, they promoted one another's work and influenced the tide of attitude at the time. Virginia was one of the few female members, but perhaps is the most well-known of the group. They were modernist in their approach, attempting to move on from the Edwardian traditions that they found too austere, towards an appreciation of the aesthetic, literature, the family and 'streams of consciousness'. On the whole, they were a liberal group, although critics have also called them naïve, and it is thought that they were taken by surprise by the war and the devastation that accompanied it. It is also well-known that Virginia was horrified by the war and no doubt this would have added to her already complex relationship with death. The group remained in varying formats until the 1930s, when it eventually fizzled out.

In 1917, Virginia and Leonard also set up the Hogarth Press, a publishing house that they started from their Richmond home. Their desire was to be involved with the production of the best and most up-to-date writing they could find. The Hogarth Press still exists through Random House today. While under the care of the Woolf's, it grew from something of a hobby – an effective distraction for Virginia and perhaps even a vanity

project – into a fully-functioning business. In addition to printing home grown talent and supporting and promoting the ideas of the Bloomsbury Group, the Hogarth Press was also concerned with the translation of foreign texts, most notably the translation of *all* of Freud's writing from German into English[15]. This was done with the help of James Strachey, who knew the Woolf's well through his older brother, Lytton Strachey – a dear friend of Leonard Woolf. James moved to Vienna after marrying his wife, Alix, and started analysis with Freud in 1920. Soon after commencing, Freud asked him if he would translate his books into English and James agreed with the help of his wife, Alix. James underwent his psychoanalytic training under Winnicott, and Alix under Karl Abraham. James would dedicate his life to publishing the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

The first thing to be printed by the Press, was a collaboration on *Two Stories* (1917) – one by Virginia and one by Leonard. This demonstrated how important their work was for them as a couple – it united them, bound them. Her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), had come at a time of psychological unrest for her (and was also the first time she introduced the character of Clarissa Dalloway) and had taken several years to complete. Her second novel, *Night and Day* (1919), was the last novel printed outside of the Hogarth Press. From then on, she produced a steady stream of writing, leading up to *Mrs Dalloway*, in 1925. Her writing was always symbolic (a lighthouse, curtains, waves) and represented the stream-of-consciousness style of writing that she employed. It was self-reflective, autobiographical, and always seemed to be both melancholic and nostalgic. In a modernist style, it also often lacked a clear narrative or dialogue from the characters and instead was reflective and introspective. Her final novel, *Between the Acts*, was published shortly after her suicide in 1941 and was laden with references to places, people and events in her life. Once it had been completed, and the act of creation was done, Virginia fell into her greatest depression which was only compounded by the destruction of her house during a London

[15] The press even printed a little-known pamphlet, an exchange between Einstein and Freud, *Why War?* in 1932.

raid in WWII. The end of her last creative endeavour symbolised the end of all being and she succumbed to suicide in 1941.

6.1.3.4 Melancholia and the Death Drive

> Dearest, I feel certain that I am going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. And I shan't recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness. You have been in every way all that anyone could be. I don't think two people could have been happier 'til this terrible disease came. I can't fight any longer... (Part of Woolf's suicide note in Rose (1986)).

Perhaps it would be fair to say that Virginia Woolf's eventual suicide was less than a surprise to those who knew her, or to anyone studying her work or writing. Her novels were rife with death, perhaps the most detailed being the suicide of Septimus Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*. The war was always present in her writing and (matching her reality) claimed the lives of many of the characters, especially in *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). The Bloomsbury Group acted as a container for her emotions and nurtured her creativity, allowing her to stave off her destruction at times; but their denial of the realities of war perhaps made its devastation even more impactful. Woolf herself was unprepared for the horrors and devastation that war would bring. To live during both wars meant that her witnessing of destruction was extreme and detrimental. Bond, in her analysis of Woolf's troubles, put forwards an all-inclusive examination of her life and the failures it had provided for her, largely through no fault of her own:

> The symbolic loss of her mother through the defection of Vita as a lover… the daily deprivations brought about by the war; Virginia's terrible disappointment with Leonard which re-enacted her early disenchantment with her father as well as oedipal defeat; the repetition during the war years of the horrors of her adolescence when her mother, her half sister, her brother Thoby, and her father died; the fact that she lost her sublimation through the waning of her creative powers and thus lost her identity as a writer, in addition to losing her writing audience as a result of war; her identification with the senile unproductive Leslie Stephens; the destruction of her books, papers, artwork, and many of her most cherished possessions: all of these losses culminated in her return, through a watery grave, to the uterine symbiosis with mother and the state of non-being that was the only source of gratification left to the destitute Virginia Woolf (Bond, 2000, pp.152-153).

Woolf's grand tragedies from childhood had become daily tragedies in adulthood and wartime was an everyday reminders of the losses she had suffered. Her writing navigated her feelings regarding the destruction she beheld and demonstrated an attempt at reconciling her losses. There is a moving moment in *Mrs Dalloway*, when a plane goes overhead of Septimus, terrifying him. But for once it was not a war plane or a bomber, it was a sky-writing plane. The characters cannot work out what it is attempting to say – it is confused language, but they conclude that it is advertising toffee. Woolf has turned something terrifying into something mundane – but she highlights that the language has not entirely worked. There are gaps in the letters – both sign and signifier have been largely lost, representing Septimus' inner state. There can be no doubt that this was also true of Woolf. The destruction in her mind, the bombers, were replaced in peaceful times; but their attempts at creating words, often failed. The subsequent diary entries are taken from *A Writers Diary: Being Extracts From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* (2012). She reminds us how important her creativity is to her:

> …happier today than I was yesterday having this afternoon arrived at some idea of a new form for a new novel… My doubt is how far it will enclose the heart – Am I sufficiently mistress of my dialogue to net it there? (January 26th 1920).
>
> It is worth mentioning, for future reference, that the creative power which bubbles so pleasantly in beginning a new book quiets down after a time, and one goes on more steadily. Doubts creep in. Then one becomes resigned… I want to write nothing in this book that I don't enjoy writing. Yet writing is always difficult (May 11th 1920).

Her greatest fear was failing at her craft, causing anxiety and fear. But we see the struggle she faces – the need to write, the burden of writing; paradoxically, writing and creating were the things that helped her feel whole and alive. It is as painful as it is affirming. In nearly all of her diary entries, they are concerned with either her illness or 'disease' as she names it, or her preoccupation with creativity. Whether it is her own struggles of writing, or her reading other literary masterpieces. She comments on such greats as Milton, Byron, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky and Proust, amongst many others. The literary world held her together as it had bound her family. She prided herself on being an intellect amongst intellects and the Press only gave her a further fortress to protect herself from her old

enemy: self-destruction. Towards the end of her life, when WWII began[16], Woolf enters this into her diary and the full extent of her inertial death instinct is recognised, reflected through the heart-breaking language she uses:

> All meaning has run out of everything…Emptiness. Inefficiency. I may as well record these things. My plan is to force my brain to work on Roger. But Lord this is the worst of all my life's experiences. It means feeling only bodily feelings: one gets cold and torpid. Endless interruptions. We have done the curtains… Yes, it's an empty meaningless world now…This war has begun in cold blood. One merely feels that the killing machine has to be set in action (September 6th, 1939).

In the final sentence, one could wonder if she is referring to herself here. Working on her Roger Fry biography, who died in 1934, again gives her somewhere to focus her concentration, away from the terror and fear of death and wartime. Regretfully, it was not well received and this creative failure is often speculated to be a further impetus in her suicide soon after. With the reigniting of war, Woolf and no doubt all involved, were living in a state of perpetual anxiety. Another personal blow for Virginia came from the destruction of two of her old houses[17], 'I could just see a piece of my studio wall standing: otherwise rubble where I wrote so many books' (October 20th 1940). The physical destruction of a signifier of her creativity perhaps forced an end to the circulatory movement from creativity to destruction. The destruction had won over all else, creativity had failed. An early diary entry perfectly apprehends this knowledge:

> Why is life so tragic; so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss. I look down; I feel giddy; I wonder how I am ever to walk to the end. But why do I feel this: Now that I say it I don't feel it… Melancholy diminishes as I write. Why then don't I write it down oftener? Well, one's vanity forbids. I want to appear a success even to myself…It's having no children. Living away from friends, failing to write well, spending too much on food, growing old (October 25th 1920).

[16] It must also be remembered that Leonard Woolf was a Jew and their names were reportedly on a list discovered in a black book belonging to Heinrich Himmler, a Nazi leader, of British citizens who were to be arrested if Germany was successful in an attack on Britain. As expected, Freud's name also appeared in the black book.

[17] 52 Tavistock Square and 37 Mecklenburgh Square.

It is also impossible to ignore her association of being childless to a failure to create, set within a list of her melancholic instances.

There are endless references to Woolf's destructive personality and her relationship to the death instinct, from her own hand and from others. However, can the Immortality Phantasy shed more light on this relationship that other theories cannot?

6.2 Part 2: An Exploration of the Immortality Phantasy in Mrs Dalloway

6.2.1 Creativity and Destruction in Mrs Dalloway

This section gives a rough overview of the plot of *Mrs Dalloway*, in order to acclimate the reader with one of Woolf's most popular novels. The psychobiographical exploration that follows, focuses closely on the characters of Septimus Smith and Clarissa Dalloway, as representations of the two sides of Woolf's characters: the manic, creative and the melancholic, destructive identity she upheld, viewing her characters alongside the events of her life. However, first I would like to offer up a few ideas from Shirley Panken, whose psychoanalytic exploration of Woolf's creative 'lusts', can further aid our understanding of key aspects of the novel. In *Virginia Woolf and the "Lust of Creation": A Psychoanalytic Exploration* (1987), Panken notes that originally it was Clarissa Dalloway who was to kill herself, before her shadow, Septimus, was invested with this death sentence, 'In *Mrs Dalloway* she returns to the vicissitudes of love and marriage, resurrects her episodes of mental and emotional illness, giving them scrupulous documentation' (Panken, 1987, p.116). Highlighting the aims of the novel as a commentary on British society and the class system, Panken reminds us:

> Woolf also engages in an extended mourning process regarding issues of unlived life, failed marriage, and identity confusion. Offering a poetic, profound exploration via fantasy and reminiscence, of human loneliness, suffering, recourse to self-destructiveness, and occasional self-affirmation in its delineation of inner and outer self, the novel illuminates shifting levels of reality and unreality, conscious and unconscious, informing the human condition… The form of *Mrs Dalloway* disdains temporal continuity but is guider rather by the characters' inner thoughts and feelings so that eruptions form the past are congruent with associations concerning the present (1987, p.118).

The novel is littered with parallels, which help to guide us towards the most important one, between Septimus and Clarissa; but perhaps also pushing us towards the parallel between Virginia Woolf's life and the events and characters that she creates. It is not my intention to highlight every symbolic aspect of the novel (of which there are many), nor comment on the textuality that Woolf uses on the page. My aim is to highlight evidential pieces in the text that can help us to create a more definitive model for understanding the affiliation between creativity and destruction.

Written in 1925, the novel commences with an introduction to Clarissa Dalloway, who is preparing for a party she will host that evening. The style of writing Woolf uses is similar to a *free association*: the thoughts flow quickly and not always consistently; there are stunted points of writing – her thoughts end as quickly as they started, interrupting each other. The trivial elements of her life and her daily routine are set against the tragedy of the figure of Septimus Smith – the next character we are introduced to and so begins a parallel that remains throughout the book, setting the tone between the attempt at creativity of Mrs Dalloway, and the inertial desires of Septimus Smith. The novel climaxes in the final scene where Clarissa Dalloway hosts her party, but it is clouded by the suicide of Septimus Smith – creativity versus destruction, reparation versus inertia

It was in fact Woolf's explicit intention to set up these characters in stark contrast to each other, one to represent madness, the other relative normality, reflecting the two sides of Woolf's life. Caramagno[18] informs us of the need for parallel in Woolf's work, the need to set up creativity against destruction:

> Initially, she had planned the novel without the psychotic Septimus, focusing exclusively on Clarissa, who was to die – or commit suicide – at her party. Second thoughts prompted her to divide sanity and insanity between two characters… (Caramagno, 1992, p.211).

Clarissa consistently comments on her party throughout the novel, 'And Clarissa too, gave a party' (1996, p.20), as though we must not forget the importance of her event and all the

[18] Caramagno's 1992 book, *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic Depressive Illness*, combines both medical commentary on Woolf's illness and observations of her life, a 'neurobiography' as it has been termed.

effort she puts into creating it. She is wealthy, privileged and demonstrates upper class sensibilities. As she walks through London, she laments the loss of her old lover Peter Walsh, alongside the loss of herself. She feels invisible, like a non-entity as she goes about her chores. Later, Clarissa reflects on her love for Sally Seton, no doubt echoing her relationship with Vita Sackville-West:

> But this question of love (she thought, putting her coat away), this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had not that, after all, been love? (Woolf, 1996, p.37)

She speaks of Sally with a passion reserved only for her - her vivacity and gregariousness, the representation of a free spirit. She recalls an evening when Peter Walsh demonstrated jealousy over the girls' closeness:

> It was shocking; it was horrible! Not for herself. She felt only how Sally was being mauled already, maltreated; she felt his hostility; his jealousy; his determination to break into their companionship (Woolf, 1996, pp.40-41)

Clarissa lives in the past, idealising so many aspects of it, presenting the enemy as male, in order to hold on to her femininity, so closely tied to her creativity. The male represents destruction. Once she has lamented Peter's treatment of Sally, she is quick to remind herself of the present, '…(as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself' (p.42). When Peter unexpectedly comes to see her, he informs her that he has fallen in love with a 'girl in India' which Clarissa reacts with horror to, both because she sees love as a 'monster' (p.50), but also because this girl has outdone her. Before this news, Clarissa had told him of her party, 'Which I shan't ask you to' (p.46), but when he leaves her suddenly, having delivered the news, she cries out, 'My party! Remember my party tonight!' (p.54), lest his news destroy her creativity, or his indirect rejection of her tear apart the wholeness the party is supposed to bring.

In direct contrast, we see Septimus and his wife Lucrezia, his keeper, struggling to survive his melancholic oppression whilst trying to keep him alive and keep his inner world from breaking apart completely, 'And it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill

himself, but Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now' (1996, p.27). Septimus had fought in the war but returned a very broken man, suffering the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. When we are allowed to witness his internal world, we quickly understand how fragmented it is – how it is impossible to make anything whole, although this is what he longs to do. His mind is filled with violent images, with terror, with uncertainty, with paranoia:

> …This gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst in to flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames (Woolf, 1996, p.18)

At the same time, Woolf describes his loss of language, the loss of the relationship between signifier and sign that accompanies a fragmented, tormented ego. Klein describes the process of paranoia:

> At the same time, since the dread of internalized objects is by no means extinguished with their projection, the ego marshals against the persecutors inside the body the same forces as it employs against those in the outside world. These anxiety-contents and defence-mechanisms form the basis of paranoia' (Klein, 1935, p.146).

This is set up against his need to revel in beauty - an attempt to make his mind whole once again. Beauty is one of the key defences against melancholia, against destruction, sort out in many different forms as discussed in Chapter 4. Woolf understands its significance - the damaged mind will seek it out wherever it can:

> So, thought Septimus, looking up, they are signalling to me. Not indeed in actual words; that is, he could not read the language yet; but it was plain enough this beauty, this exquisite beauty, and tears filled his eyes as he looked at the smoke words…in their inexhaustible charity and laughing goodness, one shape after another of unimaginable beauty and signalling their intention to provide him, for nothing, for ever, for looking merely, with beauty, more beauty! Tears ran down his cheeks (Woolf, 1996, p.25)

He is looking at the sky writing from a plane – but this also represents his painful lack of creativity. He cannot create language – the sky writing is devoid of meaning for him. There is no signifier. All he can do is cling to the beauty of the sign, desperate for it to create meaning for him. This power of beauty is described by Rickman, the quest for beauty is representative of the internal struggle:

> One of the characteristics of beauty is its power to convey the feeling that struggle is over, that peace has come at last. Though we may go in to the depths of pain and depression again and again, we carry with us the assurance that through all violence and evil there has remained a marvellous witness to the endurance of life over death (Rickman, 1957, p.310).

We learn most about Septimus from his wife Lucrezia, who laments that she herself has a death sentence looking after Septimus, 'To be rocked by this malignant torturer was her lot. But why?' (Woolf, 1996, p.73). Perhaps Woolf is trying to empathise with how members of her family, or Leonard, would feel? 'Suddenly he said, 'Now we will kill ourselves,' when they were standing by the river…and she felt he was going from her and she caught him by the arm' (1996, p.74). As the novel progresses, we see fragments of Woolf's internal voice emerging, as she phantasises about death and suicide through Septimus. He represents the dark and destructive part of herself. His pain is overwhelming and suicide is viewed as a phantasy:

> The whole world was clamouring: kill yourself, kill yourself, for our sakes. But why should he kill himself for their sakes? Food was pleasant; the sun hot; and this killing oneself, how does one set about it, with a table knife, uglily, with floods of blood, - by sucking a gaspipe? (1996, pp.102-3).

This is juxtaposed against Woolf's clinging to life through her creativity, and for Clarissa, through her party. However, her past has greatly affected her so that life is a struggle, a choice that she must keep making:

> That phase came directly after Sylvia's death – that horrible affair. To see your own sister killed by a falling tree (all Justin Parry's fault – all his carelessness) before your very eyes, a girl too on the verge of life, the most gifted of them, Clarissa always said, was enough to turn one bitter.
>
> And of course she enjoyed life immensely. It was her nature to enjoy… (Woolf, 1996, p.87).

Towards the end of the novel, Septimus does finally take his own life, although Woolf's description lacks the phantastical element that the imagining of suicide has been granted previously. The description from Woolf is relatively matter of fact, more as a free association and she repeats the language used previously as a defence against suicide. The act is sudden, aggressive, determined:

> It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw liked that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill). But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun was hot. Only human beings? Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared at him. Holmes was at the door. 'I'll give it you!' he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings (1925, p.164).

Soon after this event, Clarissa begins her party. Her creativity has come to the point where it must be put outside of herself, tested, judged, and now she is left with the persecutory anxiety that it might not be a success, as Woolf no doubt would have felt with her writing:

> Oh dear, it was going to be a failure; a complete failure, Clarissa felt it in her bones as dear old Lord Lexham stood there apologising for his wife who had caught cold at the Buckingham Palace garden party. She could see Peter out of the tail of her eye, criticizing her, there, in that corner. Why, after all, did she do these things? Why seek pinnacles and stand drenched in fire? Might it consume her anyhow! Burn her to cinders! Better anything, better brandish one's torch and hurl it to earth than taper and dwindle away like some Ellie Henderson!... Life was that – humiliation, renunciation. (1996, p.184).

Clarissa is desperate to make her mark on the world although her approach is entirely narcissistic. She wants to love, to be loved and to be remembered, mostly for her creativity, for her party. She wants it to be a success; she wants herself to be a success, to be above others. To be like the vivacious Sally Seton, never to be an Ellie Henderson – sad and meek, alone. Her fear is not death, her fear is inertia. Her death must come about with a dramatic end, not a dwindling. She is delighted when Sally Seton comes to her party as a surprise. Her beautiful, vibrant Sally. But Sally is not the same as before – she has married a man and has had five boys. She has intertwined her femininity with masculinity - she has betrayed herself, Clarissa feels, by taking on normality - something Clarissa is deeply opposed to (a strong Immortality Phantasy is her ideal). Sally has tapered her passions, procreation over creation and destruction. The death of Sally's whimsicality is then contrasted to her learning of Septimus' death, 'Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought' (1996, p.201). Again, she betrays her narcissism - Septimus is attempting to spoil her creativity with his destruction. Her admiration for suicide and those who end their lives so suddenly is not upheld when the destruction

interferes with her creative endeavour. This brings the two together when she has fought so hard to keep them separate:

> What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party – the Bradshaws talked of death. He had killed himself –but how?... He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness…And the Bradshaws talked of it at her party! (1996, p.202).

This small paragraph is perhaps one of the most telling of the whole novel – Clarissa phantasises the destruction of his body. But the discomfort Clarissa feels is at destruction being brought directly in to the path of her creativity. It was to be kept outside, it must not spoil or rot her creative accomplishments. Septimus has brought death to her, he is interfering with her survival, '…this life, to be lived to the end…But that young man had killed himself. Somehow, it was her disaster – her disgrace' (Woolf, 1996, p.203). This is the climax of the novel – where the concurrent themes of life and death have finally come together within Clarissa. She can no longer separate the two – death has been invited in and she must suffer with a melancholic dignity. The party brings together all of her episodes of creativity – there sit Sally and Peter and at the end of the evening, they remind her of love and life. However, Sally has achieved her own creations – in the form of her sons. Peter was to gain two small children in his new marriage. And Clarissa has her own daughter Elizabeth, but she envies her relationship to her father, a bond she does not share. Her two friends have moved on whilst Clarissa remains under a depressive, oppressive cloud that cannot allow for joy, solely a stagnant acceptance of life. This is reflected in the inertial Ellie Henderson being the last to leave – Ellie and her nothingness, alone, lingering on. The novel ends with her friends finding a new respect for Clarissa's husband, Richard, '"Richard has improved. You are right," said Sally. "I shall go and talk to him. I shall say good-night"' (p.213).

> "I will come," said Peter, but he sat for a moment. What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?
>
> It is Clarissa, he said.

> For there she was (Woolf, 1996, p.213).

Here, the novel concludes and the reader is left wondering what we are to make of this? What does it say about Woolf, about creativity? *Why does Peter feel both dread and excitement?* I will answer this question in due course.

Before attempting to offer my own ideas to aid our understanding of the novel, I would like to highlight a few thoughts from Elizabeth Abel's, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (1989). She comments on Woolf's aims of the novel as an observation of the ties between the characters, especially noting Clarissa's feelings of being outside the realm of strong female relationships – all of them challenging and unsatisfactory: 'Woolf structures this progression as a binary opposition between past and present, nature and culture, feminine and masculine dispensations. Versions of this opposition reverberate through the novel in rhetorical and narrative juxtapositions' (1989, p.31). Abel's book offers an illuminating discourse between psychoanalysis and literature that pulls together aspects of Woolf's novel by attaching psychoanalytical meaning to them, as I will also attempt to do. This allows for certain insights and perceptions that psychoanalysis can offer any literary reading,

> The opposition between Clarissa's relationships with men and her relationships with women modulates to the split between her present and her past, her orientation and emotional capacities on both sides of the Oedipal divide. Woolf, like Freud, reveals the cost of female development, but she creates a far more graphic image of the loss entailed… (Abel, 1989, p.38).

I use the Immortality Phantasy below to offer my own analysis of the text and to demonstrate its potential to further illuminate our understanding of the novel and to further associated discourse.

6.2.2 The Immortality Phantasy

In this section, I offer up the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis as a method of understanding the critical elements of both Woolf's life and novel, accepting that the two are intertwined in a relationship revealing both creative and destructive dependencies. *Mrs Dalloway* offers the reader a glimpse into the internal world of Virginia Woolf. For Woolf,

writing was a form self-analysis and she did her best to put her emotions onto the page as honestly as possible, allowing endless possibility for interpretation from the reader. The page acts as 'container' for her thoughts and phantasies, and much of her work follows the modernist technique of *stream-of-consciousness*, literature given over to free association, an internal monologue that reflects both fleeting and sustained thoughts and impressions. The insight she gives into the tormented worlds of her lead characters, Clarissa and Septimus, allows for a close analysis of both the characters and their author. We can easily view the struggle of the life and death instincts on the page, whilst the novel acts almost like a map of melancholia – exposing the secrets of the depressed and all that is encompassed within such darkness, pitted against attempts at life and love: the attempt to create. How does a reader unravel the complexities of such a novel? What can we make of it? What do we learn from it?

Using the Immortality Phantasy as a tool for investigation we can attempt to aid our understanding of the novel and answer some of the questions that occur, using psychoanalytical insight. The Immortality Phantasy hypothesis suggests that there is a *need* to create in order to keep the destruction at bay. However, by creating, you are also inviting the destructive instinct in. The key is survival, and repetition. In this novel, there are several significant words that are repeated through the entirety of the book, within the free associations, suggesting that these form a significant part of Woolf's thoughts and their importance filters into her writing. These words are littered throughout, reminding the reader of Woolf's unconscious state: 'immortal', 'survival' and 'beauty'. These key words stand out of the text as they are recurrently used. They tell the reader of Virginia Woolf's Immortality Phantasy being realised on the page. What sets my theory apart, is the view that when there is a defusion of instinct, this leads to the release of *both* creative and destructive energies which must be repeated for us to survive. Woolf's Immortality Phantasy is demonstrated on the page through the words and I have highlighted several instances of these: firstly, the notion of immortality, '…the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them as it had fallen upon Clarissa Dalloway' (1925, p.21), 'Septimus, lately taken from life to death…the eternal sufferer' (p.29); '…the poet of the immortal

ode; the Lord who had gone from life to death; to Septimus Warren Smith' (p.107). Woolf is acutely aware of the close bind between life and death – but there is something fantastical about the immortal – the everlasting, usually through poetry or art. Her preoccupation with the everlasting shows that it is something that carries value. The endurance of either oneself or one's work is the ultimate reward. This is very closely bound up to the second concept, of survival.

Survival is paramount to being. The language of the novel highlights the role of survival, suggesting she *must* survive first, before being destroyed: '…did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely…On the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived…' (Woolf, 1925, p.11), 'He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive' (p.96), '…the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places, after death' (p.168). Survival is a victory over destruction – it demonstrates control over the self, but to achieve this, it must be tested and this can only occur through destruction. This reveals the circuitous movement from creativity to destruction, one necessitating the other; one as a defence against the other, but also the cause. Woolf demonstrates several times in the novel, the desire for life to end suddenly and fantastically, as Freud (1923, p.53) says, for the 'pure culture of the death instinct' to take over. Or, according to the Immortality Phantasy, for the necessary repetitions of the circuitous movements between creation and destruction to cease, to give in entirely to destruction. Clarissa Dalloway almost revels in Septimus' death, 'She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living' (p.204). And we are reminded once more of perhaps the most telling moment in the book, when she meets Sally Seton again, Clarissa tells us how she phantasised that Sally's life would end dramatically, 'in some awful tragedy' (p.199), to match the beautiful melodrama of her life. 'Her daring, her recklessness', these are the aspects that Clarissa esteems so greatly in Sally, as Woolf did in Vita. The Immortality Phantasy highlights the value given to those with a tragedy, self-created or imposed. This allows you to have the right to be a 'survivor' - the highest

attribute afforded to another. The Immortality Phantasy describes this desire to enjoy destruction in order to feel the reward of survival, in order to achieve creativity. It is a narcissistic phantasy, allowing one to be reckless without fear of death, to push oneself to the limit until either the desire for survival ceases and the death instinct takes over entirely, or procreation impedes the oscillations. Destructive behaviour has always been encouraged within creative circles, demonstrated through a variety of destructive behaviour and the narcissism that this entails, the desire to be revered through one's exuberance and unique blend of creative destruction. The Immortality Phantasy is perfectly expressed by Woolf in her description of Sally,

> But everybody adored her…It was her warmth; her vitality – she would paint, she would write.
>
> …with her daring, her recklessness, her melodramatic love of being the centre of everything and creating scenes, and it was bound, Clarissa used to think, to end in some awful tragedy; her death; her martyrdom (Woolf, 1996, pp.199-200).

However, her Immortality Phantasy is tapered by her production of children. She no longer craves her survival in the same way, the desire for survival passes to the offspring above all others and it is their turn to be the carefree figures of her yesteryear. We can compare the language Woolf uses to describe Sally's vivacity with all her greatest esteem, against the deep disapproval of Ellie Henderson's mundanity – the greatest fear of all, to not be remarkable, even if this meant welcoming destruction with open arms. As Woolf informs us, 'Better anything, better brandish one's torch and hurl it to earth than to taper and dwindle away like some Ellie Henderson!' (p.184) and then, 'Anything, any explosion, any horror was better than people wandering aimlessly, standing in a bunch at a corner like Ellie Henderson…' (p.185). It is my contention that the use of the Immortality Phantasy brings additional relevance to these passages and give psychoanalytic language to this point that Woolf is trying to make. These passages perfectly demonstrate the need - especially for creative people - to engage their Immortality Phantasy: the defusion of instinct, their life instinct in favour of creativity, relishing the freedom of the death instinct and demonstrate a repetitive capacity for survival.

Why does Peter feel both dread and excitement in the last paragraph, 'terror' and 'ecstasy' (1996, p.213)? Using the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, I would answer this by suggesting that he sees her capacity for both creation and destruction as he beholds her. He knows that she is a representative of a defusion of the instincts – both are unchecked and untamed; the capacity for creativity and destruction are bound within this single woman. Will he follow his own Immortality Phantasy and return to the comfort and pain of her love, or can he resist her and ensure his own survival? If he goes with Sally, they go to Richard: a representation of containment, the fusion of instincts, procreation and normality as Sally has opted for in her life. She has chosen to go to Richard. He has made the same decision – but 'he sat on for a moment' (1996, p.213). To see Clarissa shows him the other side – the world of the Immortality Phantasy, the repetitive and painful need for survival. He has chosen love with a suitable object relation – his are not broken, they are whole. Regarding *repetition compulsion*, this sentence reflects Woolf's need for repetition – we have clearly demonstrated how Woolf choses the precarity associated to the Immortality Phantasy and its repetitive oscillations from mania to melancholia. Differing from Freud however, this repetition reflects the need for *survival*, the need to be victorious over the destructive instinct, to prevail over the phantasised destruction at the hands of the injured parent of Oedipal phantasies. And in the case of Woolf, this is the lost parent, her mother, persecuting, plaguing her with anxiety and torment as she feels guilt and fragmentation at her loss. She attempts to make reparation through creativity, to ease the pain associated, but soon she must relive the survival she desires – the need to prove that she is immortal and above the persecutions of the parent, a place she can survive where they have not.

The appeal of destruction is unavoidable and paramount to understanding this novel. Peter must decide between the fusion of Richard and the defusion of Clarissa.

6.2.3 Comparative Analyses

Having highlighted some of the key ideas from the novel that the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis can help to illuminate, this can be set against Klein's ideas on reparation and a

Freudian model of melancholia. Perhaps it would be fair to say that Klein's model picks up where Freud's left off, (or left out) ideas on creativity. The Immortality Phantasy amalgamates their ideas whilst adding its own valuable insights and, therefore, the Freudian/Kleinian model will be set against the Immortality Phantasy, to examine if one is more effective than the other, in highlighting and giving additional meaning to crucial aspect of Woolf's life and work.

6.2.3.1 The Freudian Model of Melancholia:

- No one believes in their own death
- Melancholia is the desire to punish oneself for the loss of an object
- Takes over the life instinct
- Obsessional neurosis stemming from unconscious desire for death of the Oedipal parent
- Broken object-relation (from loss) leads to self-punishment and susceptibility to melancholia
- Narcissistic object choice, ego-identification with lost object
- Repetition compulsion – a compulsion to repeat an event in order to try and master the trauma associated

6.2.3.2 Klein on creativity and reparation:

- The infant needs to repeat the incorporation of the good object
- Wish to be punished in response to depressive anxiety and guilt, especially stemming from the Oedipus complex
- Anxiety can lead to neurosis
- Creativity as an act to repair the damage done to the mother in phantasy and to restore her and make her whole once again

6.2.4 A Freudian/Kleinian Analysis of Mrs Dalloway

There can be no doubt that the loss of so many important figures in her life led to Woolf's depression and, at times, a melancholia so severe that she needed to be hospitalised. Such losses - especially of her mother - would have led Woolf towards extreme anxiety and guilt, attached to this loss. At times, her melancholia would have led her to turn away from the life instinct, consequently turning the sexual instinct inside. This narcissistic object choice can be reflected in her struggles to love her husband, Leonard, effectively; he repeatedly lost out to her melancholia; the dead parents are set up in her ego and inflict upon her guilt and self-punishment. In addition, following on from some of Freud's ideas in his paper on 'Leonardo da Vinci' (1910), this could be responsible, not only for her lack of sexuality towards Leonard, leading her to favour creativity, but also for her occasional homosexual relationships, seen both through Vita in real life and Sally Seton in the novel, *Mrs Dalloway*. Vita/Sally represent both the 'self' being the object choice – the 'ideal' that the mother created – but also the internalised mother who is sought out through a relationship with other women. Septimus represents the destructive side of Woolf's character: There he lay with a thud, thud, thud in his brain, and then a suffocation of blackness (1925, p.202). Septimus' death can be seen as a representation of the 'pure culture of the death instinct', as Freud terms it (1923). Woolf is highlighting the darkest elements of melancholia where the self becomes so lost and fragmented by trauma, that it cannot find its way back to incorporation. The individual totally succumbs to their depression. But, alongside this demonstration of melancholia, Woolf also shows the reparative power of 'creativity' which follows along Klein's ideas. 'I was in a queer mood, thinking myself very old: but now I am a woman again – as I always am when I write' (Diary entry: 31 May, 1929). Her party is her creativity – there is no space for destruction within it – it is her attempt at reparation, away from feelings of guilt and anxiety. However, her creativity is threatened, not only be the arrival of past object relations, but also the barging in of destruction, in the form of Septimus' death being announced, 'What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?' (Woolf, 1925, p.202). She has fought

hard to separate the two, but with destruction's arrival, she phantasises the suicidal act, apparently not the first destruction she has phantasised:

> Always her body went through it, when she was told, first, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes' (p.202).

We see the reparative need within Woolf to restore the lost mother through her work, demonstrated in her description of herself as 'woman', when she writes. The use of 'woman' gives her the longed-for femininity, making identifications to mother. Due to the repetitive desexualisation of her life instincts, Woolf cannot be a mother herself – she cannot give up her destruction, as her ego is too fragmented. Instead, she must create and continue her search for her own mother through her work. Klein demonstrates how creativity can be used to try to close an empty void within a person, by filling the hollow space within them with representations of the missing loved object. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Miss Kilman is a good personification of this idea. Clarissa vilifies her for the connection she has with her (Clarissa's) daughter Elizabeth; she hates her because she resents their relationship and envies it to the point she wishes to spoil and destroy it (following Klein's view of envy). Perhaps even the name she chooses for this character - Kill Man - is symbolic of her feelings (certainly her feelings towards men). The name itself suggests a destruction – the antithesis of creativity. Miss Kilman is spoiling her creativity, just as a man has spoiled Sally's, and Septimus spoils the creativity of her party. Perhaps another aspect of Woolf's decision not to have children could in part be due to the desexualisation of her libido and partly due to her fear of destroying her creativity. But at the end of the novel, when Clarissa releases some of her depressive anxiety, she demonstrates the need to make reparations with Miss Kilman, 'She hated her: she loved her' (1996, p.192), the well-known feeling of ambivalence. Through this, we see the reparative potential of literature and its ability to change the ugliness and the emptiness one feels towards a lost object, into something beautiful, when it is given form, colour and texture.

Freud equates ugliness to 'The 'Uncanny'' (1919). He associates 'uncanny' to 'frightening', 'dread', 'horror' - all words to describe the feeling created by ugly objects

and he equates the uncanny to the *familiar*. However, this familiar is something that creates unease in the individual, suggesting that the familiar feeling evoked is our inner ugliness being expressed, our death instincts finding representation. Freud also suggests that the feeling of uneasiness comes from not knowing what is real and what is phantasised: the uncanny, is the *return of the repressed*. The return of this repressed material - our internal ugliness - is due to the repetition compulsion, where we need to repeat and acknowledge our own ugliness, to give a voice to the death drive:

> For it is possible to recognize the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts – a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character, and still very clearly expressed in the impulses of small children; a compulsion , too, which is responsible for a part of the course taken by the analyses of neurotic patients (Freud, 1919, p.238).

Perhaps in direct response to this idea, the threat of her death instinct, Woolf demonstrates a preoccupation with 'beauty', no doubt for its restorative abilities and its representation as the life instinct. Freud also touches on this in his paper, 'On Transience' (1916). Our relationship to beauty can help to explain the creative process: there is the need for us to transform the ugly into the beautiful and Woolf was a great pioneer of 'art for art's sake', transforming her thoughts into 'beautiful' streams of consciousness on the page, with the page acting as a container for the ugly and the destructive, attempting to master these thoughts and make them whole and beautiful. Freud suggests:

> The proneness to decay of all that is beautiful and perfect can, as we know, give rise to two different impulses in the mind. The one leads to the aching despondency felt by the young poet, while the other leads to rebellion against the fact asserted (Freud, 1916, p.305).

Here, Freud demonstrates the necessary struggle between beauty and ugliness, between death and life, winter and summer. But the destruction of the flowers and trees is transient – it is a part of life and this circulatory pattern would continue. We mourn the loss of summer (creativity) and winter (destruction), which interferes with the narcissistic belief in our own immortality. We are left feeling melancholic, but the creativity and consequently the destruction, always returns. In the same light as Freud's paper, Woolf

informs us in *Mrs Dalloway,* 'Men must not cut down trees' (p.28), 'Buds on the tree of life' (p.33). 'The trees waved, brandished. We welcome, the world seemed to say; we accept; we create. Beauty, the world seemed to say' (p.77).

Why does Peter feel both dread and excitement? As Peter gazes on Clarissa, she represents the 'uncanny'. The feeling of familiarity that encompasses the return of the repressed, the death instinct, destruction, '…the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar' (Freud, 1919, p.220). But at the same time, she is creativity – she represents Klein's notion of reparation, 'the daughter's wish to destroy her mother' leading to, 'the desire to make reparation, to make good the injury psychologically done to the mother and also to restore herself...' (Klein, 1929, p.443). Interestingly, when Woolf sends Sally to talk to Richard, she is referred to as 'Lady Rosseter' (p.213), no longer 'Sally'. Earlier in the novel, Peter thinks, 'After all these years he really could not call her "Lady Rosseter"' (p.205), it is unfamiliar. Woolf is demonstrating her disdain at Sally, who has chosen Richard and normality. The 'excitement' represents Clarissa as creative, the whole and loving mother. The 'terror' is that she is no mother at all. She is lost, destroyed, attacked and fragmented. Woolf's words are important, 'For there she was' (p.213), not 'there she is'. Clarissa was there, but she is unobtainable. And these ideas represent Peter's *repetition compulsion*. As Freud suggests, '…we then at once perceive that the compulsion to repeat must be ascribed to the unconscious repressed' (1923, p.20) and it also 'recalls from the past experiences which include no possibility of pleasure' (p.20). He must choose between the inertia of the death instinct or the procreation of the life instinct.

6.3 Discussion and Conclusion

It is often said that Woolf's melancholia was a *choice* over her love for Richard and both Virginia and Leonard were aware that, partly what drew the Bloomsbury group to her, was her bouts of melancholia. With each onset of depression, Virginia would struggle through and the outcome would be *survival,* which I have argued is one of the characteristics that is held in the highest regard by one's peers and appeals to the narcissistic ego. By surviving

these periods of melancholia, those around her, especially the Bloomsbury Group, held her up with great love and esteem. To say melancholia is a *choice* infers an unconscious need of the ego to satiate itself in the guilt and punishment. This claim is somewhat substantiated by Bond, who suggests:

> …Leonard's seriousness, his 'uxoriousness,' would have been totally unacceptable to the high excitement and frivolity that characterized Bloomsbury…But Virginia's psychosis was the ticket that admitted Leonard into the society (Bond, 2001, p.79).

I would also argue that Woolf herself demonstrates this through her dealing with Sally Seton, as I have discussed above. She loved Sally mostly for 'her daring', 'her recklessness' – her demonstration of the Immortality Phantasy. Her behaviour, acting with impulsion as though she cannot be harmed, demonstrates how she can survive whilst others cannot. And when she is ready, she must give in totally to her death instinct, 'some awful tragedy' must befall her. The Immortality Phantasy is appealing. However, Sally eventually gives this up, fusing her instincts through procreation and a happy relationship, mending damage done in phantasy to her parents. But it was her demonstration of survival that is so important to Clarissa – not to stand in the corner 'like some Ellie Henderson' – whose instincts remain fused, who does not give in to destruction, who has no creativity and most importantly, has no Immortality Phantasy. Leonard knew that the destructive side of Virginia would aid her creativity and so did Virginia, but at the same time Leonard contained her destruction enough so as to aid her survival. This is demonstrated through Clarissa and Richard Dalloway: 'Even now, quite often if Richard had not been there reading the *Times*, so that she could crouch like a bird and gradually revive…she must have perished. She had escaped. But that young man had killed himself' (1996, p.203). She managed to survive where Septimus does not and it is this sentiment that lasts through the novel. Clarissa moves on with a twofold attitude: on the one hand, we can feel a sense of envy from *Mrs Dalloway*, as a representative of Woolf's inner world, 'The young man had killed himself but she didn't pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him…' (p.204), perhaps she protests too much. There appears to be a fascination attached to the death, described later in such detail, almost passionate detail (quoted in full above), 'He had killed himself - but how?'. It is an unusual reaction to

someone's death, where perhaps the first question would be – but why? To return to her twofold attitude, one is of envy, but the other appears to be of understanding – this was her fault, she must be punished by death over and over and smile through it, trying to be ok:

> Somehow it was her disaster – her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her evening dress' (Woolf, 1996, p.203).

It is the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis that helps us to understand her strange reaction below: she has survived the destruction, the punishment, and death that she felt responsible for:

> Odd, incredible; she had never been so happy…No pleasure could equal, she thought, straightening the chairs, pushing in one book on the shelf, this having done with the triumphs of youth, lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank (1996, p.203)

She celebrates in living – this has been her reward whilst the Other has died. She has survived through the creation of her party. The 'sun rose', the 'day sank' – on this occasion she is the day, living. And just as the sun must rise and fall, so must she move between life and death. Enduring the punishment of her loss and guilt, but making reparation through creativity. This analogy of the rising and sinking in relation to the day, reminds us of the need for repetition. We must go through the night in order to feel the sun in the morning. We must *survive* the darkness of the night, to experience a new day. This defines the Immortality Phantasy.

Elsewhere, I have described Clarissa's reaction to learning of Septimus' death and how this image is described in very physical terms – both the act of him hitting the ground, but also Clarissa's almost sexual reaction to it. It is as though she finds pleasure in it – the punishment on this occasion has been acted out on her behalf; Septimus has felt the guilt and destroyed himself for her survival. 'Always her body went through it' – this suggests that it is not the first time she has heard such news – that with every destruction she learns of, there is a similar, almost sexually charged reaction, perhaps almost sadistic. It is worth discussing that Freud has equated the 'instinct for mastery' to sadism (1913, p.322). So,

this response could, in turn, be seen as her instinct for mastery, part of the repetition compulsion – she is putting herself through the experience of this destruction in order to control it, to be a part of it, to then survive it. There is a pleasure that comes from her survival, even through another.

I have already highlighted how Freud would potentially view the repetition found in *Mrs Dalloway* and how he might equate it to the feeling of ugliness and the death instinct. We see repetition occurring in all of Woolf's writing – textually, through her repetition of certain words throughout the novel; the repetition of certain narratives – aspects of her life being repeated in various guises on the page; and especially the treatment of death in her writing. Freud suggested that the compulsion to repeat is often tied to neurosis, which is an assumption I follow. He equates it to the return of the repressed and the instinct for mastery and at the same time, he is aware of the connection between child's play, phantasising, and creativity. However, when discussing Hoffman's story of the Sandman in 'The Uncanny' (1919), Freud suggests that the repetition is a preservation against annihilation by creating a doubling effect, and this leads to the feelings of uncanniness. Even if we could assume Freud elsewhere made the connection between the repetition compulsion, the instinct for mastery and creativity, he still maintains its primary purpose as the 'return of the repressed', that it is something buried trying express itself. Whilst I agree that the repetition compulsion is an instinct for mastery, in my Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, I view it slightly differently. It is the desire to control the lost object, to experience the self-reproach associated to its loss (or retribution from the Oedipal parent), but this is a by-product of the actual aim of the repetition compulsion – to demonstrates the ego's ability for survival. The self-flagellation, the guilt and the accompanying destruction, take us on our path to survival – ever since the first repetitions when the external influences battled against the death instinct's inertial desires (as postulated by Freud in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920)), the first mini survival - this is our desire. This is what needs to be repeated. At the level of the Oedipus complex, surviving the father is the ultimate victory. In the case of Virginia Woolf, her mother has

become the loved object, entrenched in the ego, and it is the mother's wrath that she must survive, via the repetitive path of destruction.

It is my contention that when comparing the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis to Freud and Klein's model's, it can be demonstrated that the Immortality Phantasy can help us with a psychobiographical analysis better than the Freud/Klein models can. While both models add to our understanding of literature, by illuminating certain ideas and attitudes within the text as reflections of the writer's inner world, I would suggest the ideas encompassed in the Immortality Phantasy bring something additional, something relatable in everyday life. This is through its description of the relationship between creativity and destruction as demonstrating a necessary survival that must be repeated. The artist must bear the burden of this repetition – the defusion of the life and death instinct and the constant struggle associated, until the only result can be the cessation of life, the giving in to the pure death instinct, or the relinquishing of the Immortality Phantasy.

One of the amazing aspects of committing to look at any element of Woolf – be it her writing or her life, is that there is an almost unending wealth of literature on her and her work; from her own writings (diaries, novels, letters), to the contributions of others within a literary framework, or a psychoanalytic framework. This is also the most challenging aspect of using Woolf as a case study in this thesis. Literary critics and psychoanalysts alike, have combined in their offerings of interpretations, of her writing or her illness. How then, is it possible to insert a hypothesis such as the Immortality Phantasy into the endless body of work already in existence? This is only possible by offering a direct contribution to one particular area – in my case, the relationship between creativity and destruction that I postulate demonstrates a specific necessity for repetition that can be hypothesised as an Immortality Phantasy. I have attempted to demonstrate the burden of creativity and her dependence on the agony in repetition, her desire to be seen as a precariat above all else.

Leonard Woolf knew that her madness was pivotal to her creativity and this notion has been extensively explored, as demonstrated in this section on critical reading.

However, it is the repetition of the defusion of the life and death instincts that I hypothesise is so pivotal to our understanding. The identification with the Oedipal parent leads to a sublimation, which was a crucial part of Woolf's melancholy; this leads on to an instinctual defusion, where the life instinct is desexualised and defused. Consequently, the death instinct is given free rein to attack and persecute the individual, especially for any Oedipal designs and it must be assumed that Woolf carried within her enormous guilt after the death of her mother, alongside the damage done in phantasy, which she later attempted to repair through both creativity and Vita. The ego becomes punitive and masochistic, whilst at the same time narcissistic through its desire to be noticed. The complex relationship that occurs from this sublimative defusion is the hypothesised Immortality Phantasy – the survival. In Woolf's case, this is especially reinforced by her outliving so many others – death is all around her but she maintains survival whilst others perish. She must repeatedly feel this survival, to avoid her disappearance and death like all her early object relations and she reflects this through Septimus and Clarissa – one perishes, one survives. The survival is introjected each time she writes and creates. So, although we all have an Immortality Phantasy to a degree, reflected through her creativity and destruction, we have proven the strength of Woolf's.

Freud has suggested that every identification with the Oedipal parents leads to a sublimation and therefore to an instinctual defusion, and it is this key point that I propose needs repetition in the creative artist. My hypothesis puts forward the idea that, in the creative artist, the Oedipus complex is not successfully repressed, as it is kept alive by the tangible act of creation and, therefore, the defusion of instinct needs to be constantly repeated, in a desperate struggle to maintain survival against the Oedipal parent. The life instinct, as a result of continual sublimation and, therefore, desexualisation becomes defused from the death instinct, giving it free rein to punish the ego for its Oedipal desires. I have argued that, as you cannot win the Oedipal war, the reward instead is *survival* of the wrath of the parents in response to the Oedipal phantasies of destruction. It is this repetition that I propose is responsible for the swing between mania (survival) and melancholia (the tormenting of the ego), or we can say, creativity and destruction.

Creativity almost now becomes a task, a necessity for survival, but this is a vicious circulatory issue, inviting with it the necessary destruction, as the survival is also a victory over the Oedipal parent and therefore accompanied by guilt, punishment and the need for reparation. This, in return, makes creation an attempt at reparation and to make whole again the Oedipal parent. The Freudian/Kleinian model and the Immortality Phantasy model, both bring unique illuminations to the text.

CHAPTER SEVEN: AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECT ON THE READER IN GOETHE'S NOVEL, THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER

> 'My dear friend, I am so happy and have sunk so deep into the feeling of calm existence that my art suffers under it'.
>
> (Goethe, 2012, p.6)

7.1 Introduction

The Sorrows of Young Werther was written in 1774 by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a German novelist, poet and playwright, with an interest in science and politics. *Werther* was his first novel and gained, for him, an instant notoriety, akin to modern day celebrity status, complete with the release of his own fragrance! He has influenced the works of philosophers such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, and both Freud and Jung were familiar with his work. Freud often referenced his novels and stated that *Faust* was one of 'the ten most magnificent works (in World Literature)' (1907, p.245). He frequently cited Goethe and *Werther* in various letters and papers throughout his extensive psychoanalytic works.

This is an epistolary novel, written in the form of a series of personal letters, predominantly between Werther and his friend Wilhelm. This gives the impression of a (fictional) 'editor', who has found the letters and reproduced them. The semi-autobiographical nature of these 'letters', along with the personal touch that comes from the epistolary set up, led to a feeling of knowledge and emotional attachment between the reader and the author. This link will be explored in detail by examining some of the autobiographical details or Goethe's life and the character of Werther on the page, to move towards an understanding of how this novel created such dramatic effect in some readers. I will use the Immortality Phantasy to aid an analysis in both a textual sense and the introjected experience.

Goethe wrote *The Sorrow of Young Werther* in six weeks – an intensive period of writing, which one could argue led to a loosening of emotional censorship. With its release, *Werther* became an instant 'best-seller' as we would now term it. The name comes from the title of a play by Friedrich Maximillian Klinger, who was active around the same time as Goethe. Whilst researching Goethe, I came across the email blog of a young man[19] who was modernising *Werther* via the distribution of emails on a weekly basis representing Werther's letters, as though they were happing in 'real-time', encouraging the reader to go through the experiences with him. The text appears to speak to people, the story is their own – perhaps it follows what Freud termed the 'narcissism of minor differences' (1930, p.114), which explores the idea that a tendency towards aggression is increased by a proximity to an 'other', who is closest in terms of geographical boundaries, identifications, or who has other similarities (Freud, 1930). Perhaps there is an identification with Werther that increases such narcissism, except the aggression is turned against the self not the other, reflected in the numerous copycat suicides? What is causing the cessation of the Immortality Phantasy and the move from destruction to suicide? Literature can allow for a catharsis to occur in the reader, the purging of emotion, the release of feelings, a sense of reparation – but Goethe's novel appears to increase, rather than decrease emotion, thus *Werther's* destruction is introjected. Perhaps a close analysis of the text, and the aims of the author, will reveal more about this peculiar phenomenon.

The *Sorrows of Young Werther* was written in February 1774, coincidentally around the same time that his sister fell pregnant. The story centres around the relationship of the protagonist *Werther*, after he meets a young lady named Lotte on a visit through Wahlheim (based on Garbenheim). Lotte, at once, strikes him as she sits with her numerous siblings around her lap, caring for them after their mother's death. He falls whole-heartedly in love with Lotte, despite knowledge of her fiancé, Albert, who as a potential adversary, surprisingly does not mind their relationship, and he himself becomes very close to Werther.

[19] www.wertherblog.com

Goethe's style of writing marked a new era called *Sturm und Drang*, which translates to *Storm and Drive* (or Urge) and is credited with starting the Romantic movement, emphasising the value of sensibilities and freedom of emotional expression in writing, in retaliation to the perceived censorship of the Aesthetic movement. Perhaps the most notable element of this movement was its revolt against society and the need to lay bare one's emotions in their rawest state and could be argued to be the cause of so-called, 'Werther fever'. Some place the novel *Werther* firmly within this period, whilst others have suggested it moves away from the deep sensibilities associated to this movement and that the novel acts as a warning against the over-indulgence of emotion. For many though – *Werther* was still too excessive in its emotional portrayals of its characters and thought to be dangerous in the wake of the copycat suicides. In a conversation reported by Friedenthal, Goethe meets with a town syndic who complains of the extravagance in the novel. When the syndic is asked by Goethe if he has ever been drunk, he replies that he indeed has; 'Good, replies Goethe, the only difference is that your drunkenness was slept off, mine is on paper!' (1993, p.130). *Werther* is an example of a *sentimental novel*, popular towards the end of the 18th century, which aims to invoke strong emotional responses in its reader. This sentimentalism allowed the reader to find a place for their own fluctuations of emotion, to fully indulge themselves, in the way that Goethe himself did, 'My natural disposition…fluctuated between the extremes of unrestrained gaiety and melancholy discomfort' (Goethe, 2010, p.206).

Goethe's epistolary style of writing was influenced by a novel written by Madame de La Roche's, *Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*. With the use of this tool, Goethe is completing a picture in stages – in a fragmented way that will eventually lead to a whole aesthetic picture, one that allows for his own survival, but at the expense of Werther's destruction (based on the suicide of his acquaintance, Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem – a tragic case of unrequited love). Werther must die for Goethe to survive.

7.2 Methodology

In this chapter, I will closely examine Goethe's text, both as representative of the free associations of the author, and to examine the aesthetic and poetic experience of the reader. This methodology examines the response of the audience to the text, with the advantage of involving the 'subject' (Baudry, 1984, p.575).

Such a method will necessarily incorporate aspects of psychobiography, as we can follow Baudry's suggestion that there are benefits of uncovering the author's personal symbols, to give more layers to the text than by reading alone (1984), 'the power of a text often transcends the author's intended purposes' (p.565). Although a complex technique, usually reserved for experienced literary critics, I will make a humble attempt to replicate this, drawing on the technique demonstrated by Sanja Bahun in her book, *Modernism and Melancholia* (2014). Bahun informs us:

> …the methodological move away from the binary understanding of melancholia and mourning and toward the reexamination [*sic*] of the melancholia-creativity intertwine is particularly beneficial for modernist studies because it may help us understand the paradox of self-consciously "melancholic" performance (p.8).

Of course, Goethe's novel precedes the modernist era but there is still relevance in Bahun's technique, as she coins the concept of '*countermourning'*:

> …to envision a memorial articulation of loss that is at the same time expressive and critical, that aims at "therapeutic" engagement yet nevertheless utilizes the symptomology of melancholia, thereby (rather than recalling) the lost object, in all its unrecognizability, as an integral part of the text and the reader's experience thereof (Bahun, 2014, p.9)

A close analysis of the text requires focus on the struggle we see taking place *on* the page, reflecting the struggle that occurs *off* the page. Textual analysis examines the gaps and affects reflected by the chosen words and demonstrates how they can take on their own meanings.

Another form of textual analysis, is that of Jefferson and Holloway and their introduction to the 'free association narrative interview method', which aims to draw out of the text certain repetitive words and phrases, potentially revealing underlying meaning.

This method also considers psychoanalytic defences against anxiety, 'Defences will affect the meanings that are available in a particular context and how they are conveyed to the listener' (1998, p.299), or in this case, the reader.

The notion of 'effect on the reader', especially via the aesthetic, can be viewed by looking at our response to the tragedy that occurs within the pages. Nuttall's book, *Why Does Tragedy Give Pleasure?* (1996), examines a history of catharsis, tracing the development of ideas from early philosophers through to Freud. He asks the question, is the pleasure in tragedy from catharsis or emotional indulgence? 'For Aristotle it is not the emotions which are purified but the organism. The emotions themselves are, precisely, the impurity which is removed' (1996, p.6). The term 'catharsis' has been taken up and widely debated since Aristotle, with Freud arguing that it aims to rid the individual of the emotions that plague them. Others, such as Martha Nussbaum, have argued that the aim of catharsis is to heighten the emotions, to revive them, rather than to relieve us of them (Nuttall, 1996); 'The delight of tragedy proceeds from the consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more…This idea of hypothetical assent [is] a precondition of tragic pleasure' (1996, p.17). For Freud, 'catharsis came about when the path to consciousness was opened and there was a normal discharge of effect' (1923, p.236). It is essentially the release of libido, which can occur through the enjoyment of tragedy, as much as via other endeavours.

7.3 A Synopsis of The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774)

I feel it prudent to quote the epigraph posted before the commencement of the novel, which acts to set the tone and boldly instructs the reader to assume a position of concern, to prepare for an emotional ravaging, to ally ourselves to the novel and to Werther:

> *Everything I could discover about poor Werther's story I have diligently gathered together and lay it before you now and know that you will thank me. His mind and his character will compel your admiration and your love, and his fate will compel your tears.*
>
> *And you, amiable soul, feeling driven as he was, draw comfort from his suffering and let this little book be your friend if by chance or by some fault of your own you can find none nearer.*

Werther demonstrates to the reader his melancholic tendencies, right from the start of the novel. His thoughts and the events of his life are revealed through a successive series of letters to his dear friend, Wilhelm, and occasionally to other protagonists. We are informed of his love of Homer and how he is able to purge his emotions in his reading. He sets off to visit Walheim, one hour outside of where he lives, to enjoy the countryside and beautiful views it has to offer. On his way to a dance with a date for the evening, they must pick up her friend, Lotte. The girl warns Goethe, 'You will meet a beautiful young woman…Beware you don't fall in love with her…She is already taken' (2012, p.17). Lotte is introduced, surrounded by her much younger brothers and sisters who dote on her, implore her not to leave them, and each insists on passionately kissing her farewell. She professes her love of reading and dancing to Werther. They dance together at the ball with great passion, prompting Werther to exclaim, '…I swore that, cost what it might, no girl I loved and had any claim on should ever waltz with anyone but me' (p.21). At one dinner, Werther recalls a death-bed scene with a woman he knows, recalling it with all the emotion he no doubt felt at the time. This teary scene, leads Lotte to chastise his emotional indulgence, not for the first or last time, '…she scolded me for my too passionate sympathies in everything and that it would be the end of me, that I should spare myself' (p.30). Werther finds himself falling more and more in love with the unobtainable Lotte, into whom he projects all his passions, emotions, fears and anxieties, 'It is her favourite song and it recovers me from every pain, confusion, and foolishness as soon as she strikes the first note' (p.33).

When he is introduced to Albert, the two men strike up a substantial friendship, albeit marred with a relative suspicion and envy. Werther says of Albert, 'He seems scarcely ever to be in a bad mood, and bad moods are, as you know, the sin I detest above all others in people' (p.36). In one scene, Werther 'jokingly' puts a pistol up to his head, above his eye (p.40), prompting a lengthy and emotionally charged discussion on the subject of suicide – discussed later in the chapter.

As he descends further into misery due to the unrequited love of Lotte, at the persuasion of Wilhelm, Werther leaves Wahlheim to take up position in the court in

Weimar. Here he befriends Count C. and Fraulein B., although he oversteps the boundaries of friendship when he unwittingly arrives at a gathering of the aristocracy, of which he is not a part. This is made abundantly clear to him and he flees the scene in total mortification, 'it destroyed me, I am still raging' (p.62). Before he returns to Wahlheim we are reminded of his unabated love for Lotte:

> Sometimes it is beyond my comprehension that any other man can love her, is allowed to love her, since I love her solely, with such passion and so completely and know nothing, understand nothing, have nothing but her (Goethe, 2012, p.68).

He then laments the end of a relationship between a farmhand and his lady employer, equating their situations and revelling in the misery that awaits himself. Shortly after, he mourns the whimsical cutting down of some walnut trees by the wife of the Pastor of St., 'Chopped down! I could murder the wretch who first raised the axe against them. I who could grieve to death if two such trees grew by my house and one of the died of old age' (Goethe, 2012, p.72). With the augmentation of his melancholic observations, he fatefully declares that 'Ossian has replaced Homer in my heart' (p.73). He slips further into an inertial despondence,

> The heart is dead now, raptures no longer flow from it, my eyes are dry and my sense, no longer bathed by refreshing tears, contract my brow in anxiety. I suffer greatly, for I have lost what was the whole joy of my life (Goethe, 2012, p.76)

As the novel makes preparation for its inevitable conclusion, the letters cease and we see a narrative begin from, 'THE EDITOR TO THE READER' (p. 83). Piecing together information he has received, the editor informs that the farmhand of Werther's earlier story, has murdered a replacement worker. Werther declares, 'Love and fidelity, the finest human feelings, had transformed themselves into violence and murder' (p.85). Werther rushes to the aid of the now captive man, who declares, ''No one will have her and she will have no one'' (p.86). When he visits Lotte, he passionately kisses her, 'unending kisses closed upon her mouth' (p.89), only increasing his sorrow and her resolve that he must both control his emotions and visit her less frequently. He disobeys her orders and together they indulge in the passions of Werther's translations of Ossian's work. They are overcome by emotion and once again, '…overwhelmed her trembling and stammering lips

with a range of kisses' (p.103). For Lotte, this signifies the end – they must not meet again. And Werther is resigned to ensure this termination. He ends his life using pistols borrowed from Albert, 'So be it then.—Lotte, Lotte, farewell, farewell' (p.111).

7.4 A Select Study of Suicide

Studies on suicide led one sociologist, David Philips, to coin the phrase, 'the Werther effect', which examined the apparent increase in suicides in response to the knowledge of another, be it fictional or real. Philips based his initial observations on the information from the Werther copycat suicides, but sought out real data to demonstrate that it was a social phenomenon. He quickly discovered a notable spike in the number of suicides, succeeding news coverage of a suicide, to prove cause for concern (Philips, 1982), '*The more publicity devoted to a suicide story, the larger the rise in suicides* thereafter' (p.340, 1974). Due to the fear created by the 'Werther effect', the book was banned in several countries upon its release for fear of a continuation in suicide contagion. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that in the 18th century, the commercial publishing of novels was still a relatively recent phenomenon. This created a new wave of an enjoyment in reading and perhaps the first form of personal escapism. It is therefore possible to assume that people were only beginning to have such an intimate experience of tragedy, the first time that there was a new container for some of their emotions, and we can imagine that as much was introjected, as was projected. In his book, *The Power of Reading* (2015), Frank Furedi examines the role of reading on our knowledge and imagination across the years, and dedicates a chapter to the 'Werther effect'. He discusses the attribution of nefarious deeds, to the consumption of literature:

> The sublimation of moral anxieties through the reader implicitly cast doubt on people's capacity to engage with the published text – novels and periodicals – in a dispassionate, reflective and rational manner. The very term 'reading mania', with its implication of unrestrained lust for fiction, indicated that the consumers of literature could easily lose control over their lives. Such an interpretation of the power of the printed text assumed that by appealing to sensations and gratifying readers' base instincts, the capacity for agency and self-control would be diminished (p.108, 2015).

Furedi describes how, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was widely accepted that literature could have wild effects on the reader and cites references where young men describe their passionate responses to reading and their near suicidal corresponding behaviour, citing that the texts had led them astray (Furedi, 2015). The extreme sensibilities attached to the act of reading was not an uncommon spectacle, even written about in the canonical novel by Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*. Here, the protagonist acts out the stories of chivalry and bravery he has deeply indulged himself in, losing aspects of himself in the process. The idea of contagion through the introjection of entertainment is still one we consider today when we discuss violent video games or films. The idea is as archaic as art itself, 'The thesis that too much exposure to fiction leads the reader to lose touch with reality was rarely contested during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' (Furedi, 2015, p.109). Furedi informs us that, at the end of the eighteenth century there was a study produced by a theologian Charles Moore, examining the moral landscape of England at the time, and the liberal attitude to suicide that had developed, warning against the indulgences of Werther in his suicidal act:

> Implicit in Moore's observation regarding the appeal of Goethe's novel to the heart was the conviction that readers, especially women, are often unable to retain psychic distance from the stories that appeal to their emotions…Thus it was precisely the aesthetic power of *Werther* and its ability to forge a relation of intimacy with the reader that made this novel such a threat to its reader's mental state (2015, p.112).

The release of Goethe's novel was well documented, due to the extreme reaction it caused in some people and, according to Furedi, created waves of melancholia and hysteria in the young men and women that read the novel. Men took on the appearance of Werther and incredibly there was even the release of *Werther* themed memorabilia (Furedi, 2015). It was thought that Goethe's sympathetic and highly romanticised portrayal of Werther's love for Lotte, leading to his subsequent death, portrayed self-destruction and suicide in too fond a light and there were strong, successful movements for the book to be banned in certain countries. *Gentleman's Magazine*, in 1784, even used Werther as a noun, to describe someone of susceptible character as 'a Werther' and it was often reported that the suicides of young men and women must have the necessary accessory of a copy of *Werther* in close proximity to the discovery of their body (Furedi, 2015). Whilst we can examine

with ease the incidences of suicides attributed to the role of the novel, and the indulgence in sensibility it provides to its reader, what needs to be understood is *why* a novel, be it Goethe's or another, can cause such a strong and dedicated reaction in its readers.

In his book, *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide,* Al Alvarez observes that in response to *Werther*, '…suicide was more than exonerated, it was fashionable' (2002, p.228), no longer perceived as a failure of morality. Goethe's novel was assigned the title of a 'genius' work, but this carried certain connotations:

> It follows that real geniuses, who produced as well as posed, had to live at a certain dramatic pitch – at least, in the imagination of their adoring public. At the height of the Romantic fever this personal intensity became almost more important than the work itself' (Alvarez, 2002, p.229).

This supports the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, which highlights the need for people to be perceived as having their own personal tragedy, making them somehow more worthy if this is adequately portrayed. I have suggested that by attributing a tragedy to oneself or another, it also implies a survival has successfully occurred and I feel justified to repeat my contention that this is the true mark of power and success. A CEO of a company has survived all the competition, risen above all those around them and survived the projections and attempts to induce failure, from others. Success is through survival. But for the author, success is something that is measured only by their latest production, leaving the possibility of destruction and an inability to survive symbolically in their literature (and the consequent immortality their words will find) as an ever-present threat. Perhaps, for this reason, there was a vulture like attitude towards the author (perhaps also applicable in our society's appetite for celebrity news, or reality TV):

> However strenuously the poets insisted on the impersonality of art, the audience was reluctant to read them in any way except that by which Keats's tuberculosis, Coleridge's opium and Byron's incest became an intrinsic part of their work – almost an art in themselves, equal and not at all separate. Again, Werther is the first and best paradigm (Alvarez, 2002, p.229).

So, he is suggesting that the reader greedily introjects part of the writer, alongside the words, and it is the knowledge of potential destruction in their real lives that is so hungrily desired. And no doubt Werther's reflection, the self-destructive thoughts of its author, and

his lamentation at the pain of unrequited love, gave the reader a feast. Alvarez observes, 'So suicide enhances a personality which magically survives' (2002, p.231). I have argued that within the model of the Immortality Phantasy, suicide represents the *cessation* of the phantasy. At this point, the desire for survival has halted in the individual; but I have also highlighted that often, the desire for the potential legacy of their tangible creations (art, children, or in this case their Romantic ideologies) can replace the desire for one's own survival (as described by Golding in Chapter 5).

David Bakan questions the unpleasant content of nursery rhymes, responding that 'Critical to their persistence over time is that they are selected again and again for repetition…Those that resonate well to the psychological conditions of mankind survive' (Bakan, 1971, p.61). Yet these are often the ones rooted in the destruction of the child. Bakan hypothesises that perhaps this allows for the preparation of the child for the move into adulthood, or to gain some understanding of the evil in the world, sung through the gentle voice of the mother. She prepares the infant for the onslaught of destruction, presented through the voice of survival. Rob Weatherill, in his book, *Cultural Collapse* (1994), also touches on the role of fairy tales in our unconscious make up. He points out the recurring theme of the threat of consumption from the bad character (the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood, the witch in Hansel and Gretel and the ogre in Jack and the Beanstalk) and he helps develop an explanation of this using Melanie Klein's paranoid-schizoid position, where objects are split into their good and bad parts by the infant, with the ever-present threat of the destruction and devouring both from, and of, the bad object. This is projected into monsters and, as discussed earlier in the thesis (and according to Anna Freud), forms the basis for the bad characters on the page or in stories:

> If the *real* mother does survive his magical destructive attacks, then the power of these destructive phantasies is considerably diminished…It is a time when parents are tested. The child tries out his destructiveness to see if the parents survive!' (Weatherill, 1994, p.53).

This suggests that the parent's survival lays down the model for the child to follow. The parents have been tested, and survive. However, where there is some sort of failure – the parents do not survive either through an inadequate response, or through an actual death,

then the Immortality Phantasy gains strength, destructive phantasies are increased. Jeffrey Berman examines the effect of suicide on the reader, asking if the over glamorisation of the suicidal act, can influence the reader into imitation? He looks at the explicit portrayals of suicide, as put forward by Woolf, Plath and Sexton through their work – none of their diaries or letters ever reveal the same romanticised descriptions (Berman, 1999). However, even knowledge of the act can be influential enough - he describes how Anne Sexton was so influenced by Sylvia Plath's death:

> Anne Sexton refuses to glorify mental illness or suicide in her early poems, regarding herself instead as a survivor. She believed that the writing of poetry saved her life and could save the lives of others. In her late poems, however, we see a darkening of Sexton's vision and an increasing attraction to death. Her poem "Sylvia's Death," written a few days after Plath died, glamorizes suicide as an irresistible longing…the poem embraces suicide as a solution to the problems of life' (1999, p.3)

Anthony Storr presents a model of creativity that helps to explain the artist's increased sensitivities. He informs us in *The Dynamics of Creation* (1993), 'Tests… reveal that creative people are emotionally and socially sensitive'. He continues:

> Some creative people seem to have only a tenuous sense of their own identity. Indeed, their work may be an expression of their search for identity. Sensitive people, and especially those with a pre-dominantly depressive psychopathology, very easily identify themselves with others…' (1993, p.262).

Storr confirms the hypothesis that creative people are different in the makeup of their ego – often fractured and searching for wholeness that may or may not be found via the page (canvas), or in life. Overly sensitive people tend to search for validation of themselves in the words of others (in Werther's case, through Lotte) and it is possible to imagine the melancholic identifying strongly with *Werther* and his sensibilities. Storr suggests that for creative individuals:

> …many are only happy when they are working at some new problem, and require recurrent challenges as a stimulus…the ability to tolerate tension and anxiety is characteristic of the creative…the motive power of much creative activity is emotional tension of one kind or another… (1993, p.264).

This perhaps lends knowledge to the idea that there is the need for reparation on the page to occur, but only under the control of the artist. Storr emphasises the need of the artist to find tension, to seek it out, to control it. The Immortality Phantasy hypothesis can add to

this, suggesting that the tension needs to be mastered on the page, but must only be temporarily resolved before it will be sought out elsewhere, allowing for the repetition of survival. We can look at more of Storr's theory to guide us further, as he follows a Kleinian line of thinking:

> If the breast is always available, there is no reason to hallucinate one. In other words, if there was a perfect match between mother and infant, between object and subject, no inner world would ever be formed, since, in the first instance, this world is presumed to consist of unfulfilled desires and unsatisfied wishes…the result is a schizoid split between reason and emotion, and an added impetus to conquer the world by thought. It is as if such individuals early abandoned any hope of obtaining emotional fulfilment in the real world and therefore banished their feeling to an inner world… (1993, pp.215-216).

We hear artists speak of their need for 'self-expression', the recreation of the self on the page – the representation of the inner world, perhaps with the consequence of withdrawal (temporarily or permanently) from the outer world. Self-expression is the need for the self to be represented in some way. I would argue, this is the need to have a perceptible representation of survival. Storr suggests, 'At the beginning of life, survival is dependent upon 'object relationships'' (1997, p.198). We are aware of the destructive consequences of damages to these early object relations, and how they are set up, influencing future relationships. My hypothesis proposes that survival *is* dependent on object relations, but not solely at the start of life and this persists most certainly through the Oedipus complex and beyond. So, if we look to Goethe, perhaps we can use this idea to understand how his work would cause a small, but notable group of his supporters, to take their own lives in raptured mimesis of the protagonists demise.

The effects of the novel were lamented by Goethe, who regretted not only the re-enactment of the novel, but also the fame that it brought to him. He shunned his 'celebrity' status. However, according to Alvarez (2002), the knowledge of Napoleon having read *Werther* several times, remained a highlight of Goethe's life and his 'greatest personal triumph' (p.228). Perhaps it was necessary for him to condemn the book in order to free himself from the potential for guilt and regret at the raging fever. Equally the carnal ingestion of his words – and due to their auto-biographical nature, his life too – perhaps felt like parts of his identity were being slowly taken away from him, absorbed by the

masses, his reparation torn apart by the scavengers seeking their own truth in his words. 'Goethe healed himself through the telling of the story and lived a long and productive life, but this consolation came too late for those readers whose identification with his suicidal hero proved fatal' (Berman, 1999, p.26).

7.5 Who Is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe?

There is no shortage of material when it comes to a visitation of Goethe's life, including his writing as psychobiography, autobiographies and numerous other studies. I rely on a text by Richard Friedenthal (1993), and turn briefly to the fascinating psychoanalytic study by Kurt Eissler (1963). For spatial reasons, I have narrowed down the selection of key events and relationships to those that that occur *up to* the writing of *Werther* in 1774.

Goethe lived a long life to the amazement of those who had knowledge of his uneasy start to life: not breathing, quite black in colour – a surprise to all that life persisted where death seemed more pertinent. Indeed, Goethe seemed to pride himself on this fact and perhaps it sets the tone for later neurotic tendencies as he states in his *Autobiography*: *Truth and Fiction Relating to My Life* (2010):

> These good aspects, which the astrologers managed subsequently to reckon very auspicious for me, may have been the cause of my preservation; for, through the unskilfulness of the midwife, I came to the world as dead; and only after various efforts was I able to see the light (2010, p.1)

This demonstrates an element of pride in his survival which persisted throughout his life, reflecting his Immortality Phantasy and was no doubt exaggerated further by the many wars he lived through. Goethe's health was a constant issue in his life – from his complications at birth through to some grave childhood illnesses that he was not expected to survive:

> He always complained a great deal about his health… On the other hand he lived to great age, was constantly described as a 'radiant Apollo' and, latterly, as a 'magnificent old man', the prototype of a near-immortal. Without any doubt there was a serious hypochondriachal strain in him…' (Friedenthal, 1993, p.59).

However, these periods of grave illness brought him even closer to his sister, who was often charged with his recovery. Additionally, they brought him survival, where none was

expected. Beyond being a poet, artist, philosopher and writer, he was also a scientist who made some notable contributions to the fields of anatomy and colour theory.

Johann Wolfgang was the oldest child of the family, with a sister born one year after him and three children to follow, all of whom died young (Friedenthal, 1993). He was very close to his mother and maintained a relatively good relationship with his father, who, with an iron fist, pushed him hard in all things of scholarly interest and into the path of law in Leipzig at a young age. Goethe suggests in his autobiography that this was because he had outgrown the knowledge of his father and teachers (2010). His mother was known for her carefully cultivated sunny and cheerful disposition, which she wore with pride (Friedenthal, 1993) and in his *Autobiography*, she is spoken of with great fondness. His father ruled with terror, his mother with reward (Goethe, 2010). He also adored his sister and she, him – perhaps they were truly each other's greatest loves, 'Goethe attaches himself more and more closely, almost passionately to his sister' (Friedenthal, 1993, p.32). Goethe's frequent object choice of already attached women or unobtainable women, could perhaps be a reflection of this relationship. A detailed psychoanalytic study of Goethe's life performed by Kurt Eissler (1963), reveals a stronger complication in the family dynamics, especially with regards to his sister:

> The tendency to take full possession of her is unmistakable. He will tell her what to read and what not to read…The jealousy, the desire to banish the taboo-object of his affection into an environment where sexual gratifications are impossible, the denial that the sister is an object of erotic feelings, and the aggressive impulse against a father-substitute – all of these are expressed on the occasion of this birthday that he had to celebrate away from his loved one (Eissler, 1963, p.41-2).

For Eissler, the desires of the relationship with his sister, reflects his dominance in the form of a father figure over her, mainly as a tool to usurp his own father and maintain dominance over the females in his life:

> The question of Goethe's abrupt – and usually secret – flightlike separations from his sweethearts has often been raised. I think that for a few instances of these at least his jealous attachments to his sister must be considered the driving force' (1963, p.94).

Goethe made a move to Strasburg as a young adult, commencing an incredibly happy time for him. One of his acquaintances there was a man called Salzmann, who

introduced Goethe to various literary and societal circles. Goethe made a habit of befriending both older men who could guide his educational and passionate pursuits, and young boys who he mentored and 'rescued' from lives of poverty or difficulties. Friedenthal noted, 'Even in his early days, the polarity of Goethe's nature can astonish us with the strength of its contrasts' (1993, p.63). He is referring here to the contrast between his work, a 'shameless piece of roguery' and his real life, 'the world of pietism' (p.65) - a major movement at the time in Germany, concerned with spiritual rebirth. Goethe eventually moved away from this way of life, 'Here again we can observe the duality in his nature: solitariness and the deep need for sociability' (Friedenthal, 1993, p.65).

It is abundantly clear that women governed Goethe's life – from his great love and respect of his mother and sister, to the numerous love affairs that accompanied his life. The most notable connection he formed was a deep and lasting friendship with Charlotte von Stein, who is accredited with both his emotional and literary developments in his later life. One particular love affair commenced during a visit to see relatives in Sessenheim, where he met Friederike Bion and the two form a very happy and close bond, based on flirtation and games. She is immortalised in a later poem, *Friederike in Sessenheim*, which created a similar effect to *Werther*:

> A Friederike cult started, Sessenheim became a place of pilgrimage… In this, with sickening sentimentality, the girl voluntarily renounces her love for the genius Goethe, because she does not want to stand in the way of his career as a poet (Friedenthal, 1993, p.92).

In 1772, he goes to Wetzlar and whilst passing through a countryside village of Garbenheim, he meets the bailiff, Amtmann Buff, who is the father of the very special Lotte (Charlotte Buff). Goethe is extremely taken with her but even more so, perhaps, because she is engaged to another man, Christian Kestner, 'But Goethe does not want a girl who is free and may try to tie him down. He derives a sense of inner well-being from his grief, his indecision. He is perfectly happy to love unhappily and to be spared the final consequences' (Friedenthal, 1993, p.115) – the consequence of marriage and children (perhaps the cessation of his Immortality Phantasy?). Lotte becomes the inspiration for the love interest of the unhappy *Werther*, a role that she was reportedly flattered by

(Friedenthal, 1993). There were other great loves of Goethe's life, including Lili Schoemann, Ulrike von Levetzow and Maria Agata Szymanowska amongst others. However, in later life, his heart belonged to his mistress, Johanna Christiana Sophie Vulpius. They were together for eighteen years and had one child together, Julius August Walter von Goethe, before he finally married her. They remained together until her death, ten years later.

In contrast, Goethe's first love was a girl named Gretchen. Together with Goethe and a group of cousins, they formed a joyful group of friends, after initially using Goethe's poetry skills to tease others with fake love letters. This eventually developed into making money from writing epithalamiums, which the group would spend on indulgent nights of food and wine, accompanied by happiness and laughter. After a period of great delight in each other's company, Goethe is informed that the cousins have supposedly been involved in some nefarious dealings and he is forbidden to see any of the group again, including Gretchen. The others are arrested and questioned over their roles in a gang of frauds, who had forged documents and been involved in serious criminal activities. Goethe is treated more sympathetically due to his social status but does not forget his friends. Concern at their fate nearly tears him apart and we see the first of his extremely active sensibilities and the first commentary on the possibility of self-harm:

> I declared at the same time, that if they were not spared like myself, that if their follies were not regarded with indulgence, and their faults pardoned, that if anything in the least harsh or unjust happened to them, I would do some violence to myself, and no one should prevent me…I did not know what to do for my sorrow. I cast myself full length upon the floor, and moistened it with tears (Goethe, 2010, p.128).

What we do learn is the deep loyalty of Goethe even at this young age, and all his future relationships - friendships, lovers, boys, girl - were afforded the same level of passionate commitment. From the care-free happiness of this period of creativity and friendship, he now plummeted into a despair and depression that he could barely contain. As his melancholia persisted, his writing ceased. Only after an illness, his family finally agree to reveal the consequences of his fateful friends – all of whom were released with warnings only. However, Gretchen's deposition reveals that she thought of Goethe as a child, and

herself as his sister, causing immeasurable damage to Goethe's pride: '…I was terribly affronted that she had set me down in reports as a child, and believed myself at once cured of all passions for her' (2010, p.133). She is the first of a collection of women who do not reciprocate his love, and instead represent a mother/sister figure, confused for a love object, 'It seemed frightful to me that I had sacrificed sleep, repose, and health for the sake of a girl who was to consider me a babe' (pp.133-134). At times of disappointment, he loses the ability to create and interestingly equates it to the father and son dynamic (also reflecting God and Jesus):

> But here again, the peculiarities of the father and son came into conflict: for it was almost impossible for me to make good use of a good, white, perfectly clean sheet of paper… Nor were any of my drawings quite finished; and how should I have executed a whole, which indeed I saw with my eyes, but did not comprehend (Goethe, 2010, p.137).

We see here a mix of symptoms – the inability to create, the inability for reparation, confusions in the oedipal relationship, an indulgence in the death instinct and the temporary failure of the Immortality Phantasy. He is inertial – lost, fractured. Even when he finds a new female to attach his identification to - 'My early affection for Gretchen I had now transferred to one Annette' (2010, p.175) - he cannot form a completed bond. The internalised destruction is projected outwards onto his latest love object:

> My ill humour at the failure of my poetical attempts…I thought I might vent on her, because she truly loved me with all her heart and did whatever she could to please me. By unfounded and absurd fits of jealousy, I destroyed our most delightful days, both for myself and her (Goethe, 2010, p.176).

He eventually pushes her away entirely - no doubt in part due to her availability. But Goethe is also reflecting the excessive sensibilities of the times: perhaps due to the threat of war, perhaps due to the lack of real drama, perhaps due to the novel gaining popularity? 'Generally known is that self-torture which in the lack of all outward grievances, had now become fashionable, and which disturbed the very best minds' (Goethe, 2012, p.1). This became especially reflected around the time that *Werther* was written – the height of the apparent cult of sensibility – leading to another of Goethe's friends to take his own life:

> In carrying on and sustaining this [internal] conflict, Lenz surpassed all the other idlers and dabblers who were occupied in mining into their own souls, and thus he suffered from the

> universal tendencies of the times, which was said to have been let loose by Werther (Goethe, 2012, p.2)

But Goethe continues to survive and as Eissler crucially notes,

> The mechanism of riddance is basic to those who are constantly courting the unconscious, as the man of art must do if he wants to create great art. Goethe was a master of ridding himself of adversity. He put an end to a crisis of suicide by writing *Werther* (Eissler, 1963, p.28-9).

7.6 A Kristevan Approach

To preface an exploration of the novel using the Immortality Phantasy, it would be helpful to examine Julia Kristeva's ideas, to further understand the role of the text on the reader. I have discussed elsewhere how art has the ability to transform loss into something alive, something living, it is the role of beautiful creativity to remind us of survival over death. Loss is transformed onto the page to provide a sense of, and an unconscious belief in, our immortality. It enhances our Immortality Phantasy but also our subsequent need for destruction in order to gain access to the repetition of survival. Kristeva hypothesises the counter version of this: that the beauty on the page cannot have resonance with the individual – it represents a good meant for someone else. It does not fill the void of loss because they cannot transform their own depression into a creative act:

> Ever since that archaic attachment the depressed person has the impression of having been deprived of an unnameable, supreme good, of something unrepresentable, that perhaps only devouring might represent… (Kristeva, 1989, p.13).

This suggests that primary identifications have been insufficient and therefore we can make the assumption that the ability to effectively sublimate, create, or form substantial relationships, is stunted. With initial Oedipal connections, the primary loved object must be given up. The object is temporarily lost, and it is loss that is the impetus for imagination, whilst simultaneously threatening it (1989, p.9). The lost object is searched for through creativity, until the Immortality Phantasy and the struggle for survival can no longer be endured. We can tie all these thoughts together to understand how this can manifest in the reader: their loss is not accompanied by creative salvation, they cannot create beauty and therefore, must be relegated to the ugly – to the incomplete, the lost, the unsalvageable.

The beauty of the words serve only to remind the individual of their own badness. Sorrow is craved, symbolism has no meaning, 'The depressive denial that destroys the meaning of the symbolic also destroys the act's meaning of the symbolic and leads the subject to commit suicide without anguish of disintegration' (1989, p.19). If we imagine that, for Goethe's reader, when identification has failed with the restored parents, or the form of language, creativity fails and the individual is lost to the death instinct. Kristeva explains this:

> …what makes such a triumph over sadness possible is the ability of the self to identify no longer with the lost object but with a third party – father, form, schema… such an identification, which may be called phallic or symbolic, insures the subject's entrance into the universe of signs and creation (Kristeva, 1989, p.23).

The defusion of the instincts has left them vulnerable and the failure of creativity (and identification) has meant that the Immortality Phantasy is inverted to become a desire for death, not survival.

7.7 An Exploration of the Novel Using the Immortality Phantasy Paradigm

7.7.1 Conversations about Suicide

> I have been drunk more than once, my passions were never far from madness, and I regret nothing for I have understood in my own capacity that all extraordinary people who over achieved anything great, anything that seemed impossible, were always certain to be vilified as drunks and lunatics' (Goethe, 2003, p.41).

Werther highlights the closeness of the indulgence of passion – be it melancholic, or emotional excess – to the 'extraordinary' person, those of creative exceptions, as Goethe is so fond of highlighting. The projection of his emotions and feelings reflects a need to be genius, extraordinary and impassioned. Albert does not let Werther off so easily and we see the internal monologue of Goethe's sense and sensibility battling on the page, representations of his life and death instincts. Werther is the death instinct: suicidal, unrestrained in passions and emotions, melancholic. Albert is controlled, calm in his emotions and he represents the life instinct with procreation as its aim. He is whole: complete in his relationships, work and life. Albert responds:

> You exaggerate everything and here at least you are quite wrong in comparing suicide, which is what we are talking about, with great deeds. For really, it can't be thought of anything but weakness. Of course it is easier to die that to bear a life of torment with fortitude (Goethe, 2003, p.41).

Werther is unhappy with this response, suggesting that people who undergo greats feats of strength in extreme circumstances are not weak, 'And if such exertion, my dear friend, is a strength why should an extreme degree of it be a weakness' (p.41). He continues:

> So it is not a question of whether person is weak or strong but whether he can withstand the measure of his sufferings, be they physical, mental, or emotional. And I find it as strange to call a man a coward for taking his own life as it would be improper to call him cowardly for dying of a malignant fever' (p.41).

Werther makes further justifications, '…in the end some growing passion robs him of all tranquil power of thought and drives him to destruction' (p.42). He then recounts a story in great detail regarding a young, humble girl whose passions are finally awakened in the most intense way through a love affair, taking her away from the mundanities of everyday life. The girl in question has been pulled out of her inertial state of non-being, into the passionate sways of love, her desires contained in the other. But when he leaves her, her survival desires cease and inertial aims take over:

> Till at last she stretches out her arms, to embrace all she has wished for – and her beloved leaves her.—Stricken, senseless, she stands before an abyss, all about her is darkness, no prospect, no comfort, no grasp of anything, for *he* has left her in whom alone she felt herself to be alive… she jumps, to smother her pain in an all-encompassing death… Nature can find no exit out of the labyrinth of tangled and contradictory forces, and the person must die' (Goethe, 2003, p.43).

But (perhaps like Jocelin) the container and its creativity was a delusion, her inner world is irreplaceably shattered. She cannot look for survival because she is too broken to desire it. The Immortality Phantasy does not exist even in its most destructive form. She requires only the inertial silence of the death instinct.

In terms of the language used in this last passage, the provocative use of the letter 'S' must be noted [20]. 'Stricken', 'senseless', 'abyss', 'smother', 'encompassing'. We must

[20] It must be noted that this is a translation of the German text and therefore the words differ from the original. Nonetheless, this observation remains noteworthy for our examination of the text.

consider the relevance to the other crucial s's: 'suicide' and 'survival'. The extremes of the letter S. And perhaps we can imagine that the reader is split: do they follow suicide or survival? This follows the dialectic of Goethe's life, reflected in the novel – Albert is survival, sense. Werther is suicide, sensibility. Werther argues that suicide cannot be seen as that different to succumbing to a disease – the disease here is of the mind, rather than of the body. Their discussion as to the strengths and weakness of one who would act on their destructive tendencies no doubt reflects the thoughts of the times. The sway towards excesses of emotions and the encouragement to indulge one's feelings to their fullest, perhaps persuades the reader to introject the pain Werther felt – the remnants of Goethe's own pain and emotions, given over to the page – taking in his destruction over his creativity.

7.7.2 A Textual Analysis

I have highlighted above, Goethe's use of an epigraph at the start of the novel. As the first connection with the reader, he is imploring us to receive the character in the way he, as the author, dominantly requires – perhaps reflecting Goethe's own desire for mastery. Whilst this is the voice of the editor, at the same time, it is the authoritative voice of the author, telling us that we *will* be moved to tears. We are told to indulge in his suffering, and keep the book as a 'friend', suggesting we move beyond the normal identifications made with an interesting novel, to create an actual object relationship. The book is to be assimilated, to become a representation of the self, the friend as our mirror image. We are told to hold *Werther* up as part of our identity, to form a bond, a connection with the 'admirable' Werther.

As the novel begins the language of the text is immediately extreme in its displays of passionate arousal. The letters written for our purview, repeatedly refer to, 'My dear friend' (Goethe, 2014, p.6), reaffirming our bond to each other. The mirror image idea from Jacques Lacan, reveals that through viewing our image, we can see an imagined wholeness taking the place of the real, fragmented self, 'It suffices to understand the mirror stage in this context *as an identification*…namely, the transformation that takes place in

the subject when he assumes…an image that is predestined to have an effect at this phase…' (Lacan, 2004, p.4). Lacan is referring to a childhood movement in this case, but the basic idea can be applicable in other ways. I propose that we can follow this idea to understand Goethe's desire for Werther to become our mirror image – for us to see within him those parts of ourselves that we have not linguistically revealed, where we have not sufficiently formed the words that can express our feelings. And when we behold Werther, we are required to introject him - the good and the bad parts, and through the coercion of the author and the protagonist, Werther can lay down expressions of love and sadness on our behalf. But if Werther becomes the representation of our perceived wholeness, whilst we remain fragmented – not least because of the act of projection and introjection, or due to ill-formed primal object relations – then his eventual destruction of himself, destroys ourselves too. Goethe expresses this idea further:

> …I can feel the presence of the Almighty who created us in his image, the wafting breath of the love that encompasses all, that upholds and sustains us in an eternal joy, oh my friend, at the dawning then before my eyes when the world and the heavens reside in my soul completely like the bodily shape of a beloved woman, then how I yearn and often have said to myself, Oh could you give that some answering expression, only breathe into the page what is so fully and warmly alive in you till it becomes the mirror of your soul just as your soul is the mirror of the unending diety!—Oh my friend!—But it will be the downfall of me, I lie defeated by the force of the splendour of these phenomena (Goethe, 2014, pp.6-7).

This passage has been quoted at length due to its abundant descriptive and theoretical contributions and therefore its composition must be explored. Not only are we connected to Werther, but he further allies us to God, lest we forget that we are made in his image, cementing our belief in our wholeness through the other. We are promised 'eternal joy' – unending love and happiness, appealing directly to the Immortality Phantasy. Eternity informs us of our survival, 'oh my friend' - the personalisation assures us of this. And here Goethe has the chance, through Werther to describe his aims – to 'breathe into the page what is so fully and warmly alive in you'. I have argued that following the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis, the act of creativity is accompanied by the release of destruction, and the page can act as container for the duelling life and death instincts,

defused and dangerous. The creative act allows the individual the chance for reparation, to be introjected by the reader, to allow for the survival to occur via the page on our behalf. Werther expresses his feelings of being alive, and his desire to project this onto the page to be introjected by Wilhelm/the reader. The page becomes a reflection of the self, he says, and the self a reflection of God. The page becomes our mirror image – the (perceived) true representation of ourselves. This includes the idealisation of the female – happiness in his soul is in the shape of a beloved woman. We have learnt that Goethe's satisfaction is entirely dependent on female relationships and Werther has informed us that his self-worth is tied up to Lotte, 'And how I value myself…how I adore myself now that she loves me' (2012, p.33). But as Klein suggests, such an idealisation can be extremely damaging:

> The projection of good feelings and good parts of the self into the mother is essential for the infant's ability to develop good object relations and to integrate his ego. However, if this projective process is carried out excessively, good parts of the personality are felt to be lost, and in this way the mother becomes the ego-ideal; this process too results in weakening and impoverishing the ego (Klein, 1975, p.9).

She informs us further, 'The identification based on this type of projection again vitally influence object-relations' (p.9). We are aware that for Goethe, the mother has become the ego-ideal and this greatly effects subsequent object-relations. Werther too seeks the mother-ideal in his relationships and when he sees Lotte, surrounded by her 'children', there is a narcissistic reflection in her, of his ego-ideal, as described by his amalgamation of deity, woman, self and mirror-image, in the quotation above (p.6-7). But with this rapture comes a stark warning – such identifications will represent his demise, 'I lie defeated'.

The language of the novel maintains its intensity from the beginning to the end, everything dictated in passionate sways, between *destruction*, 'through hedges that hurt me, through thorns that tear me' (p.48), and (in the telling representation of his internal world), 'Oh, I stood over the abyss with open arms and breathed down, down, and lost myself in the ecstasy of committing my torments and my sorrows down there in a tempest and to vanish in a roaring like the waves!' (Goethe, 2012, p.88); to *survival*, described in infinitely less ardent means, 'to enjoy every memory wholly new, livingly' (p.64) and 'For

your sake I must live' (p.30). Goethe has described aspects of the despairing mind, in language that it is possible for the reader to make identifications to. The beauty of the description coerces the reader, suggesting the potential for wholeness and containment formed by the words. But at the same time, the words project the hidden sentiment, protected by linguistic deflection, 'abyss', 'lost', 'vanish' – all reminders of the inertial desires of the death instinct. And in comparison, the language of survival is occasional. The reader introjects Werther's Immortality Phantasy - the survival and destruction is entirely entrenched in his own ego, through the ego-ideal of the mother, tied up to Oedipal desires that cannot be fulfilled. This is explained by Werther, 'The fact is, by our very nature we are bound to compare everything with ourselves and ourselves with everything, and so our happiness or misery lies in the objects we keep company with and nothing in that respect is more dangerous than solitude' (Goethe, 2012, p.53). And here we recall the novel's epigraph, where we were informed by the 'editor' that in loneliness, we can reach for Werther's story as 'friend', when we have none other. If this is the case, Werther is telling us that our misery is found in the objects we choose, and therefore, those who have internalised his Immortality Phantasy, will follow him on his path to suicide, justified by the acquisition of his story as object.

It must also be remembered that this novel was amongst the first written and therefore presented the reader with the unusual situation of being *alone* whilst absorbing another's creative projections, rather than the shared experience of watching a play for example. The act of reading requires solitude, and yet it is exactly this that the author is warning against. The paradox of the situation, will be reflected in the reader's response – survival or destruction.

7.7.3 The Effect on the Reader

Whilst this chapter has already made observations of the effect on the reader and made attempts to understand the extreme response *Werther* created, this idea is discussed further within this section, to answer explicitly if the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis can provide a more effective paradigm to shed light on this devastating phenomenon.

If we imagine that Goethe has projected his idealisation of women into Werther, then we can argue that the creative process (carrying with it the desexualised libido), allows Goethe the possibility to make reparation for any damage done to his loved objects. Whist enjoying the passionate sways of the extremes of emotion, as he did in his youth, we know that he was later able to form good object relations, including marriage and procreation – which I argue, usually results in the decline or cessation of the Immortality Phantasy. *Werther* does not appear to have creativity at his disposal – we see his artistic endeavour referred to on occasion, but this is not successful as an act. By maintaining and attempting mastery of the idealised object, bound up in his super-ego, object-choices become narcissistic and therefore, the value of his self is measured in the acceptance of the other, 'But I found her, I felt the heart and the generous soul of her in whose presence I felt myself to be more than I was because I was everything I could be' (Goethe, 2012, p.9). This reflects the perception of her as a lost-object that Werther has been searching for and she becomes the replacement of the idealised mother who remains unobtainable.

Freud has suggested, with regards to infants, 'they derived their sexual objects from their experiences of satisfaction…which serves the purpose of self-preservation' (1914, p.87). He continues:

> We say that a human being has originally two sexual objects – himself and the woman who nurses him – and in doing so we are postulating a primary narcissism in everyone, which may in some cases manifest itself in a dominating fashion in his object-choice (Freud, 1914, p.88).

Therefore, the individual can become, 'impoverished in his ego and is incapable of fulfilling his ego-ideal' (1914, p.101). The individual feels he can only be cured by love – the chosen object can make him whole again, but the object choice remains unsuitable (demonstrated in Werther's case). I would argue that they are unconsciously chosen for their unobtainability, perhaps to ensure the 'incest-prohibition' (Freud, 1917). This idea suggests that there is an innate horror associated to incestual relationships, following the instinct for self-preservation (Freud, 1917, p.335). Therefore, this object-choice remains an unconscious one, but the taboo associated is sought out in unobtainable relationships.

Lotte is perfection in her epitomisation of 'mother'. Werther tells us, 'I thirst and pine' (Goethe, 2012, p.15) for Lotte - she is not fulfilling his basic needs of love and hunger, failing to preserve him. Lotte remains idealised, necessary to Werther to maintain illusions of wholeness, 'It is better to see her through the eyes of the man who loves her. Perhaps if I saw her through my own eyes she would not appear to me as she does not, and why would I spoil that beautiful image' (2012, p.15). His desire for mastery is also evident, 'no girl I loved and had any claim on should ever waltz with anyone but me' (p.21). Through Lotte, Werther's attempts at mastery and control of the idealised object continue, reflecting Goethe's own attempts to govern his sister, as replacement of mother. The novel was written at a time that his sister was not only possessed by another man (in marriage) but also pregnant with a child, fulfilling the demands of procreation. Both his sister and Lotte represent survival through procreation, which Werther seeks to obtain in his folly, by setting himself up as father, next to the mother. But he cannot replace the father, and he cannot replace Albert – the first of several grave narcissistic injuries. In healthy developments, identifications with the father are made as I have discussed, leading to a sublimation; but Werther fails to achieve this when he can no longer bare to imagine Albert with Lotte. We can perhaps understand this further by looking to Goethe, who idealises himself as the replacement of his father from a young age – outgrowing his tutelage, soon prevailing where his father could not, arguable enforcing his own failed relationships in his quest for mother-object. Reflecting Goethe's relationship to Gretchen, and her viewing his as a child, we can see the same situation in Werther. Lotte rejects his advances to become a father-figure to her siblings and in one instance, he picks up a child who has affected him deeply by 'her truth and goodness', and sets about, 'kissing her warmly' (2012, p.30). Lotte's response is, 'You shouldn't have done that' (p.30). Interestingly, he begins the next letter, 'What children we are!' (p.31) representative of Werther's move to an accepted position of child, of awareness that he cannot be the father, cannot be the love interest of the mother. Thus begins his melancholic descent, exclaiming to us, 'Adieu! I see no end to this misery but the grave' (p.48). As we see him move towards his self-destructive end, his resignation to the role of child becomes more of a reality, revealing his Oedipal failures and consequently, survival failures: 'How clearly I have always seen my

condition and acted like a child nonetheless'. If we are to follow the Kleinian argument that the first survival is of the bad breast, we can apply the knowledge of Goethe's over-idealisation of the good breast - represented by excessive introjection - to assume that the bad breast was too readily incorporated alongside. The good and bad parts represent the nourishing breast (equating to survival), and the annihilating breast (equating to destruction). We can assume these objects are deeply entrenched within Goethe and therefore he desperately searches for the representation of the good breast in the external world. When the love from this object is rejected, the survival fails and the destructive impulses succeed. Werther, projects these feelings out through his emotions and we see them appear in his extreme sways of emotions, 'There's no truer and warmer delight than when a great soul opens itself to you' (2012, p.54). We see his proclamations of pleasure, but at the same time, this remains a narcissistic reflection – he feels delights because she opens herself up to *him*, she is validating him. Even his attempt at humility reveals the extent of his narcissism, 'I see every day how foolish it is to measure others by oneself' (p.55). The implication is that they cannot live up to his ego-ideal.

We understand that for Werther, both destruction and survival are firmly entrenched within him, rather than sought for recognition, from the outside world, as per the usual Immortality Phantasy. Therefore, he must represent these two aspects through his *emotions*, rather than through his *actions* (as we have seen in our previous protagonists – Jocelin and Clarissa). For Werther, the Immortality Phantasy implies the testing of his nourishing emotions, against those of his devouring ones. One represents the strength of the ego to survive against the other, which desires the annihilation of the self. This affirmation of survival is bound up in his relationship to others, and when they fail to maintain his idealisations, his internal world is irreplicably destroyed. To the reader who has obeyed the demands of the author, internalising Werther as told, they too must perish. Perhaps we could imagine that within Werther they found a place to put their own idealisation – his fashionable sensibilities, wrapped around the evocative notion of a 'forbidden love'. This fulfils the demands of the Immortality Phantasy – but this time, the love object is not obtained. Lotte chooses Albert and the reader is left bereft, unloved,

unwhole. Ugliness has taken the place of beautiful sentiment. They submit wholly to the death instinct.

7.8 Conclusion

As the book progresses, Werther suffers several painful, narcissistic injuries, which demonstrate a failure in survival. His phantasies of omnipotence as the Oedipal victory, eventually begin to dwindle, as he is rejected as father figure. There are several further key incidents which I hypothesise, lead to Werther's self-destruction:

- Werther's removal from a societal gathering. This event stresses that he is of an unequal social standing and therefore not welcome, serving as a reminder of his childishness. 'Every word she spoke was a dagger in my heart' (p.62), he says of a subsequent discussion with the party's hostess.
- The chopping down of the walnut trees, 'I shall go mad with rage' (p.72). We assume immortality in the great strength of trees. The narcissistic injury done is the realisation of their failure to survive – especially when they had previously acted as container to his emotions.
- The murdering farmhand in retaliation for unrequited love, 'The vain attempt to save the unfortunate farmhand was the last flaring-up in Werther of a flame and a light that were being extinguished. He sank all the deeper into pain and inactivity' (p.85). This very real reflection of his own situation, only encourages the destruction and a welcome move towards the inertia of the death instinct.
- The condemnation of Lotte after he passionately kisses her, ''That is the last time, Werther! You will not see me again'' (p.103). She is irrevocably lost to him.

These events reflect in Werther the aspects of himself which represent self-destruction, the internalised bad objects. All together, the lack of good object relations means that he cannot make whole the good object, it has no survival. As he nears his intended death, we see all the confusion of his Oedipal relationships come together, '…you are mine, yes, Lotte, for ever', 'And what does it matter that Albert is your husband', 'I go ahead to my Father, to your Father', 'I shall see your mother…Your mother, the image of you' (Goethe,

2012, p.105). Through death he believes that he can possess Lotte, through the joining of the father and finding of the lost mother. This is the only way he can fulfil all of his Oedipal desires. It appears to him that *death is his only option for survival* (and we can also see this idea reflected in martyrdom – the legacy lives in place of the individual). Lotte will be reflected in her mother, who has survived on through death.

By understanding the role of the mirror image in the novel, we can better understand the effect on the reader. Goethe's novel, coerces the reader into introjecting Werther's reflections. He projects all he cannot contain into the reader and we are constantly reminded that we are his accomplice, we know his secrets, and we too cannot create good objects, as our container – in the form of Werther and the page – has failed us. Werther represents the bad object, which we have introjected. Our desire for survival has failed. In the fragmented or weak ego, we can imagine that the desire to fulfil the Immortality Phantasy - to test the strength of one's survival - can only lead to the destruction of the self if it perceives failure in the other (as in Winnicott's notion). Werther has failed. The Immortality Phantasy has ceased.

I would like to conclude by highlighting one alternative desire that could take hold of the reader, highlighted by Werther's desire to see Lotte's mother post-death: survival either through legacy, or the after-life. A better life once this one has been destroyed and now we can see death holding the potential for survival. This is further supported by the report that those who committed suicide following the reading of *Werther*, like the protagonist himself, ensured that the details of their death were meticulously carried out. It was essential for a survival to occur for them *in abstentia* and this is ensured when the editor now assumes control 'of his surviving letters by acting as narrator'. Survival has been given a new voice post-mortem, the Immortality Phantasy successfully carried out through their legacy.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

'There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.'

(Oscar Wilde, 2003, p.3)

8.1 Introduction

The Immortality Phantasy is a hypothesis developed out of the extensive theorisations of the human condition from a variety of psychoanalytic schools of thoughts, particularly the Freudian and Kleinian. This hypothesis aims to synthesise the large body of work on creativity and destruction to highlight a crucial desire for survival, which can help to determine the nature of this relationship. This thesis has attempted to answer certain important questions: why are destruction and creativity so closely linked? What is the role of survival? Can the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis explain certain observational phenomenon in our relationship to destruction that other psychoanalytic theories cannot? And perhaps, most pertinently, is the application of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis useful to an examination of literary texts?

This final chapter, aims to synthesise the variety of ideas put forward within the pages of this thesis, questioning the validity of the claims of the hypothesis, at the same time as looking forward, beyond the pages, to ask if there would be a way to improve its excavation of ideas, to develop the Immortality Phantasy further, or to include knowledge beyond the scope of Freudian/Kleinian schools?

Before discussing and concluding these research questions, it is relevant to briefly examine some final literary texts, in order to extend the list of tested novels beyond the three main ones chosen above. I have chosen to place these texts within this final chapter, as the second half of the thesis moves away from a conceptual framework, towards a demonstration of the application of the hypothesised paradigm through literary texts. As analyses of these texts cannot be thoroughly conducted (including the usual biographies,

secondary sources, synopses etc.), I have chosen extra texts to be examined briefly here in the final section, to provide further support for the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis. This process follows the notion of verificationism – suggesting that the more evidence that can be garnered, the more claim a hypothesis has to success. The additional texts aim to demonstrate future directions for the Immortality Phantasy (such as a deeper discussion of these additional novels), as well as to demonstrate that the hypothesis is applicable to a wide-ranging set of novels, from very different authors, with very different subject matters.

8.2 Verificationism

Verificationism as a methodological tool, puts forward the idea that the more demonstrative the hypothesis is, the more we can claim that the Immortality Phantasy is valuable in our reading of literature. This is used in place of stricter methodological testing as it is an effective way to excavate the hypothesis and build up evidence in favour of the Immortality Phantasy and the role of survival. This is a logical process for testing my theory as it follows the basic idea that the amassing of evidence helps to support the hypothesis. By establishing the validity of the Immortality Phantasy within the chosen novels, we are in essence, proving the hypothesis to be correct. Of course, it must be noted that this system is used for the purpose of this chapter in its most simplistic form, purposefully disregarding the complexities and criticisms associated to this methodology. The process of verificationism is used in place of more strict tests appropriate to other branches of science and follows a simple idea that with every test that shows the Immortality Phantasy, the more solid the argument is.

8.2.1 Paradise Lost *by John Milton (1667)*

‘The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a hell of Heav’n’
(Milton, 2003, p.9)

John Milton’s epic poem, has been chosen due to the rich allegorical depictions of both creativity (through Adam and Eve) and destruction (through Satan). The poem was

controversial due to its treatment of a delicate religious subject and the use of Satan as one of his main protagonists (or antagonist). By his own admission, Milton's desire was to write a poem of epic proportions that would rival those of Homer and Virgil. In an 1807 love letter to his wife Martha, Freud describes Milton as 'an even greater poet' than Goethe. The book as a journey through the processes of creativity and destruction, mirrors Milton's own life, full of destruction and creativity, most notably the loss of his eyesight, the death of two wives and his dedication to his literary pursuits, highlighting his desire to be the greatest writer. The epic story takes on the role of describing the commencement of all creation and mankind. His beautiful poetic manner transforms and personifies a range of ideologies, that form part of our everyday language and are reflected in the characters of Sin, Death, Chaos and Night. I examine briefly, two ideas from the poem:

1) Sin as the Immortality Phantasy
2) Adam and Eve's destruction of innocence by eating from the Tree of Knowledge

In Book Two, we learn of the 'family' dynamic of Satan as father, Sin as both Mother and Daughter, and Death as Son. Satan is narcissism. Sin, his daughter is sprung out of his head, representing his ego-ideal, 'Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing' (p.44). This part of himself, his daughter, becomes his sexual choice and he rapes her. Sin is a personification of the Immortality Phantasy. The top half of her, 'The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair' (Milton, 2003, p.41), representing beauty: wholeness, life, survival, a defence against our knowledge of death (Hagman, 2002). This is brutally juxtaposed against her lower half, 'But ended foul in many a scaly fold' (p.41), representing: destruction and pain. Contained within one character, we see a picture of beauty against ugliness, life instincts versus death instincts, survival battling destruction. As a consequence of Satan's narcissistic rape, the bottom half of the body is destroyed, when her son, Death, 'Made to destroy' (p.44), rips out of her. Milton's imagery of the disgusting and obscure character of Death, is that of another world – something unfamiliar and indigestible to us, representing our inability to comprehend death fully. Milton maintains the language of family, 'father', 'daughter', 'son' 'mother', but of course, the trio only serve to remind us that there must be a successful repression of Oedipal desires,

or the family dynamic is distorted and destroyed. Sin, quite literally, must integrate the destruction of this dynamic (in the form of the hell hounds bursting in and out of her hourly). She warns us of the duality of the beauty of creativity and life, with the less visible connection to death and destruction. Satan has broken down the boundaries of the Oedipus complex, in his attempt to overthrow his own father (and by raping his daughter). He cries, 'Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n' (p.9), demonstrating his refusal to have God as his master, leading to his attempt to overthrow him and God's subsequent rejection of Satan. Consequently, he sets himself up as the representation of destruction for all eternity. When he produces his son, Death, he must endure the same threats to his power as father, as he has attempted to God, 'Grim Death my son and foe, who sets them on, And me his parent would full soon devour' (p.45).

The second aspect for examination, follows Hanna Segal's paper, 'Disillusionment: The Story of Adam and Eve and that of Satan' (2001). This relates the story of Adam and Eve to our own personal mourning for lost illusions, associating guilt and shame to the loss of paradise in consequence for eating from the Tree of Knowledge, leading to ambivalence and death. This conscious knowledge of their loss of immortality leads to a 'resentment against life' and a psychosis. But their life before in Paradise, Segal describes as a non-reality (2007, p.26), '…paradoxically, eating from [the tree of life] gives us also the knowledge of death. The Serpent…tempts them by appealing to their destructive part – to their envy of God and their wish for power (Segal, 2007, p.29). God uses his creativity to make them, and the serpent leads them to destruction, to spoil God's creativity. Adam and Eve exist inside the Immortality Phantasy – caught between the realms of creativity and destruction. To know life (creativity), you must be threatened with death (destruction). The future of mankind follows a form of Immortality Phantasy, oscillating between continual attempts at survival, created by moments of necessary destruction.

In conclusion, it could be argued that Milton's complex prose acts as a warning against the desires of the Immortality Phantasy. He warns that too strong an attempt at survival, will only invoke destruction. We see mankind formed out of God's love and creativity, battling against Satan, the fallen son, intent on destroying his father's creativity, filled with

envious rage. We are reminded that with creativity, there will always be a form of destruction, matching it in severity. The Immortality Phantasy must be reconciled, reduced, or renounced through procreation. This is personified through Jesus, the antithesis of Satan, ensuring the survival of Mankind.

8.2.2 The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde (1891)

'There was something fascinating in this son of Love and Death'

(Wilde, 2003, p.38)

Oscar Wilde's tale of narcissism, destruction and art, is a beautiful portrayal of the downfall of humanity when indulgence and whim are untapered, when the Immortality Phantasy is allowed to exist in its most extreme form. Wilde, like Virginia Woolf, was a key figure of the Aesthetic movement: art as beauty, art for art's sake. This story is a celebration of decadence, accompanied by a strong warning of the potential for destruction. The novel looks at the relationship between Dorian and his best friend Basil, who is enchanted by Dorian. At the beginning of the book, Basil paints a portrait of his dear friend, remarking on the effects of creativity as a representation on the canvas of elements of the artist:

> Every portrait is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter…It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself (Wilde, 2003, p.9).

Elsewhere, the author again reveals his knowledge of the power of the creative artist to invoke, contain and transform emotions:

> It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence… Sometimes, however, a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our dramatic effect (2003, p.98)

Dorian gazes upon this portrait that Basil has completed, and feelings of envy rise within him. He wishes, 'If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! …I would give my soul for that' (p.28). He then declares, 'I am in love with it, Basil. It is part of myself' (p.29). However, the reflection of creativity, his portrait, must bear

the scars incurred in his destructive pursuits, 'It might escape the hideousness of sin, but the hideousness of age was in store for it' (p.118). The painting incurs all of the destruction of Dorian's life. Destruction contained within creativity. At the end of the novel, he attempts to destroy the creativity, by slashing it with a knife – inadvertently killing himself.

This story can be seen to represent the Immortality Phantasy – the necessary partnership of destruction and creativity. The creative endures the destructive, in order to maintain survival (in this case, Dorian's survival). We see the potential for someone else to suffer on our behalf (such as the character of a story). They can act out the destruction and subsequent survival so that we can remain safe, with elements of our inner complications cathected onto the page. It is exactly this process that Dorian follows with his painting. All that is bad, ugly and dangerous is deflected onto his portrait – he remains free from suffering (and the consequences of illness and ageing), free from danger – he is free to engage himself in all the delights he can, without fear of repercussion. The painting acts as container, or like a good mother, taking on all the destructions of its infant, trying to keep the infant whole. Dorian can live his life according to the Immortality Phantasy, as though he is immortal, and all the destruction is put outside him. He survives over and over again. However, if creativity is totally negated (and not through procreative means), total destruction ensues.

Wilde also highlights the enjoyment attached to destruction, the necessity of it to precipitate beauty and potential wholeness, 'Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic' (p.37). I have argued that this need for tragedy is in response to our quest for the subsequent experience of survival.

8.2.3 The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath (1963)

Sylvia Plath follows the tragic narrative that can so easily be associated to the creative artist. Her demonstration of a strong Immortality Phantasy allows her to be an excellent case study for the purpose of this thesis as she highlights the link between her creativity and her destruction. The novel reveals both a wit and insight that made Plath such a celebrated author. The language of the book is descriptive and on the whole extremely

amiable, but at the same time infinitely frustrating as we witness her purposeful descent into melancholic desolation.

A semi-autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* follows the story of Esther Greenwood, an intelligent young woman from a kind and educated but poor family. She moves to New York to follow her dreams of becoming a writer. However, as her life increases in excitement, so too does her disillusionment as she slips further into the throws of melancholia exacted on herself with great vengeance, in retaliation for the mundanity of everything she encounters and a plateauing apathy for what should be happiness and pleasure. Excitation of emotion can only be achieved through internal destruction and we see her decline towards depression and inertia.

From the first line of the novel, the internal world of the author, reflected in her protagonist is evident – the need to shock, the need to open with destruction, to reveal ones Immortality Phantasy which thrives on both the possibility and actualisation, of destruction. The novel opens with death – the electrocution of the Rosenberg's on the news and her reaction to the death sets the scene for the rest of the novel, giving us a clear insight into the authors mind. She is horrified by the events, but more so because she must hear about it and see it constantly – it occupied all the news wherever she went. But we also see her phantasise about how the process of execution must feel – the pain that must be felt. We are immediately presented with Esther's Immortality Phantasy within the first page, we can see that this girl is both titillated and horrified by destruction. The picture created by Plath is descriptive in its dullness. She describes bad smells, sore throats, greyness, heat, dust. The image is oppressive, stagnant. And next to this she introduces us to Buddy Willard, as we discover he is Esther's long-term boyfriend who is as responsible for her feelings of stifling oppression as the weather is (despite him not doing too much wrong). Esther lives in the sway of her Immortality Phantasy - her need for destruction is extreme and frightening. She repeatedly suppresses any happiness, in favour of melancholia. Such a melancholia allows her to castigate herself in response to the negative relationships she encounters with her parents. Perhaps as her creativity increases, the defusion of the instincts gives full reign to the punitive destructive instincts which she

whole-heartedly embraces. As she slips further into a melancholic torment, survival is no longer desired and she rides the path to inertia and death. I have described, with regards to the Immortality Phantasy, the need to suffer but not to perish, in favour of survival – the ultimate goal and we have also discussed that the Oedipus complex is responsible for the strength and direction of the Immortality Phantasy. At this point and with the first sublimation that occurs in response to a development in the relationship with the Oedipal parents (the relinquishing of competition in favour of identifications), we can see complications arise. In the case of Esther, the identifications are given up in the place of creative endeavours and she never finds an effective method of identification with her parents. This failure and the sublimations that occur lead to a defusion of instinct and the release of the extremely punitive death instinct that infiltrates her being, with vengeful exactation. She seeks punishment alongside the release of her creative endeavours and it is this point that she is repeating over and over. Her creative endeavours can only occur through the release of the death instinct, but retribution is also repeated. For the healthier individual (and consequently the less creatively sensitive), the desire is for survival – the repeated position of survival of the wrath of the Oedipal parents and the reintegration of the self as a whole. On her inertial path, Esther looks for the cessation of all excitations – internal and external.

Esther identifies strongly to her poorness, providing her with the necessary tragedy which I postulate one needs to be adequately recognised as 'successful'. But as her success becomes attainable, it is accompanied by fear and destruction. She must punish the inadequacy of the parents that she has been forced to try to integrate into her ego and which she has relinquished in favour of her creative endeavours. The language of her novel is expressive and so readily reflects her internal state: 'My drink was wet and depressing' (p.15), 'I felt myself melting into the shadows' (p.9), 'The silence depressed me' (p.17), 'I felt now that all the uncomfortable suspicions I had about myself were coming true' (p.27), 'how scared and depressed I was' (p.34). Things are split into life and death, ugliness and beauty, 'ugly abbreviations' to the 'sheer beauty of chemistry' (p.33). It is creativity itself that forces the defusion of instinct, but it is the act of creating something that allows for

wholeness, fusion and survival to occur (be it temporarily), before the defusion must be repeated and the destruction felt anew.

It seems that Esther (carrying Plath's own melancholic voice) has been bound by the constraints of depression since she was young, 'I thought how strange it had never occurred to me before that I was only purely happy until I was nine years old… I had never really been happy again' (2005, p.71). But we are given clues as to how this could be from her relationship to her mother – the object of both her love and her hatred, intensified by another strong female figure who seems to be omnipresent in her life: 'My grandmother and my mother were such good cooks…They were always trying to teach me… and then I'd always spoil what I did so nobody would ask me to do it again' (p.71). She aims to spoil their version of creativity which they attempt to nurture within her, to replace it with her own version – something she has created herself without following on any form of matriarchal role. She cannot internalise the good object. And when she thinks back to this, she makes a list in her mind of the things she cannot do, concluding '…I felt dreadfully inadequate. The trouble was, I had been inadequate all along, I simply hadn't thought about it' (p.72). She cannot make reparations with her mother it seems. Her struggle with the matriarchal side of her family is reflected in the complicated female relationships she develops later and perhaps her apathy towards men. This follows on from Freud's ideas on creativity which suggests that even the stories of young children and their early creativity reflects the need for punishment and beating phantasies (Freud, 1919). So if the reparation with the mother has failed, the beating phantasies – developing into the Immortality Phantasy – continue, taking these beating phantasies into the destructive realm of behaviour in punitive melancholia. This early creativity must be repeated to maintain the level of guilt and punishment she feels is deserved, in order to consequently reincorporate the good object (which she fails to do). We can also further understand our female protagonist if we follow Kleinian ideas. If there has been an inability to master early anxieties, then there is a repetitive need for punishment, as the self-punishment is preferable to the dread of anxiety of never having adequately repaired the damage done in phantasy to the loved objects (Klein, 1929). Klein also suggests that anxiety especially in

young girls arises from the sadistic desires of the Oedipus complex and when the mother is then absent, this is accompanied by a fear of reprisal and subsequent anxiety (Klein, 1929).

Esther remarks, 'Children made me sick (p.113)', '…I never intended to get married' (p.24). We know that creation very often happens in place of procreation, or if children do occur, they can often be placed in a secondary role. Goethe shared a similar fear of marriage and children and Woolf remained childless. At the discovery she has not made her writing course at summer school – a bitter disappointment, she concludes, 'Then I decided I would spend the summer writing a novel' (p.115). She *can* control what happens on the page and the conclusions of her characters. She can cathect her inner world into a safe and contained environment. She can make an attempt to master her losses and create some form of immortality for herself. At this point, Plath gives us one of the biggest clues that the page is the representation of her inner world and that *The Bell Jar* allows her to release some of her deepest emotions and feelings with regards to the decline of her mental health. When she begins her writing she states, 'My heroine would be myself, only in disguise. She would be called Elaine. Elaine, I counted the letters on my fingers. There were six letters in Esther, too' (2005, p.116) and in Sylvia, of course. Her creativity also reveals the phantasies of destruction aimed at her mother: as Esther lies in bed next to her as she snores, 'The piggish noise irritated me, and for a while it seemed to me that the only way to stop it would be to take the column of skin and sinew from which is rose and twist it to silence between my hands' (Plath, 2005, p.118-9). This description is particularly ugly, demonstrating her projection of her own ugliness onto her mother. And following earlier ideas presented with regards to aesthetics, we understand that ugliness represents the broken and destroyed. Both Plath and her character, Esther, demonstrate the role of the Immortality Phantasy, with *The Bell Jar* beautifully highlighting the relationship between creativity and destruction.

8.3 Discussion

> Perhaps this affinity between art and mood shifts explains why so many artists suffered from affective disorders. Donizetti, Beethoven, Mahler, Rachmaninoff, Dickens, Ruskin,

> Hopkins, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Van Gogh, Pollack, Poe, Emmerson, Hemingway, Sexton, Roethke, Robert Lowell, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johnson, Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Chopin, Chekov, Schumann and Cowper are but a few who experienced pronounced variations in mood that seemed to contribute to their creativity (Caramagno, 1992, p.77).

An examination of the relationship between creativity and destruction is not a minor undertaking, as the wealth of theoretical provision for such a discussion is immense. Attempting to give a fair and balanced view of the representative literature for each idea put forward is a difficult pursuit and bound to leave gaps, despite best efforts. I am painfully aware of the occurrence of this, notably the neglect of the British School and the theoretical proponents of aesthetic development. These include: Meg Harris Williams, notably her ideas in her book, *The Aesthetic Development* (2010); Wilfred Bion and Donald Meltzer; extending to Adrian Stokes, Marion Milner, Roger Money-Kyrle and Donald Winnicott. The latter two thinkers put forward arguments regarding the role of survival in the production of life (and death), which follows a different line of thinking to my own, but could provide an interesting path for future engagements. Winnicott's notion of *psychic survival* highlights the need for the infant to test the survival of the good object, to demonstrate their value – an external value placed on survival, in contrast to the internal test afforded by the Immortality Phantasy. Money-Kyrle, in his book *Man's Picture of His World* (2014), ties up survival to the self-preservatory role of the death instinct. He suggests that survival forms the basis of continual evolution, i.e. if a species could ensure the survival of its offspring, evolution would cease – at some point survival would become its 'overriding purpose' (2014, p.36). These could be used as interesting points to take a discussion on the Immortality Phantasy further, beyond the limitations of this thesis.

This thesis has followed a gradual development of Freudian and Kleinian theory, amalgamated and evolved to create an argument in favour of a new paradigm: *The Immortality Phantasy can be defined as a symbolic matrix, representing the pivotal point of defusion between the life and death instincts that allows for the release of both destructive and creative energies, leading to necessary repetition of survival.*

During both the conceptual first half and the more applicable exploration in the second half, I maintained several questions at the forefront of the ideas:

- Does the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis allow for a deeper reading of literary texts?
- Is it a better method of understanding the role of creativity and destruction than others?
- Does this model succeed in its attempts to integrate Freudian and Kleinian theory into a more succinct, all-inclusive model?
- Does the evidence provided via literary texts, support the author's claim of the value of survival and repetition?

These questions were answered via the two sections of this thesis and will be concluded at the end of this chapter. The first section of this thesis, aimed to inform the reader of the key papers and theorisations on creativity, following a Freudian and Kleinian school of thought. I attempted to draw the key elements of their theories into the composition of my own hypothesis. This relies heavily on Freud's lengthy and developmental discussion on the life and death instincts, highlighting key aspects of his argument and these ideas formed the basis of my arguments on destruction. Klein's ideas on splitting, reparation and melancholia, provided the foundations of my ideas on creativity, supplemented by the thinking of Hanna Segal and others.

For Part 2 of this thesis, I used a range of methodological techniques to engage with literary texts, exploring the pages in search of evidence of the Immortality Phantasy. Key aspects of this search included the Oedipus complex as the precursor to sublimation, the desire for survival, the links between creativity and destruction, and the demonstration of repetition to test survival. By looking at three texts in three different ways, I have highlighted through the author, the characters on the page and the effect on the reader, that the Immortality Phantasy is ever-present and can be introjected off the page by the reader, as easily as it can be projected onto the page by the author.

There are a number of areas of this thesis that could extend the validity of the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis further. One method could be to use published case study material, as opposed to literature. Possible examples include Robert Wallerstein's, *42 Lives in Treatment* (2000), a study conducted over 30 years, chronicling the experiences of patients in psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic analysis. Another interesting study would be Bell & Hall's collaboration, *The Personality of a Child Molester* (1971). This book carefully records the analysand's dream-life, set up next to the reports given during his psychoanalytic sessions. The authors compare the detail of the dream work to the analysts work, looking for synchronisation and linking between the two. Other narrative forms of analysis would also lend themselves well to an exploration using the Immortality Phantasy, similar to the case studies used within this thesis.

In order to give the necessary time and detail to the three chosen novels, this resulted in the limited use of other texts. The verification section above attempts to put forward a quick-fire analysis of an additional three texts, but there is scope to continue exploration via a number of differing novels. Those I excluded for spatial necessity were: Toni Morrison - *The Bluest Eye* (1979), Charles Dickens - *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and Patrick Süskind – *Perfume* (1985). However, it should be expected to find representation of the Immortality Phantasy within most literary texts.

The methodological models used in this thesis, were carefully chosen to demonstrate both the creative side of the thesis – the free-flowing ideas arising between the given literature and my hypothesis, but also to maintain a more serious structure associated to the rigorous testing involved with other scientific practices. Of course, it is impossible to achieve such testing to the extent of a true scientific or psychological study, involving static results to be discussed; psychoanalysis is much more subjective, allowing for a fluidity in discussion, free-thinking and a necessary adaptability in our technique. However, I have attempted to maintain some form of methodological structure which could be claimed to successfully 'test' my hypothesis, although it could be criticised that such attempts were not rigorous enough in their structure, or there was not enough space given to the chosen methodologies to give adequate representation to their key players and

developments. This could be achieved only at the expense of losing either other theoretical observations, or extensive literary tests, but could form part of an extension of the thesis in the future. In this case I would look further at the work of Hinshelwood, Wollheim and Edelson, potentially via an examination of applied psychoanalysis or grounded theory.

8.4 Conclusion

This thesis has extensively examined the role of the hypothesised Immortality Phantasy, in our everyday functioning, as well as in creative pursuits.

The first half of the thesis provided a detailed account of the work of Freud and Klein, looking especially at their positions on destruction and creativity respectively. An adequate representation of their work allowed for me to develop my own hypothesis, regarding the existence of an Immortality Phantasy. I have argued throughout that survival is the most crucial aspect of our understanding of the role of creativity and destruction, thus far being largely overlooked or inadequately hypothesised within a complete model of creativity. I introduced the notion of our unconscious desire for immortality, our unconscious phantasies that led to paradoxically dangerous behaviour, highlighting the painful necessity of this in order to survive, but also to test the survival in a repetitive manner. I have demonstrated that both survival, and the repetition of this survival, are necessary elements of creativity and can be used to explain the movement from mania to melancholia. To argue the perceived societal value placed on the survival I have described, I turned to everyday examples to demonstrate its infiltration into our unconscious, notably through myth, creative works (including music, literature and art etc.), everyday language, acts of bravery and reckless behaviour. Crucial aspects of these ideas were explained using Freudian and Kleinian ideas on the Oedipus complex, the role of sublimation, defusion of instincts, creativity, destruction and repetition.

The second half of this thesis sought to test these ideas, with literary texts chosen to provide an effective method of exploring the life and death instincts, both as representations of the author's instinctual life on the page, but also the page's ability to contain and modify emotions, through the presentation of the aesthetically good. The

efficacy of the creative writer to transform unpalatable material into enjoyable material was discussed at length, concluding that this pleasure stems from the ability of the page to alleviate internal tension and to create a sense of order, wholeness and immortality. Each chapter in the second half of the thesis aimed to present a case study in the form of a well-written text, which demonstrated a methodological process, in order to fulfil its attempts to adequately 'test' the hypothesis. I explored three novels in detail, highlighting the usefulness of the Immortality Phantasy as a tool to explore the books and aid our understanding further. Firstly, I look at Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and used a *psychobiographical methodology* to help illuminate aspects of the author's own creativity and destruction, reflected through the novel. I demonstrate the Immortality Phantasy through Woolf's treatment of the fractured Septimus Smith as destruction, and Clarissa Dalloway as creativity. Woolf/Clarissa attempted to keep these ideas separate, but learns that they are inextricably tied together by Septimus' death interrupting her party. Woolf aids our understanding of the value put on one's ability to tolerate destruction, (demonstrating their survival) through her treatment of Sally Seton (a representation of Woolf's lover, Vita West). Sally's 'recklessness' is revered by Woolf, because she *survives* all the destruction that she so admirably creates. She is contrasted to the dull Ellie Henderson, who does not live in these oscillations between destruction and creativity. She has contained her Immortality Phantasy, she exists peacefully, dully. Society does not place value on her. In the conclusion of the novel, Clarissa is horrified to learn that Sally has also followed this path – she has chosen procreation over creativity. She has passed on her Immortality Phantasy and her desire for survival to her children and consequently, she loses value to Clarissa. This psychobiographical study allows us to examine the role of creativity and destruction *within the author*.

The next chapter explores William Golding's novel, *The Spire*, this time paying attention to the creativity and destruction *of the characters on the page* as representations of our inner world. By closely analysing the protagonist and his struggles to build his epic spire through a process of *textual analysis*, we are presented by Golding with clear representations of the Oedipal complexities he faces, in his desire to outlive God, to

become his equal, in order to 'survive' him. Jocelin's creativity comes at the expense of all others as he demonstrates narcissism, omnipotence and delusion. He moves into the realm of 'excessive creativity', which I have argued could be what Freud meant by 'pure life instinct', concluding with the same annihilation as 'pure death instinct'. Jocelin's desire for survival fails – his creation is a folly, it is not real and therefore it does not create value to others, it does not provide him with reflected self-worth. He is hated, doubted and ultimately he perishes. He has failed to mend Oedipal relationships and his attempts at mastery and projection, lead to his persecution by bad objects, both internal (fragmented ego, ailing health) and external (through the destruction of the good characters and affiliation with the bad). We can conclude from Golding's cautionary tale that the Immortality Phantasy can be a dangerous pursuit and the costs of too strong an attempt at survival (via creativity), can lead to total destruction.

The final chapter explores one of Goethe's most well-known and influential novels, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. This chapter explores his novel, seeking out the answers to *why* this novel had such a profound impact on people that read it and how the novel acts as a reflection of *the creativity and destruction within the reader*. A *textual analysis* aids this process as we examine the story of the overly sensitive Werther and the journey to his ultimate destruction. But the real question in this chapter is not to understand Werther's suicide, but the causational link between the suicide on the page and the suicides of actual readers. What was introjected from this book that created such extreme reactions, such a dedicated following, where other texts have not? The Immortality Phantasy helps us to understand how the desire for survival, has been replaced by the desire to die. In the case of *Werther*, a necessarily fragmented ego of the reader, allows them to follow the strict order of the author, to become complicit in Werther's demise. Werther displays a strong death instinct which lacks the desire of survival to counter-balance it. Through his idealisation of the mother-object, projected onto his object relation choices, he cannot form a refusion of the instincts. There is no self-preservation as he lacks both creativity and procreativity; therefore, he has no survival, he must perish. For the reader, Werther is their mirror-image, his failures are introjected due to Goethe's careful attempts to make us

container to his instincts. The container fails, the reader has failed. Werther has pushed all survival into the realm of the beyond (legacy or after-life) – he has not chosen it for himself – and for some, this was the only survival they too could imagine, resulting in their own necessary suicide.

These novels have helped us to answer some of the questions regarding creativity, destruction and survival, that we set out to answer. But does it provide a *better* model for an understanding of creativity that other theories? As it is my contention that survival and the notion of an Immortality Phantasy are the crucial aspects of creativity, this model is the only one that explains these within a single paradigm and is therefore valuable. However, my ideas lean very heavily on those of Freud and Klein and certainly would not be sustainable without theirs. Perhaps further exploration of their ideas, could continue to validate the Immortality Phantasy and the crucial role of survival. I would also argue that the Immortality Phantasy paradigm is one of the few to contain theoretical observations of both creativity and destruction, in such a complete model. I argue that the hypothesis has been validated effectively enough through its testing, to claim that it *can* be a useful tool in an exploration of literary texts. The theory is suitable for use within literary criticism and is beneficial in providing the reader with an extended understanding of the relationship between creativity and destruction, following the Immortality Phantasy hypothesis. This model should prove to be beneficial and complimentary to a reading of any literary text. This is because it gives us a model to understand the relationship between creativity and destruction from the vantage points of: the author, the characters on the page and the reader.

I suggest that we all have some version of an Immortality Phantasy which can grow stronger or weaker at different times in our lives, depending on a combination of internal and external events. It has been extensively demonstrated that the Immortality Phantasy is stronger in creative artists, due to their sensitive natures, their understanding of the internal world, and often, their enjoyment of the esteem garnered by the outside world for their displays of excess. We see this in non-creative people too. I propose that we desire our survival and that we are given validation by others when they too can see our ability

to survive. Often the Immortality Phantasy will cease through procreation, when the desire for survival is passed on to one's children. But until then – and especially for the melancholic or creative - this survival must be repeated consistently, in order to demonstrate the ability to live. Where there is a cessation in the Immortality Phantasy, a cessation of demonstrative survival, then death is the only path.

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