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## Radclyffe Hall

Richard Dellamora

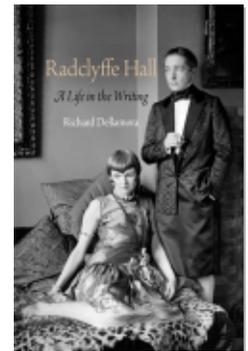
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## From Sexual Inversion to Cross Gender in “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself”

In *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall parsed female same-sex desire through the sexological model of sexual inversion. As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, this choice was strategic. If Hall was to claim public space for the lives of subjects of female same-sex desire, it was necessary that those subjects be recognizable in widely shared, implicitly objective terms. For this purpose, the obvious place to turn was the language of sexology; and in that direction the available terms were *female homosexuality* and *female sexual inversion*, phrases in synonymous use at the time. In choosing such a model, however, Hall subjected herself and those on whose behalf she wrote to the operations of medical biopolitics. To the degree to which the activist objectives of *The Well of Loneliness* succeeded, female subjects of same-sex desire would be normalized as masculine women.

Hall's choice was not only political; it was also personal. From the mid-1920s onward, Hall identified herself as a sexual invert. When she declared her love to Souline in 1934 and Souline responded that she feared that their mutual attraction might be “emotionally wrong,” Hall replied: “My dearest child, it is not emotionally wrong for your John. I have never felt an impulse towards a man in all my life, this because I am a congenital invert.

For me to sleep with a man would be ‘wrong’ because it would be an outrage against nature. Can’t you try to understand, to believe that we exist—we people who are not of the so called normal? Where’s your medical knowledge—we do exist and believe me you must not think us perverted.”<sup>1</sup> Hall’s performance of self in this letter demonstrates the naturalization of a new identity—both singular and plural—in the same breath in which she acknowledges that this new identity is “not of the so called normal.” To Hall, it was important to emphasize that inversion occurred naturally, that is, congenitally. She claimed that because of this origin, her desires were not inherently immoral or “perverted.” Instead the moral character of inverted passion depended upon whether its expression was motivated by friendship: “love without friendship is not love but lust” (47).

While Hall was determined to rivet her desire to a fixed position, the ontological status of the object of that desire remained anything but secure. Proceeding with a tutorial on the varieties of sexual subjectivity, Hall informed Souline that she was bisexual: “Don’t you know that an enormous number of people are bi-sexual, capable of falling in love equally with a man or a woman?” (51). Unlike inversion, however, bisexuality did not necessarily name a specific sexual type. It might denote instead indetermination, uncertainty, and unpredictability regarding the direction of one’s desires and engagements. In Havelock Ellis’s study of female sexual inversion, Ellis had shown himself notoriously unable to provide an organic etiology of the womanly woman’s desire for a masculine woman.<sup>2</sup> In the letter, Hall supplemented Ellis’s account of feminine women who were the objects of desire of masculine women with the theory of primitive or original bisexuality put forward by Freud in his 1920 essay on female homosexuality.<sup>3</sup> Referring to the work of a medical student at Cambridge to whose research she had recently contributed, she wrote: “I helped a young doctor a little while ago to prepare [*sic*] his paper for his final medical degree at Cambridge; he maintains that the bi-sexual is the true *normal*” (52).

Hall’s commitment to the sexual-inversion model committed her to two contradictory views of sexual formation: one in which it took a precisely defined form and another in which lack of definition was predominant. As I have noted, in doing so, she accurately mirrored an inconsistency within sexological thinking that radically undermined the attempt to suture sexual object-choice with personal identity. There may, however, be yet a further factor in play. The model of relationship that Hall projected onto her connection with Souline suggests that Hall’s notion of

female masculinity was relational. In Hall's thought and personal experience, it was impossible to think about female sexual inversion apart from the inverted subject's desire for a womanly woman.

At the same time that Hall became officially, so to speak, an invert, she wrote a short story, "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself," with an inverted female protagonist. Within the story Hall suggests a relational model of sexual identity. In doing so, she suggests something else as well, a notion that Miss Ogilvy experiences her sexual and gendered self in a continual process of transition between the condition of being female and the condition of being male. In other words, Hall emphasizes what a twenty-first-century theorist such as Jay Prosser refers to as "the trope of crossing."<sup>4</sup> In this context, one might say that the old-fashioned (at least to Freud) concept of sexual inversion draws Hall forward to postmodern concepts of transsexual and transgendered identity. In speaking of this impetus in Hall's work, I prefer to use the term *crossgendered* in order to avoid anachronistic usage. It is noteworthy that Prosser's conceptualization of both categories takes place in individual not relational terms, though there is evidence particularly in accounts of transgendered experience that the selfhood of such subjects is at times construed in explicitly relational terms.<sup>5</sup>

First written in 1926 and likely revised for publication in a collection of short stories by Hall that appeared in 1934, "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself" is situated significantly both before and after the date of publication of *The Well of Loneliness*. Accordingly, Troubridge may be correct in characterizing the short story as the point of departure for the novel.<sup>6</sup> But the story's double temporal relation to the novel also permits a retrospective look that finds in *The Well's* avowed inversionism license for the exploration of cross-gendered existence. Prosser, for example, reads the novel as a fictional transsexual autobiography written before the medical invention of the term.<sup>7</sup>

In the realist first half of the story, Hall shows how service in extreme conditions during World War I makes it possible for Ogilvy to escape for a time the confining limits of her upper-middle-class family and to "come out" as a subject of female same-sex desire. This narrative is abruptly juxtaposed with what Hall refers to as a venture "into the realms of the fantastic."<sup>8</sup> In the second half of the story, the protagonist escapes into a land and seascape, at once primitive and national, in which sexual love between him/herself and another woman, impossible at home, becomes recoverable as a result of returning to a lost "English" paradise. Hall's fantasy is both

utopian and dystopian. As characterization, it focuses upon the reality of split subjectivities with attendant unhappiness and lack of fulfillment. At the same time, by successfully traversing with Miss Ogilvy disjunctures of temporality, gender, sex, and culture, Hall moves the reader sympathetic to the character's desires to a here and now that is also an elsewhere at another time.

The generic splitting of the story permits Hall's most outspoken exploration of the modernist–antimodernist dialectic that structures her work. Ogilvy is both a beneficiary and a casualty of modernity. The mass mobilization of populations in wartime that occurs in Western Europe in World War I enables her to escape from a confining domestic existence into a rewarding mental and physical life within civilian medical services at the front. This change likewise enables her for the first time to meet other women like herself and to exercise her masculine selfhood. At the same time, ideological and economic retrenchment after the war aborts this change and shifts her back into the former pattern, which she now finds literally unlivable. For Miss Ogilvy, escape from this mold becomes necessary no matter the price.

This escape is framed within antimodernist terms of return to a primitive, pastoral, indigenously “English” existence. Even the national referent is marked by the modernist/antimodernist caesura. As I discuss in Chapter 1, Hall attempted early to position herself in alliance with the renovation of English music. From about 1910 onward, composers and musicians turned to pre- and early modern musical melodies, harmonies, instrumentation, and folk materials for resources in fashioning musical Modernism in England. In order to create a national style, practitioners adapted the materials of nearly lost and newly reinvented traditions. This turn back in order to move forward resulted in odd temporal dislocations, with the result that what was new could be characterized as simultaneously both primitive and decadent insofar as the return to origins was taking place late in the history of civilization. The crisis that attends this temporal loop is exacerbated in the fantasy portion of Hall's story, whose Neolithic male protagonist is about to be massacred along with his fellow villagers by Bronze Age invaders. The story is the most apocalyptic of Hall's various envisagings of the threat posed to communal existence as a result of technological and other contemporary innovations.

Apologies on behalf of sexual inverts were often framed in terms of eugenics, which Mrs. Havelock Ellis defines as “the study of all agencies,

under social control, that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations.”<sup>9</sup> In these accounts, the chronotypes of evolutionary progress and degeneracy are to the fore. Hall draws upon both. In its second half, the narrative moves backward in time to a moment in prehistoric Britain when a Neolithic community was about to be supplanted by Bronze Age invaders. Hall observes the truths of contemporary paleontology in describing the young warrior whom Miss Ogilvy becomes. He has “sad brown eyes like those of a monkey. . . . His nose was blunt, his jaw somewhat bestial” (26). But he also shows signs of evolution into a higher type: “his mouth, though full-lipped, contradicted his jaw, being very gentle and sweet in expression” (26). In fact, he is superior to most of the people whom Miss Ogilvy knows in twentieth-century England. Moving forward into the past, *s/he* becomes a composite, in some respects improved, type. This ambivalent realization parallels representations of sexual inversion by such self-consciously sympathetic sexologists as Havelock Ellis. On the one hand, Ellis continually compares sexual inverts with members of savage and primitive races. On the other hand, he argues that inverts are characterized by superior endowments, such as artistic genius and shamanic powers. Inverts are both early and late, primitive but also subject to the degenerative pressures of civilization, and at the same time harbingers of an improved future human existence.<sup>10</sup>

In a prefatory note to the 1934 volume, Hall refers to Ogilvy as a “sexual invert,” but she also complicates the sexological picture. In a general discussion of the definition of human existence, Michel Foucault has discussed several ways in which impermissible thoughts may nonetheless be uttered. He describes the last of these as follows: “It consists of subjecting an utterance, which appears to conform to the accepted code, to another code whose key is contained within that same utterance so that this utterance becomes divided within itself. It says what it says, but it adds a silent surplus that quietly enunciates what it says and according to which code it says what it says.”<sup>11</sup> The representation of Miss Ogilvy as a masculinized woman corresponds to the code of third-sex theory. As it turns out, defined and defining herself in this way, she is incapable of becoming a sexual actant. And yet the climax of the story is the moment when *s/he is able* to experience bliss with another woman. The affirmation of sexual intimacy between two women provides the second code at work within the story. It is the story’s “silent surplus,” its motivating ethic. Implicit is the need to go beyond the contradictory and disabling terms of sexological theory.

In the account of Ogilvy's wartime experiences that opens the story, Hall in effect argues that war service enabled many female subjects of same-sex desire to leave home, find suitable work, and gain economic independence. As a result, they were able to find each other and themselves. Again, in the "Author's Forenote," Hall memorializes "the noble and selfless work done by hundreds of sexually inverted women during the Great War." At the same time, the story is shadowed by reflections on loss, mourning, and melancholy prompted by World War I. Like other writers, such as Virginia Woolf, Hall responds to the fissures opened by World War I by imagining a patriotism before the imperial kind that can become available as a possibility in a post-imperial future. "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself" is at one with Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938) in the opposition of both writers to marriage as a career for women, in their grief over the death of young men in war, and in their disdain for the conversion of the land and seascape of England into private holdings.<sup>12</sup>

Hall turns to fantasy and aspects of dream-narrative to represent the central action of the story, Ogilvy's transformation into a heroic but doomed young fighter. In doing so, Hall articulates psychoanalytic insights within a theosophical armature. Theosophy provides a vernacular mode of speculative psychology whereby Hall attempts to explain her perception of the possibilities, including bodily, of becoming other.<sup>13</sup> Theosophists were especially aware of constraints of gender, sexuality, and race, which some were willing to challenge. Ellis, for example, remarks that Madame Blavatsky was "either homosexual or bisexual" (197). The aura of sexual nonconformity that surrounded her and close associates, such as the Anglican clergyman Charles Webster Leadbetter, drew attacks upon the group. In this light, it is not surprising that *Lucifer*, the English theosophical magazine, condemned the behavior of Oscar Wilde. Despite efforts to maintain the respectability of the movement and its leaders, however, theosophist teachings on gender and, implicitly, sexuality continued to be rich and contradictory. Theosophical mythology of reincarnation envisaged the self as moving through a series of, in turn, increasingly masculine or feminine physical existences at different times and in different places. These changes were used to explain the phenomena of sexual inversion. Experience as a subject of both genders was necessary to the perfection of the self, which joined aspects of what Freud refers to as the bodily ego with what theosophists called "a True or Higher Self that stood beyond and before the only temporarily sexed and gendered self of this particular incarnation—the 'I

that was always watching and analyzing its present vehicle was much more than could ever be expressed on the ‘lower planes.’”<sup>14</sup>

Theosophical axioms shape the representation of Miss Ogilvy. Her transformation into a primitive warrior makes sense in terms of the view that “reincarnation” could “provide a sense of a different—and somehow more true or authentic—identity drawn from one’s past” (Dixon, 428). The transgendered, implicitly feminist aspects of this identity had already been sounded in 1905 when a certain “W.F.K.” wrote in the *Theosophical Review* that suffragettes reincarnated “racial Viking tendencies.”<sup>15</sup> The concept of the Higher Self also helps account for the fact that Miss Ogilvy continues to be Miss Ogilvy even when she no longer remembers her twentieth-century existence as well as when she has become a Neolithic “he.” The sense of ontology involved is counter to any singular notion of what being might mean.

Beginning as a study of changes in English manners stemming from the war years, in its course, “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself” turns into a primitivist fantasy. Hall marks this shift in terms of a split in the consciousness of the protagonist: “She thought that she lay there struggling to reason, that her eyes were closed in the painful effort, and that as she closed them she continued to puff the inevitable cigarette. At least that was what she thought at one moment—the next, she was out in a sunset evening, and a large red sun was sinking slowly to the rim of a distant sea” (24). The space indicated by the dash is apocalyptic, by which I mean that it registers a complete change in the spatio-temporal organization of the subject. Even before that moment, two shes are registered: in theosophical terms, the I of the Higher Self that thinks into being, physically prostrate and “struggling to reason.” On the left side of the dash, Miss Ogilvy is the former successful commander of a Red Cross ambulance unit on the French front. The salient word is “former.” Before the war, Ogilvy had played the role of spinster daughter in an upper-middle-class family. After her father dies, she becomes responsible for managing the affairs of her ailing mother and two “neurotic” (9) younger sisters. A shortage of manpower as a result of exorbitant casualties gives Miss Ogilvy an opportunity to leave home for London. There she forms a motorized ambulance unit and successfully lobbies for permission to move her equipment and nurses to the front lines. On the right side of the dash, Miss Ogilvy, while on a solitary visit to an unspoiled island off the coast of Devon, is transported into a prehistoric past.

She forgets her dismal twentieth-century existence and briefly enjoys life as the capable and tender Stone Age lover of a beautiful young “woman” (26).

Hall’s story begins with the end of the war, the disbanding of the unit, and the forced return of Ogilvy to peacetime unemployment. Driven to despair by blank existence in a Surrey village, Miss Ogilvy, on a desperate whim, leaves for the island. The apocalypse of World War I—which Hall sees to have been both devastating and liberating—stands in causal relation to the apocalyptic metadiscourse in which the hybrid fiction is set. The setting sun and archaic beauty of the island are enmeshed in a discursive topography that signifies nation and empire. In an apocalyptic register, the sunset implies the end of the British Empire consequent upon the reduced status of Great Britain after the war. Although the passage cited emphasizes phenomenological aspects of life (“moment,” duration), Hall’s primary emphasis is ontological—a point she makes clear in the sentence that follows: “Miss Ogilvy knew that she was herself, that is to say she was conscious of her being, and yet she was not Miss Ogilvy at all, nor had she a memory of her” (56). Ogilvy’s demand entails a transformation of being that requires the loss of defining aspects of consciousness such as memory. The effacement of her memory is a means used by Hall to resist psychoanalytic recuperation of the significance of the story. Without access to memory, Freudian psychoanalysis cannot provide a metonymic account of Miss Ogilvy’s consciousness through the analysis of dreams, symptomatic actions, and so forth. Instead, Ogilvy’s desire to become otherwise becomes imaginable only within the terms of another, transgendered, even transsexual existence. Moving in the opposite direction in the second half of the story, Hall mimes Freudian analysis through Ogilvy’s anamnesis. Remembering her earlier existence simultaneously with recognizing the disappearance of her memory as Miss Ogilvy, Ogilvy is able to emphasize that her love of a woman is “perfectly natural” (24).

In addition to theosophy, Hall draws upon sexological description in representing “the difficulties” of Miss Ogilvy’s “nature” (8). For one thing, there is that cigarette. Ellis writes in his classic description of the modern lesbian, “In the habits not only is there frequently a pronounced taste for smoking cigarettes, often found in quite feminine women, but also a decided taste and toleration for cigars.”<sup>16</sup> In other details too, Hall follows Ellis’s typology. For example, she notes Ogilvy’s “tall, awkward body with its queer look of strength” (3). But sexology provides only one discursive

frame for the passage. The social changes brought about by the war create the conditions in which it becomes possible and necessary for Miss Ogilvy to demand *another existence*.

Hall shows how the changes in women's roles necessitated by the war effort in effect produced a new form of sexual identity, single and collective, for women who, before the war, had been forced either to live celibate lives or to accept subjection within the family. This modern identity is termed *lesbian*. In the present context, lesbian existence, though characterized by Ogilvy in terms of female masculinity, is not so much the discursive effect of sexual-inversion theory as the result of social and technological change. But she is also a throwback to the heroic Dorians (ancient Greek soldiers with male lovers) whom Edward Carpenter describes in *The Intermediate Sex* (1908). The members of "that glorious Unit" (Hall, 4) display the "hardihood and courage" of those whom Carpenter prophesies will build up "new forms of society, new orders of thought, and new institutions of human solidarity."<sup>17</sup> Hall adapts Carpenter's ideal, in context male, to lesbian subjects. She observes that when Ogilvy went to London during the war, for the first time she realized that she was not the only odd woman at large: "In London she had found herself quite at her ease, for many another of her kind was in London doing excellent work for the nation. It was really surprising how many cropped heads had suddenly appeared as it were out of space; how many Miss Ogilvies, losing their shyness, had come forward asserting their right to serve, asserting their claim to attention" (11–12). After the war, the arena of this heroic effort is removed, and a quiet struggle ensues as determined efforts are made to circumscribe women once more within the private sphere. Ogilvy experiences "complete frustration" (6) as she is pushed back into domestic existence.

Although enlisted in the service of "the nation," Hall makes clear that Ogilvy's unit maintained a distance between itself and the war effort. First of all, the Red Cross service was nonbelligerent; second, Ogilvy puts herself and her cohorts in the service not of the British field command but of their French allies. In this way, Ogilvy accentuates the humanity of her service, not its identification with government objectives. This sort of independence was noticed. Nor was it all that was noticed. Three years after the war, for the first time in British history, an attempt to outlaw lesbian sexual practices was made in Parliament. The amendment, which reads as follows, attempted to extend to women involved in sexual activity with other women the same sanctions that had been levied against Oscar Wilde in

1895: “Any act of gross indecency between female persons shall be a misdemeanor and punishable in the same manner as any such act committed by male persons under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885.”<sup>18</sup> Although the amendment was passed, the bill to which it was attached failed to clear the House. These are *not* the terms upon which the Miss Ogilvies of World War I wished to achieve equality with men before the law. The destruction of nascent lesbian existence experienced by Miss Ogilvy is directly related to the efforts made to intimidate female subjects of same-sex desire and to exclude middle-class women from well-paid managerial and professional work. Hall contends that this process intensified after the war despite, in part because of, legal steps taken at the time to emancipate women. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf observes, in a rhetoric at once materialist, sardonic, and apocalyptic, the opening of the professions to women by act of Parliament in 1919. She likewise demonstrates how modest the economic advances opened for women proved in actuality to be. Similarly, the achievement of partial enfranchisement for women in 1918 did not preclude efforts to return them to the world of “the private house.”<sup>19</sup>

The threat of extinction hovers over the idyll that Ogilvy experiences after her metempsychosis as an ancient Briton. Just what or whom, however, is threatened with extinction? Is it young men, whether like Wilfred Owen they resisted the seductions of war or whether they rushed to their deaths? Is it, by analogy, the British Empire in decline? Does the second half of the story begin a work of mourning for the loss of national greatness? Is it the anachronistic world of Victorian domestic values—uncomfortably lodged in the woman with whom the Briton is in love? Is it the sexual subjectivity that marks Ogilvy as a split subject: a self-suppressing, middle-aged, middle-class spinster and, in another incarnation, a man who can take a woman as Miss Ogilvy, shamefully, cannot? Is it the late Victorian sexology, summed in the name of Ellis, that Hall needed in order to give scientific sanction to *The Well of Loneliness*? The answer to all these questions is yes.

When Miss Ogilvy arrives, she meets the owner of the island, Mrs. Nanceskivel, who shows her the partial remains of the skeleton of a late Stone Age man, dug up on the island and now kept in a cupboard in the scullery because she does not want the island to become the site of an archaeological dig. “Look, miss, he was killed,” she remarked rather proudly, ‘and they tell me that the axe that killed him was bronze’” (21–22).

The indignity to which the fragments are subject angers Ogilvy. For Ogilvy (and Hall) Mrs. Nanceskivel is typical of those married women whom Woolf describes in *Three Guineas* as the economic and ideological captives (and upholders) of the “patriarchal” order (64). “And now Miss Ogilvy was swept by another emotion that was even more strange and more devastating: such a grief as she had not conceived could exist; a terrible unassuageable grief, without hope, without respite, without palliation, so that with something akin to despair she touched the long gash in the skull. Then her eyes, that had never wept since her childhood, filled slowly with large, hot, difficult, tears. She must blink very hard, then close her eyelids, turn away from the lamp” (22–23). Miss Ogilvy takes leave of her hostess and goes upstairs. Mourning the profanation of the man’s remains, she also mourns the loss of potential capabilities of agency within herself. In recognizing loss, she approaches at-one-ment with the deceased. Then the moment of metempsychosis occurs.

After struggling, alone on her bed, with “reason,” she wakes as another subject, evidently although not definitively the warrior whose remains she has just grieved. “She pictured herself as immensely tall; she was feeling immensely tall at that moment. As a matter of fact she was five feet eight which, however, was quite a considerable height when compared to her fellow-tribesmen. She was wearing a single garment of pelts which came to her knees and left her arms sleeveless. Her arms and her legs, which were closely tattooed with blue zig-zag lines, were extremely hairy” (25). Moments later, she recognizes that she is a “young man” (26). As such, she experiences a romantic interlude. As the sun sets, the “pretty” young woman at the young man’s side bestows upon him her virgin love: “All of me is for you and none other. For you this body has ripened” (26). The pair retires to the same cave, the sight of which had jarred Ogilvy’s recollection as she arrived on the island. They make love. Although the fact is not stated, the text implies that on this very night the young man will be killed. Presumably, his “wife” will be taken captive and enslaved.

Ogilvy achieves romantic union with another person only when the gift of an attractive younger woman’s love enables her to cross from the liminal state of she/he (“Her arms and legs . . . were extremely hairy”) into her identification as a “young man,” warrior, de facto husband. The pronoun shift from she to he is bridged by the passage in which her/his “little companion” both defines herself as feminine (“pretty,” she calls herself) and

declares her love for the warrior. Ogilvy simultaneously marvels “because of her beauty” (25), an unmixed pleasure that Miss Ogilvy never permitted herself to enjoy.

Ogilvy can fully respond to another female only if she is able to identify her as woman and finds that identification to be accepted: “‘You . . . woman,’ he murmured contentedly, and the sound seemed to come from the depths of his being” (26). To be desirable, the female object of desire has to be positioned as a particular subject. In this context, the English word *woman* like the French word *femme* and the German word *Frau* engenders the female as *wife*. The subject is the familiar Victorian one of the angel of the house—the figure that Woolf tells us it is necessary for the modern female writer to kill.<sup>20</sup> Defined in terms of “Love” (32), her name in Neolithic language carries a number of meanings that are more resonant with Victorian bourgeois ideology than with prehistoric existence. The narrator remarks that the warrior’s “speech was slow and lacking in words when it came to expressing a vital emotion, so one word must suffice and this he now spoke, and the word that he spoke had a number of meanings. It meant: ‘Little spring of exceedingly pure water.’ It meant: ‘Hut of peace for a man after battle.’ It meant: ‘Ripe red berry sweet to the taste.’ It meant ‘Happy small home of future generations.’ All these things he must try to express by a word, and because of their loving she understood him” (26–27). These meanings conflate in a single term the concepts of feminine and natural purity, sexual enjoyment and its naturalness, plus the values of home, family, and community. This combination coheres within the terms of the subjectivity of the former Miss Ogilvy, a capable woman of conservative views, who happened to be sexually and emotionally drawn to other women. These values, however, can be experienced in unified fashion by Ogilvy only if she becomes completely other, a he. In Miss Ogilvy’s transformation, moving from one side of the hyphen to the other requires no work; it just happens. Nothing in Miss Ogilvy’s everyday existence, however, is easy. And the prehistoric Britain to which s/he arrives is marked by tensions and threatened with violence. The resistance of actuality to desire is signified in the threat of attack on the village by the newcomers. Unlike the warrior, whose weapons are of stone, the interlopers carry weapons of bronze. Although they are nominally “friends” of the natives, the warrior fears them. His Cassandra-like warnings of imminent disaster have made him *persona non grata* with the woman’s father, who is the head of the

village. Accordingly, the love of the couple is threatened both by an unaware patriarchal authority within the village and by the superiority of newcomers.

Hall's passionate identification with young soldiers helps explain why Miss Ogilvy, when transformed, becomes a young warrior. Like Hall too, at the outbreak of war, Ogilvy declares: "If only I were a man!" (10; Baker, 54–55). At the start of World War I, Hall was caught up in war fever; but, in "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself," something else is at work: the love and guilt of author and character in face of the deaths of young soldiers. The intensity of Ogilvy's unacknowledged mourning shows in the fact that she is found dead the morning after metempsychosis occurs. As Freud says, loved "objects . . . are . . . in a sense taken into our ego." In the face of mortality, "libido clings to its objects and will not renounce those that are lost even when a substitute lies ready to hand. Such then is mourning."<sup>21</sup> Ogilvy's crossgendered identification enables her to mourn both the loss of the possibility of her own sexual and emotional fulfillment and the losses sustained by the young men whose wounds she tended in wartime.

At the end of "Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself," Miss Ogilvy is found the next morning, seated in front of the cave in which her other self has found bliss. "She was dead, with her hands thrust deep into her pockets" (34). The position of her hands, a typical gesture, indicates her inability ever to arrive at the moment when she would actually touch one of the women whom she loved. Earlier, Mrs. Nanceskivel pointed out to her the mark of the gash on the ancient man's skull. The scarred skull in the story suggests the diacritical marking of Ogilvy as a split subject: schizophrenic, in Luce Irigaray's term, as a result of her disidentification from her roles as woman; caught in mourning; sundered in the classification of herself as a man/woman; split in ethnic, national, and racial terms as a traditional English woman whose moment of emancipation had occurred within the terms of mass mobilization and technological advance.<sup>22</sup>

Marking this split, Hall's story too is generically divided. But this aesthetic utterance says more than even an "expert" could, were he available for forensic analysis. Retrospectively predicting the end of the theory of sexual inversion upon which it is in part modeled, Hall's story glimpses the approaching end of the oppressive institutions whose traces characterize third-sex theory. The story looks backward to a time before the denial of sexual alterity; it looks ahead to a time, after death, loss, and mourning, when a different imagination of sexual and emotional ties, including those

of transsexual subjects and those who call themselves he-shes, would make other lives possible.

As I have mentioned, Miss Ogilvy's split subjectivity resonates in a number of registers: in that of woman defined as wife; in that of the lesbian as modern sexual subject, relegated simultaneously to invisibility and, as Hall learned after the publication of *The Well of Loneliness*, to contumely. The phantasmatic conversion of Ogilvy from female to male lends itself to a postmodern transsexual reading. Her comment "If only I were a man!" suggests that she may be transsexual before the fact. Ogilvy's contrary-to-fact wish, however, acknowledges that her actual body is female. And this recognition is consistent with the possibility that what she expresses here is recognition of her existence as crossgendered. This possibility is further underwritten if we consider the direction of her desire in the story as not to the wish to become man but rather to actualize in her own bodily ego the relation of male to female that is figured metaphorically in the union of the tender male warrior with the brave young woman who will become his wife for one night only. What Ogilvy may desire is an entry into manhood that would unlock her affectively and sexually and, through finding sexual love, enable her to reclaim her own estranged female embodiment. If so, then, in her own fictional terms and relying on the languages of sex and psychology that existed at the time, what Hall envisages for her readers is the existence of a fully enabled he-she. In that case too, Hall invites readers of the twenty-first century to consider crossgendered existence not in terms of individual but of relational identity.