

MARGARET MCFADDEN

## IN/OUTSIDER: HELLA WUOLIJOKI'S IDENTITIES AND VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *THREE GUINEAS*

In her keynote address\*, Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak provided a critique of nationalism and feminism, explored the relationship between them and claimed that “feminism today is as incapable of creating an international women’s movement as it was a hundred years ago”. Yet that statement is belied by the evidence that she herself mentioned: the importance of NGO’s; the successes of women’s movements in such places as Ukraine, Russia, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Palestine; the continuing and powerful international women’s peace movement. Moving back in time to the early twentieth century, we find women living out their internationalism in different ways – ranging from the leftist anti-fascist commitment of women like Emma Goldman of Russia and the United States to the pacifism of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom of women like Rozsika Schwimmer of Hungary or Jane Addams of the U.S., or the anti-nationalism of women against conscription like Nelly Roussel in pre-First World War France.<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between feminism, nationalism and internationalism brings us at once to the heart of any discussion about the time “between wars”. Powerful as the pull of nationalism was for women in many contexts

---

\* Margaret McFadden is referring to the conference that led to this book. For more information see the introduction, pp. 9-11 (editors’ note).

<sup>1</sup> On Goldman, see CANDACE FALK, *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman*, New Brunswick, NJ 1990, and ALICE WEXLER, *Emma Goldman in Exile. From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War*, Boston 1989. For Schwimmer, see the Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection of the New York Public Library, Mss. and Archives Section, as well as SUZANNE HILDENBRAND, *Women for Peace. The Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection of the New York Public Library*, in: *Women’s Collections. Libraries, Archives, and Consciousness*, New York 1986, pp. 37-42. For the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, see LELA COSTIN, *Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women*, in: *Women’s Studies International Forum* 5 (1982), pp. 301-315, and LINDA K. SCHOTT, *Reconstructing Women’s Thoughts. The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II*, Stanford, CA 1997. For Nelly Roussel, see KAREN OFFEN, *European Feminisms 1700-1950. A Political History*, Stanford, CA 2000, pp. 241-242.

during the interwar period, internationalism was a significant counter-current. Women peace activists, European and American, began their most intense period of activity during the First World War, holding a conference in The Hague in 1915. Two thousand women from both neutral and belligerent nations attended, many with great difficulty. Their work resulted in the formation of the still active Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). They organized locally and nationally, held yearly national conventions and international ones every three years. The international conference in Vienna in 1921 was particularly successful and well-attended, as was the one in Washington in 1924. In that summer of 1924, an international women's peace summer school was held in Chicago.<sup>2</sup>

Women opposed to war and the military during and after the First World War expressed their pacifism and anti-nationalism in various ways. The life of Rozsika Schwimmer (1877-1948) is illustrative of the activists of the WILPF. She had foreseen the coming conflict of the Great War and indeed warned Lloyd George that the war was imminent. She wrote the "Appeal for Continuous Mediation" asking for negotiation before an armistice was reached. She traveled and lectured to 22 states in the U.S. and organized the Women's Peace Party with Jane Addams. She visited President Woodrow Wilson in 1914, saying presciently: "If you do not help us end the war in Europe before the militarists end it, you too will be drawn in."<sup>3</sup> In 1918, Schwimmer was appointed Hungarian minister to Switzerland by Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi – the first woman ambassador in history, years before Alexandra Kollontai of the Soviet Union was appointed ambassador to Norway and then Sweden. She was forced to resign in 1919 when the Communists came to power in Hungary, and in the resulting civil war became persona non grata in Hungary. Sources disagree about the reasons for her removal as ambassador: whether it was because she was a woman, because she disagreed with government policies, or because she spent too much money in Switzerland at hotels, dress and shoe shops.<sup>4</sup> Fearing for her life, she was smuggled out to the U.S. with the help of English and American Quakers and Swedish relief people. In the U.S. she hoped again to take up her pacifist work as lecturer and writer, but now was denounced as a traitor, a spy, a Bolshevik. Applying for U.S. citizenship in the heated atmosphere of the Red Scare in the 1920s, she argued the case all the way to the Supreme Court with various appeals. Finally in 1929 the case was

---

<sup>2</sup> Pacifists Open Their International Summer School at University of Chicago, in: Chicago Tribune, May 19, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> Rosika Schwimmer, *World Patriot*. Published by International Committee for World Peace Prize Award to Rosika Schwimmer, 1937, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence and files, 1919, Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection (see note 1).

denied on the grounds that she was a pacifist and would not bear arms. Over fifty years old by this point, she became a stateless person. Of course, neither male nor female at age 50 would have been subject to the draft in the United States. As a Hungarian with a mother-tongue related to Finnish, Schwimmer kept up a 30-year relationship with Annie Furuhjelm and other Finnish feminists. In 1940 Schwimmer penned a long article on Finland's courage and non-violent resistance to Russia in the 1905 General Strike and the 1939-40 Winter War.<sup>5</sup>

If the experience of the First World War had been a determining factor in forming Schwimmer's pacifism, different conflicts of the era inspired other women to affirm their opposition to militarism and war. Emma Goldman wrote in 1923 from Germany (after being deported from the United States to the new Soviet Union and then leaving in disillusionment in the wake of the Kronstadt massacre):

"But the one thing I am convinced of, as I have never been in my life, is that the gun decides nothing at all [...] It brings so many evils in its wake as to defeat its original aim. I have seen it in Russia, and I am certain it will work the same everywhere."<sup>6</sup>

The civil war in Spain challenged the anti-war convictions of many leftists, but Englishwoman K. Gillett-Gatty found that her convictions were only made stronger by her experiences in Spain. Writing to Rozsika Schwimmer in February 1937, she described a Spanish woman who had already lost her husband and five older sons in the war, travelling in a troop train with her youngest soldier son of 16, proud and happy to have her last son fighting. Gillett-Gatty was convinced of "the invincibility of non-resistance", if it was Gandhian, i.e., self-conscious and determined, but believed that Spain would not be able to make that commitment in the civil war. Defiantly, Gillett-Gatty declared: "I am still a pacifist".<sup>7</sup>

## II

One model for women's response to militarism, nationalism, anti-semitism and fascism in the interwar period is to be found in Virginia Woolf's *Three*

---

<sup>5</sup> "Invincible Finland," unpublished manuscript, B-14, Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection (see note 1).

<sup>6</sup> Emma Goldman, "Letter to Bayard, February 20, 1923," Emma Goldman Papers, Mss. and Archives Section, New York Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> K. Gillett-Gatty, "Letter to Rosika Schwimmer, Feb. 20, 1937," Schwimmer-Lloyd Collection (see note 1).

*Guineas* (published in 1938). Woolf proposed that women should belong to an imaginary secret Society of Outsiders<sup>8</sup>, since, “as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.”<sup>9</sup>

Woolf’s search for metaphors and models to describe women’s difference in the political and social arena anticipated the quest of more recent authors for ways of theorizing the distinctive character of women’s politics. Nira Yuval-Davis in her book *Gender and Nation* explores what she calls “transversal politics” a third way for feminists, between the total relativism of post-modernism and the universalism or essentialism of particular identity politics. In transversal politics, dialogue is essential: each group acknowledges its truth as partial and unfinished. “Rooting” (understanding one’s own roots and values) and “shifting” (pivoting to understand the Other) are both necessary; one must be careful not to lose one’s own centre nor to homogenize the Other.<sup>10</sup> Hans Mayer has examined the outsider in literature and art, portraying women, Jews, and homosexuals as “existential” (not intentional) outsiders. Part of his thesis is that the Enlightenment “principles of liberty and equality [...] inordinately encouraged combatting all forms of outsiderdom in favor of a bourgeois normal existence.”<sup>11</sup> That normality is of course male. Both Gloria Anzaldúa and María Lugones posit the importance of “border”, “curdled-separate”, or “mestiza” situations for Chicana women.<sup>12</sup>

Woolf’s characterization of women as “outsiders” thus has powerful resonances for analyses of women in contemporary politics; however, it also needs to be seen as a particularly pertinent comment on her own times in interwar England and in the face of a rising threat of war. She analyzed powerfully women’s economic situation, noting throughout that patriotism and nationalism (“our country”) mean little to a woman who has an unequal education, a poorly paying job, and family responsibilities. Critics can point to Marx’s and Engels’s earlier and similar appraisal of nationalism, and ask

---

<sup>8</sup> But note that in Sweden there has been in actuality such a secret women’s political organization, the “Stödstrumporna” or “Support Stockings”.

<sup>9</sup> VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Three Guineas*. New York 1966 [1938], p. 109. Further references to this work will be to this edition; page numbers will be noted parenthetically in the text.

<sup>10</sup> NIRA YUVAL-DAVIS, *Gender and Nation*, London 1997, p. 132.

<sup>11</sup> HANS MAYER, *Outsiders. A Study in Life and Letters*, Cambridge, Mass. 1984, p. xvi.

<sup>12</sup> GLORIA ANZALDÚA, *Borderlands. La Frontera*, San Francisco 1999; MARÍA LUGONES, *Playfulness, World-Traveling, and Loving Perception*, in: *Hypatia* 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 3-19; MARÍA LUGONES, *Purity, Impurity, and Separation*, in: *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19, 2 (1994), pp. 458-479.

what is new about Woolf's model. Yet their analysis of the necessity of internationalism was not gendered: they did not say that the *woman* has no country, only that the proletariat has no country.

Explaining why women should remain outsiders, Woolf first looks at the elitist educational system, saying that universities are exclusionary, full of ritual and pretension. "We need", she says,

"a different kind of college, one which is poor, experimental and adventurous, which has a love of learning for its own sake, where disciplinary boundaries are not honoured, where teachers and students together create a learning community. The aim of the new college, the cheap college, should be not to segregate and specialize, but to combine. It should explore the ways in which mind and body can be made to co-operate; discover what new combinations make good wholes in human life.[...] [There] would be none of the barriers of wealth and ceremony, of advertisement and competition which now make the old and rich universities such uneasy dwelling-places – cities of strife, cities where this is locked up and that is chained down; where nobody can walk freely or talk freely for fear of transgressing some chalk mark, of displeasing some dignitary. But if the college were poor, it would have nothing to offer; competition would be abolished." (34)

Woolf then maintains that women should remain outsiders because the stressful inhuman life-style of successful powerful men is not to be envied:

"Sight goes. They have no time to look at pictures. Sound goes. They have no time to listen to music. Speech goes. They have no time for conversation. They lose their sense of proportion – the relations between one thing and another. [...] Money making becomes so important that they must work by night as well as by day. Health goes."

They are no longer real human beings, but "only cripples in a cave" (72). Women should not opt for this kind of life, but should remain outsiders. The crux of the matter is her final question: "How can we enter the professions and yet remain civilized human beings; human beings, that is, who wish to prevent war?" (75)

She links violence and militarism firmly to men and may have been the first to analyze the "military-industrial complex" of government-sponsored research, education, and armaments. More, she blames England as well as Germany and Italy for the rise of fascism and anti-semitism. Galvanized particularly by the horrors of the Spanish Civil War (in which her nephew fought and died), Woolf views 1930s militarism and the arms build-up as a specifically male activity that is dangerous to the human race. Women will be able to change the situation precisely because they have not been a part of traditional institutions, and they remain outsiders. Their methods and ways are different, although they have the same goal as thinking men – the

goal of preventing war and protecting “intellectual liberty”. Women can build coalitions with men, but must act in their own ways.

What should women do if they want to prevent war? Woolf believed that women must respond in a different way from men, since their education and socialization are so differently constructed. Woolf’s Society of Outsiders makes several demands of its female members. Recasting the traditional monastic vows, she stipulates that all must agree to poverty (only enough money to live and develop), chastity (refusal to sell one’s brain-power), derision (refusing honours and fame), and “freedom from unreal loyalties” of national, class, religion, family, or sex pride (80). All members must 1) earn their own livings expertly, and agitate for a living wage for all women, including those whose profession is marriage and motherhood; 2) refuse any profession engaged in promoting “the weapons of war”; and 3) critique educational and religious establishments for nationalistic or militaristic loyalties (especially of financing). After Woolf explains the Society of Outsiders and what women should do, she asserts that the group already exists by quoting from various newspaper accounts: a woman mayor refuses to knit socks to help the war effort, women athletes refuse trophies and medals for their winning teams, fewer women participate in organized religious services of the Church of England.

Woolf’s work was far ahead of its time. Only in the past twenty years has her text become a major theoretical model advocating political gender difference. Feminist theorists as diverse as Mary Daly and Carol Gilligan have used her work in their own conceptualizations of women’s difference. Contemporary reviews at the time were often scornful or contemptuous, but Woolf received many positive letters from readers. A new volume of the *Woolf Studies Annual* reprints 82 of these letters. Several of them respond to her description of the Society of Outsiders, in many cases asserting that the Quaker Society of Friends has the same characteristics.<sup>13</sup>

Woolf composed the work quickly in the heat of her strong belief. Writing in her diary Feb. 21, 1937, she said, “Once I get into the canter over *Three Guineas* I think I shall see only the flash of the white rails and pound along to the goal.”<sup>14</sup> For this work she was not nearly as concerned about the reviews as she usually was; here she had written her own political convictions:

---

<sup>13</sup> ANNA SNAITH, *Wide Circles*. The Three Guineas Letters, in: *Woolf Studies Annual* 6 (2000); see esp. letter 58, pp. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup> VIRGINIA WOOLF, *A Writer’s Diary, Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by LEONARD WOOLF, New York [1973], p. 266.



“For having spat it out, my mind is made up. I need never recur or repeat. I am an outsider. I can take my own way: experiment with my imagination in my own way. The pack may howl, but it shall never catch me.”<sup>15</sup>

Virginia Woolf’s notion of a Society of Outsiders in *Three Guineas* (1938) is a suggestive and intriguing one that helps illuminate the subject of this essay. By using Woolf’s ideas to shed light on Hella Wuolijoki (1886-1954) and her international business dealings, her political play *Law and Order* (1933), and her international salon and diplomacy, I hope to explain how an Estonian-Finnish woman between the wars was also an outsider, even as she nurtured her own nationalism. Why is Hella Wuolijoki especially useful for seeing the interrelations between gender, nationalism, and internationalism? I would argue that Hella Wuolijoki’s life and work, because it was so political and so international – and also so contradictory – helps us see some of the ambiguity of nationalism for women in the peripheral reaches of Eastern Europe. Wuolijoki was both an insider and an outsider, and at times was quite conscious of that “borderland” status. She was in many ways an anti-nationalist, although she became part of the government after the Second World War; she was opposed to war and refused to take sides in the civil war after the Russian Revolution, but opposed Germany during the Second World War; although she was a socialist/communist in her political beliefs, she earned millions as a capitalist, and then lost or gave most of the money away; she loved natural, simple beauty, but she also, according to her daughter, had a taste for jewels and expensive clothes<sup>16</sup>; she was determined that women could make a third way between polarized political demands, even though she was also a leftist. In what follows I will try to show some of Wuolijoki’s multiple and perhaps ambiguous identities in her life and work.

### III

On the face of it, Hella Wuolijoki seems an unlikely candidate for Virginia Woolf’s anti-nationalist Society of Outsiders, for she was a leading figure in helping develop a Finnish national consciousness after her emigration from Estonia. She studied folklore at the University of Helsinki, worked on organizing the parts of the Estonian national epic, and then became a part of the Finnish socialist-nationalist movement. Her famed Niskavuori plays

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., May 20, 1938, p. 282.

<sup>16</sup> VAPPU TUOMIOJA, Sulo, Hella ja Vappuli: Muistelmia vuosilta 1911-1945 (Sulo, Hella and Vappu. Memoirs from the Years 1911-1945), Porvoo 1997, p. 135.

attained almost mythic status as a picture of rural Finnish life. She was jailed and sentenced to life imprisonment as a spy during the Second World War because of her sheltering of a female Russian paratrooper.

But other currents pervaded her life and work and these show more affinity with Woolf's stance. Indeed, if we allow the latter's model to interrogate Wuolijoki's legacy, the interesting complexity of its content becomes clear. Wuolijoki's businesses in international trade financed her international salon after the Russian Revolution and Finland's independence. She spoke seven languages: her voluminous correspondence is in Finnish, Estonian, Swedish, Russian, German, French, and English – with a huge amount in English.<sup>17</sup> Her subsequent international diplomacy (with Alexandra Kollontai [the Soviet Ambassador to Sweden], John Reed, Bertolt Brecht, and others) points to her refusal of the usual national boundaries. Her political plays, especially *Law and Order* (1933), suggest her feminist anti-militaristic stance.

Hella Wuolijoki was a woman who broke boundaries all her life. Estonian-born (in Älä, near Helme) and educated in Russian in Tartu (her grades were all 5's except in deportment), Hella Murrik was already showing her cosmopolitan daring when she managed to turn her acceptance at university in St. Petersburg into a transfer to the University of Helsinki. Studying folklore in Helsinki, she became involved in the Finnish socialist-nationalist movement, participating in the General Strike of 1905. In those revolutionary events, she says, she forgot for the first time that she was an Estonian. She met and married a member of the new Parliament, Sulo Wuolijoki, in 1907; as a leftist "Red", he was imprisoned during and after Finland's civil war; the marriage was dissolved in 1923. She writes in her memoirs of those early heady days of the first Russian revolution after 1905 in Helsinki; later she worked at three jobs, having given up her academic career after her Master's degree. Her first published play, *Children of the House* (*Talon lapset*, 1913) was published and performed in Estonian and then banned for being too nationalistic. The Russian censor said, "You cannot travel to Russia from Russia", since she had depicted Estonia as separate from Russia.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The Finnish National Archives in Helsinki has over 47 boxes of Wuolijoki's papers. Several of her international correspondents were British or American (including her agent and friend Ernestine Evans), and these portions of the archives include in many cases hundreds of letters.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by PIRKKO KOSKI, Introduction to *Law and Order*, in: *Portraits of Courage. Plays by Finnish Women*, ed. by STEVE E. WILMER, Helsinki 1997, pp. 219-225, here p. 220.



Later describing herself as “a capitalist employer with a Marxist view of the world and a belief in the bankruptcy of capitalism”<sup>19</sup>, Wuolijoki during the First World War became a leader in international trade, beginning as a secretary and business translator. Her considerable language skills facilitated this endeavour. She had major successes with Latin American, American, and Swedish firms, with sugar, coffee, wheat, and timber trading. Coming on the scene at just the right time during the war, her firm became the sole source of coffee for Russia and the early Soviet Union. She negotiated profitable deals with the American firm W.R. Grace and Company; she bought up forests and sawmills and invested in joint stock companies.<sup>20</sup> These companies were all incorporated separately – Kontro & Kuosmanen, Scandinavian Trading Company, San Galli – but they were all connected to W. R. Grace. Some of the correspondence with New York was written in code, but the New York City addresses for the different firms were all the same, 104 Pearl Street. But through it all, she refused to kowtow to authorities, to use formal business language, or to care about the profits she was making, most of which she then gave away or later lost during the Great Depression. Thus, she remained a curious sort of outsider, both in style and in fact.

As the sole woman trade negotiator, she could not go out alone at night and had to eat meals in her hotel room. Often travelling to Russia with large sums of money, she decided that public conveyances would be safer than hiring a car which could be easily hijacked. She writes: “There was one difference between me and the men. Try as I might, I couldn’t bring any seriousness to this game with the money tiger.”<sup>21</sup> And so, as an Outsider, she plays with the traditional language, showing that she considered the work just a game: “Where a normal business letter would say, ‘subject: eleven thousand tons of sugar to Finland,’ or, ‘subject: six thousand sacks of coffee,’ I wrote, ‘re: pipe dream number three in the coffee series,’ or, ‘pipe dream number one in the sugar series’”<sup>22</sup>; she used the English expression “pipe dream” in her Finnish-language memoirs. Her letters to her American friend and business partner in Sweden, Murray Sayer, give the flavour of her anti-business style:

---

<sup>19</sup> Quoted by GUNNEL CLEVE, Hella Maria Wuolijoki, in: *Women Writers of Great Britain and Europe*, New York 1997, pp. 547-549, here p. 548.

<sup>20</sup> W. R. Grace and Company. “Correspondence, 1916.” *W. R. Grace Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts*, Columbia University, New York.

<sup>21</sup> HELLA WUOLIJOKI, *Und ich war nicht Gefangene. Memoiren und Skizzen*, ed. by RICHARD SEMRAU, Rostock 1987, pp. 180-181.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

"21<sup>st</sup> May, 1917. Dear Murray: -- Now we have come to the most wonderful pipedream in the world. I did not tell you, but I have been since weeks most energetical working on that flour-pipedream. I heard through my relations in the Government that they are inten[d]ing to get Flour from America and that the Central organisation of the cooperative associations is trying to buy there [sic] Flour."<sup>23</sup>

She continues with the scheme, including power of attorney, price fixing, commissions, and shipping plans, all as a part of her plan to spend time with her intimate friend.

After the war, the Americans told her to enjoy life now, "to have a good time," but she hated the expression and the sentiment. The money was made as a game, but it should be used for others. She bought and maintained the Marlebäck estate in southern Finland as a salon for left-leaning literati, business people, and politicians from many nations, "where thinking people could speak freely." Her maxims became the preservation of human dignity and the struggle for independence: unwittingly, she was living out Woolf's four characteristics laid down for an Outsider: poverty, chastity of the brain, derision of fame and honours, and freedom from loyalties to nation, sex, or class. She attempted to make Marlebäck a model estate, where everyone worked together, and "the mistress of the house didn't sleep any longer than her people did, and rode out in the early morning before the work bell rings."<sup>24</sup> She gave away vast sums of money in the twenties to help feed starving prisoners and others destitute after the war. Her political position was hard for others to interpret and their memories about her vary considerably, for she often opted for a middle or third way between the polarized "reds" and "whites" of the post-war period. Her sympathies were left-leaning, but her talents and profession in timber and farming were capitalistic, and she refused to take sides. Indeed, she sheltered John Reed at various times in the revolutionary period when he was travelling back and forth to Russia, and was an ally of the Finnish Communist leader Otto Wille Kuusinen and his daughter Hertta Kuusinen.

In the thirties, Wuolijoki began writing plays again, this time in Finnish. Her Niskavuori series became very popular, as the strong women characters on a large-scale farm, especially the matriarch Loviisa, the proprietress who keeps house and family together, appealed to both traditional and more modern parts of the audience. The conflict "between going against obligations and working within the established norms, between engagement in

---

<sup>23</sup> Hella Wuolijoki Papers, K-3 Murray Sayer folder, Finnish National Archives, Helsinki.

<sup>24</sup> WUOLIUKI, Und ich war nicht Gefangene (see note 21), p. 298.

societal interests and the narrow-minded pursuit of egotistical goals” is the central topic in all of her plays.<sup>25</sup>

In *Juurakon Hulda* (filmed in 1937 as *The Daughter of Parliament*), Hulda, a young woman from the countryside, struggles for acceptance in the world of work, education, and politics. Hulda says,

“I want to learn everything that they know, so they can’t always despise people like us. [...] I want to know what they know. They get it from books. First I’ll go to the Workers’ Association.”<sup>26</sup>

Finnish women achieved the vote at the same time as men (in 1906), and yet the female protagonists in Wuolijoki’s plays are usually more radical and idealistic, coming into conflict with the male, who is more tradition-bound. Interestingly, *Juurakon Hulda* was the basis for the 1947 Academy-Award winning film, *The Farmer’s Daughter*, starring the late Loretta Young. As with many of her works of that era, Wuolijoki used a male pseudonym, Juhani Tervapää (in the Hollywood film mistakenly written as “Juhni Terve-taa”). Certainly, her leftist background would not have been accepted in the United States in the McCarthy era, when Hollywood screenwriters, actors, and directors were being blacklisted for leftist and Communist political views.

It is in Wuolijoki’s 1933 play *Laki ja Järjestys* (*Law and Order*) that we see the best example of Woolf’s Outsider in the character of Maria Saras, a Social Democratic MP in the first independent Finnish Parliament in 1917, who could be read as Wuolijoki’s alter-ego. The three month civil war between the Reds (Bolsheviks) and the Whites (non-Socialists) had a toll of 30,000 lives lost. When the Whites won, many Reds died of malnutrition in poorly-run prisons. In Wuolijoki’s play which takes place during the civil war, Maria Saras chooses a third way, threading a course between the polarized violence of the Reds and the Whites. As she says in Act 1, “[The woman is] not white, or blue, or red, or green. Only a human being.”<sup>27</sup> This declaration seems to anticipate Woolf’s famous dictum: “As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.” In Act 2, Maria vows, “I’m not going to help you, but I’ll work to create a new world where there is no violence” (258). Maria attempts to take a middle way between the opposing sides, declaring in Act

---

<sup>25</sup> RICHARD SEMRAU, Nachwort, in: Und ich war nicht Gefangene (see note 21), pp. 287-311, here p. 300.

<sup>26</sup> HELLA WUOLIJOKI, Hulda Juurakko, in: Modern Drama by Women 1880s-1930s, ed. by KATHERINE E. KELLY, New York 1996, pp. 218-253, here p. 228.

<sup>27</sup> HELLA WUOLIJOKI, Law and Order, in: Portraits of Courage (see note 18), pp. 230-295, here p. 240. Further citations to this work will be noted parenthetically in the text.

4, “Another road has to be found”(294). But when the men opt for law and order, she asserts, “We are no longer speaking the same language” (293). She sees herself as an Outsider, one who stands apart (“I have no home as long as they are killing people out there” [293]). Her identity as a woman is more important than a political position: “I am a woman. I am one of the mothers of society. I can’t stand by when my children are being destroyed” (292). Maria goes out into the realm of bullets and bayonets, while the men continue to stand firm for law and order. Wuolijoki ends the play at that point, leaving the audience with the question of resolution. Reflecting the continuing divisive political climate, the play was banned in Finnish theatres for three years in the thirties after it was first performed.

Finally, I want to look at Wuolijoki’s international diplomacy at the end of the 1930s, her role in negotiating the end of the Winter War, and her international work, first with Bertolt Brecht and then during Finland’s “Continuation War.” In December 1939 Hella Wuolijoki had written to Väinö Tanner, Finnish Foreign Minister, offering her services in trying to get peace talks started with the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> She was an old friend of Alexandra Kollontai, the Soviet Ambassador to Sweden, and proposed to go to Stockholm to meet with her. Tanner had had no success in making contact with the Kremlin through any neutral capitals – Stockholm, Washington, Berlin, or Rome. So Wuolijoki traveled to Stockholm and met daily (and secretly) with Kollontai for three weeks in the Grand Hotel. Max Jakobson colourfully narrates their negotiations:

“They kept no proper records; they freely spiced their reports with personal comments; they drew upon their vivid imaginations to embellish, and improve upon, their official instructions; in short, they acted like two matchmakers determined to lead, or, if need be, mislead, a reluctant and suspicious couple into matrimony.”<sup>29</sup>

Clearly, Wuolijoki and Kollontai were acting as Outsiders, using their own means and their own ways, “finding new words and creating new methods,” as Virginia Woolf puts it (143). And, they succeeded in getting the peace negotiations started to end the Winter War.

In that same year (1940), Wuolijoki sheltered the German exile Bertolt Brecht and his family, who had escaped through Denmark and Sweden and were waiting for visas to the U.S. For nearly a year they lived on Wuolijo-

---

<sup>28</sup> ERKKI TUOMIOJA, Hella Wuolijoki kanssa matkustajana ja rauhantekijänä (Hella Wuolijoki. Traveller and Peacemaker), in: Suomi ja Viro. Yhdessä ja Erikseen, (Finland and Estonia. Together and Separate), Turku 1998, pp. 173-185.

<sup>29</sup> MAX JAKOBSON, *The Diplomacy of the Winter War. An Account of the Russo-Finnish War, 1939-1940*, Cambridge, Mass. 1961, p. 209.

ki's estate at Marlebäck, and an international salon flourished in the midst of the nationalism of the Second World War. There was, in Wuolijoki's words, "a nightly symposium." The international group remained optimistic about possibilities for peace even while war raged. Says Wuolijoki: "We scrapped the bombers and found an excellent use for them."<sup>30</sup> The two playwrights discussed drama, theory, and politics; Brecht wrote furiously in his journal. On 18 August 1940, he detailed the joys of this collaboration:

"As i put forward various techniques from non-aristotelian dramatic theory for the play h.w. is planning about s.[Snellman, the great Finnish nationalist], i am fed little omelettes baked from the blood of young calves, eaten with thyme and sour cream."<sup>31</sup>

They collaborated in writing a play together. The resulting Brecht play, *Master Puntila and his Servant Matti* (which premiered in Zurich in 1949), did not give joint credit to Wuolijoki, while Wuolijoki's Finnish version, *Iso-Heikkilan isanta ja hanen renkinsa Kalle* (1946) listed Brecht as co-author. Only later, when Wuolijoki's daughter Vappu Tuomioja complained, did she begin to receive royalties. In fact, Wuolijoki was the only one of the women who helped Brecht during his career who ever received royalties, no doubt because a signed contract exists.<sup>32</sup>

The saga of Wuolijoki's prison term needs to be narrated in order to complete the discussion of this outsider's life. She was arrested by the anti-Soviet government and tried for treason in 1943, on charges of harbouring a spy, a Russian woman parachutist, on her estate at Jokela.<sup>33</sup> (Wuolijoki had been forced by financial circumstances to sell Marlebäck in 1940.) Sentenced to life imprisonment, she was freed in 1944. At the end of the war she was made head of Finnish Radio and, after the 1945 elections, became a member of Parliament and a part of the government coalition from the SKDL (Finnish Communist) party. She was dismissed in 1949 from Finnish Radio after the defeat of the Communists in 1948 elections. She recounts the story of her so-called "treasonous" war work in a letter to Brecht in 1946: "But the main thing is that I sat here for up to ten hours and broadcast over the radio messages of comfort in all the seven languages that

<sup>30</sup> WUOLIJOKI, Und ich war nicht Gefangene (see note 21), p. 229.

<sup>31</sup> BERTOLT BRECHT, Bertolt Brecht Journals, ed. by JOHN WILLETT, New York 1993, p. 88.

<sup>32</sup> MARGARETA N. DESCHNER, Wuolijoki's and Brecht's Politicization of the Volksstück, in: Bertolt Brecht. Political Theory and Literary Practice, ed. by BETTY NANCE WEBER/HUBERT HEINEN, Athens, GA 1980, pp. 115-128, here pp. 125-126. See also JOHN FUEGI, Brecht and Company. Sex, Politics, and the Making of the Modern Drama, New York 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Jailed Finnish Writer to Get Big Political Job, in: New York Herald Tribune, June 25, 1944.

I knew.”<sup>34</sup> Her radio work may have sounded traitorous, but in its pacifist internationalism was another example of her outsider and anti-nationalist status. Released from prison, she recounts the feeling of pressing herself against the grass at her home, the smells and the sights of the fields, flowers, and sky: “I closed my eyes, and as little Tuuli [her grandchild] brought me clovers, I could finally breathe in their full scent – the lost scent of two summers.”<sup>35</sup>

Wuolijoki continued, throughout her life, to embody the model delineated by Virginia Woolf for the outsiders who want to prevent war: “[...] by remaining outside your society but in co-operation with its aim. That aim is the same for us both. It is to assert ‘the rights of all – all men and women – to the respect in their persons of the great principles of Justice and Equality and Liberty’” (Woolf 1966, 143-4). Wuolijoki’s radical view of society was often in conflict with her own bourgeois life-style, but she attempted to make a difference as a woman and refused to be cowed by limiting gender norms. Her following of her twin maxims – for human dignity and independence – set her apart from polarized politics in the difficult time period in which she lived and enabled her to continue breaking the boundaries of expectation wherever she was. This third way for women – the way of the Outsider – provides another perspective in the discussion of gender and nationalism between the wars.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> WUOLIJOKI, Letter to Brecht, in: *Und ich war nicht Gefangene* (see note 21), pp. 280-287, here p. 282.

<sup>35</sup> WUOLIJOKI, *Und ich war nicht Gefangene* (see note 21), p. 237.

<sup>36</sup> I want to thank Ritva Hapuli, Docent in History, University of Turku, and Maarit Leskelä Phil.Lic., Cultural History, University of Turku, for their sensitive reading and translation help on this article.