

WOMEN'S WRITING OF WORLD WAR I

DISCOURSES OF FEMINISM AND PACIFISM IN ROSE MACAULAY'S
NON-COMBATANTS AND OTHERS AND VERA BRITAIN'S
TESTAMENT OF YOUTH

Joyce Van Damme

Student number: 01302613

Supervisor: Dr. Birgit Van Puymbroeck

Master thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of "Master in de Taal-
en Letterkunde: Engels"

Academic year: 2016 – 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Birgit Van Puymbroeck, for her guidance, feedback, and support. Thank you for always being ready to answer any questions I had and for your engagement throughout the process. I would also like to thank my friends and family for their love and support.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Historical Context of the First World War	9
3. Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in Rose Macaulay's <i>Non-Combatants and Others</i>	15
3.1 Biographical Introduction to Macaulay and her Feminism and Pacifism	15
3.2 Discourses of Feminism	19
3.3 Discourses of Pacifism	25
3.4 How Feminism and Pacifism Are Connected	34
4. Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in Vera Brittain's <i>Testament of Youth</i>	38
4.1 Biographical Introduction to Brittain and her Feminism and Pacifism	38
4.2 Discourses of Feminism	42
4.3 Discourses of Pacifism	48
4.4 How Feminism and Pacifism Are Connected	56
5. Comparison of Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in <i>Non-Combatants and Others</i> and <i>Testament of Youth</i>	58
5.1 Difference in Discourse	58
5.2 Comparison of Development of Feminist and Pacifist Discourses	63
6. Difference in Discourse Related to Difference in Time and Genre: Macaulay's 1916 Novel Compared to Brittain's 1933 Memoir	68
6.1 Influence of Genre on Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism	68
6.2 Difference in Genre and Discourse Related to Difference in Time	71
7. Conclusion	76
8. Cited Works	83

(26677 words)

1. Introduction

During the Great War, feminism and pacifism both evolved and advanced, sometimes even hand in hand. Now, a century later, women's rights are often still threatened and war does not always seem far away. This makes it interesting to look back at the literature of the First World War when the concepts of feminism and pacifism were upcoming ideas, expressed especially in women's war writing, and to see how they developed during WWI, often seen as a pivotal moment in history for women's roles and rights, and how feminism and pacifism were advocated in writing. This thesis investigates the discourses of feminism and pacifism in Rose Macaulay's 1916 novel *Non-Combatants and Others* and Vera Brittain's 1933 memoir *Testament of Youth*. The authors and their works will be discussed against the historical background of the First World War. This thesis focusses on Macaulay and Brittain because they are both British authors who experienced and wrote about the First World War, and who can be seen as prominent feminist pacifists of the time. Moreover, they were connected in their struggle to find their place as women writers in wartime and interwar society, in their similar ideas of feminism and pacifism and how these evolved, and in their awareness and encouragement of one another's writing. Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others* and Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, which can be seen as the authors' most important WWI works, are particularly relevant for this thesis, since they are explicitly focused on the war and women's wartime experiences.

Macaulay's *Non-Combatants* is her 1916 novel centred around Alix, who is searching for her position as a female artist in mid-war society, observing other characters and their various, mostly patriotic, stances on the war. Brittain's *Testament* is a 1933 autobiographical memoir focused on Brittain's wartime experience and her interwar feminist and pacifist activism. I will particularly be focusing on the discourses of feminism and pacifism in both books, as it is interesting to explore how women writers of WWI advocated these causes at a

time when both concepts were still evolving and growing in impact. Discourse is defined here as a form of writing, more specifically as the way these authors engage with the concepts of feminism and pacifism in their writing, how they refer to the concepts, and in what light these concepts occur in the books. The discourses of feminism and pacifism can mostly be found in how certain views are expressed in the books and what the characters say about these or related concepts. My discussion of them includes references to secondary sources containing previous research relevant to the thesis and backing its claims. Although Brittain and Macaulay and their works have previously been the subject of academic research (an overview of which will be shown further on in this introduction), a comparison of *Testament* and *Non-Combatants* and their discourses of feminism and pacifism in particular has not been done yet. This comparison, however, is useful in that it shows how women writers of WWI expressed their ideals similarly, which shows that there was a connection between these women writers, which this thesis will explore.

The aim of this thesis is, aside from comparing the discourses of feminism and pacifism in the particular works, to show that the difference in feminist/pacifist discourses can be linked to various factors affecting the manner of expressing these discourses. The goal is, therefore, to formulate an answer to the following research question: “How do Rose Macaulay and Vera Brittain develop and connect their literary discourses of feminism and pacifism in their respective novel *Non-Combatants and Others* (1916) and memoir *Testament of Youth* (1933)? How are those discourses influenced by (a) the time of publication, (b) the genre of the works, and (c) the evolution of the authors’ ideas?” In their respective works *Non-Combatants* and *Testament*, Rose Macaulay and Vera Brittain develop and connect their literary discourses of feminism and pacifism differently. Macaulay writes during the war and does not directly voice her own ideals; Brittain writes years after the war, using her own voice to openly advocate feminism and pacifism.

The hypothesis this thesis wants to put forward is that the discourses of feminism and pacifism were affected by factors such as the context of publication. The differing times of publication can be linked with different contexts due to people's ideals changing during and after the war. An example of this would be that Macaulay, being published earlier, could express her ideas and discourses less directly, which is why she then used a fictional novel expressing the voices of many different characters. More often than not, she represents certain feminist and pacifist ideas in a negative light, perhaps as a reflection of society: "Macaulay uses her novel to represent many viewpoints, many different and often conflicting ideas, both combatant and non-combatant, with a detachment that reflects the confusion and ambiguity of the time" (Smith 143). Brittain, on the other hand, wrote and published after the war using her own voice, real life characters, and the genre of autobiography to show how her ideas progressed. This enabled her to be more open and direct. Her memoir is based on the diary she kept during the war and also includes her posterior reflections on the war and her interwar experiences, such as her pacifist activist work. The fact that she used the genre of the memoir shows that she could express her discourses more directly, at a time more receptive to feminist and pacifist discourses. In the interwar period, some women used their personal writing from during the war, such as diaries and letters, to be published to show their experience of the war and to show that the Great War had not solely been a male experience or that only men's writing was relevant (Smith 47). Brittain's memoir can be seen as the most famous example of such a publication (Smith 47). Through their works centred on women's war experiences, Brittain and Macaulay provide an alternative story of the war, unlike the familiar stories of the war poets and memoirists such as Siegfried Sassoon, and shed light on women's changing roles.

Previous scholars, such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *No Man's Land*, have rejected the assumption of war being an exclusively male experience and have opened a scholarly debate on women's war writing, which reflects women's historical experience of the

war and women's view on militarism (Buck 87-88). Some other works on women's war writing are Claire Buck's "British Women's Writing of the Great War," which discusses women's war poetry, drama, and prose, and Santanu Das' "The Impotence of Sympathy," which focuses on nurses' memoirs. Trudi Tate's "The First World War: British Writing" provides an overview of WWI writing by soldiers as well as by civilians, including women writers. Macaulay and Brittain have both previously been discussed in the context of feminism and pacifism. Scholars have, for instance, linked discourses of feminism or pacifism with other cultural aspects in the literary works of these two WWI authors. Sharon Ouditt, for example, links feminism in Brittain's work with class distinctions, saying that although Brittain's text recognizes women's wartime experiences and women's roles in the war, it is advocating feminism based on an individualism that was only accessible by women of Brittain's own class (3-4).

Other academics have linked pacifism with art and modernism, for instance regarding Macaulay's work. An example of this is Angela Smith who writes that the central focus of Macaulay's *Non-Combatants* is on art and war, and that Macaulay does not attempt to resolve the problems of the artist's otherness (139). Alix's otherness as an artist means that she does not know her place in society and feels excluded. Moreover, Smith writes that "[t]he association of art and pacifism recurs continually in women's writing of the war, and [that] it echoes the modernist links between the privileging of the aesthetic and the rejection of a mechanised mass media culture" (139). Another link that academics have made concerning WWI discourses is between feminism and citizenship, as the latter forms a significant point of research for the former and many scholars have investigated feminism in relation to social citizenship (Canning 207). Citizenship has also been linked with pacifism. An example of defending women's roles as citizens can be seen in the anti-war stance that sees war as part of a society that dominates and diminishes both women and the lower classes (Ouditt 5). Since class distinctions, art,

modernism, and citizenship are less relevant for this thesis, it will not be building on those aspects of previous research.

Scholars on WWI literature have also investigated a change in gender dynamics, which is more relevant for this thesis. Gender and war have been studied together and in that field of studies, discourse and experience are particularly entwined. The experience of the war influenced discourses, for instance, on masculinity and femininity. Moreover, gender ideologies were influenced by the war and by the new experiences it brought to men and women, and likewise did these changing gender dynamics influence the way men and women experienced the new events (Canning 44). From the final decades of the twentieth century onwards, no longer only the experience of men was widely recognized; the war's effects on women's lives were also being acknowledged and investigated: "Studies of the home front, for example, emphasized the transformative effects of prolonged total war upon women, upon their experiences – of labor and loss, family and food provision, protest and propaganda – and on the ways in which they were represented in the new national symbolics of war" (Canning 42-43). An example of war literature promoting the change in gender dynamics is Brittain's memoir, as it disclaims the negative representation of women in popular men's literature and brings a different version of war experience to the market, being a woman's work reflecting on the men's war while deploring the divide of soldiers and non-combatants (Smith 106).

A change in ideals concerning gender roles can also be seen in Macaulay's and other women's war discourses, as some express a longing for a more active female participation in the war. A good example is Macaulay's 1915 poem "Many Sisters to Many Brothers," which expresses the inequality of women not being allowed to fight alongside men at the front:

Oh it's you that have the luck, out there in the blood and muck:

You were born beneath a kindly star;

All we dreamt, I and you, you can really go and do,

And I can't, the way things are.

In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting

A hopeless sock that never gets done.

Well, here's luck, my dear – you've got it no fear;

But for me... a war is poor fun. (qtd. in Reilly xxxv)

Along with a change in gender dynamics in WWI discourses, an evolution of ideals, such as that of heroism, took place as well. Smith, for instance, writes about the significance of gender in the war as she relates it to patriotism, heroism, and emasculation. She says about *Non-Combatants* that “[t]raditional notions of ‘heroism’, which will later be deconstructed in much war fiction, are already presented as meaningless in this early novel” (Smith 144). Changing ideals of patriotism and heroism will also be discussed in this thesis, given that they played a role in women’s discourses of feminism and pacifism.

Furthermore, scholars on Brittain and Macaulay have previously tied feminism and pacifism together, for instance Muriel Mellow. In “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism in the Novels of Vera Brittain,” Mellow writes that Brittain was a liberal minded woman whose writing reflects England’s contemporary intellectual interests, as socialism, feminism, and pacifism were her main concerns (215). Previous research has also shown how Brittain shifted her focus over the years from feminism to pacifism and back, as she was first mostly known as a prominent feminist journalist until the late 1930s, when she became exclusively committed to the pacifist cause, until she was able to return to her feminist work after 1945 (Mellow, “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism” 215). Previous work on Macaulay has also tied feminism and pacifism together, for instance concerning *Non-Combatants*’ character Daphne Sandomir, Alix’s mother, who “personifies the mentality, the inexhaustible energy, and the tactics of strident feminist pacifism during the First World War” (Gottlieb). Another source has discussed Macaulay’s pacifism tied in with Christianity. Claire Tylee argues that Alix’s

combination of pacifism and Christianity disregards the fact that the Church of England was supporting the war and the government's propaganda, and instead focuses on a romantic kind of religion, which fits in Macaulay's imaginary pacifist organisation which does not mention feminism or socialism (116-17). This pacifist organisation will further be investigated in this thesis, as well as religion and how it changes throughout both books.

It can be concluded that feminism and pacifism in World War I literature have previously been discussed in relation to one another and to class distinctions, art, modernism, citizenship, changing gender dynamics, heroism, the war's effects, Christianity, etc. Particularly relevant for this dissertation are the research on the war's effects, changing gender dynamics, Christianity, and changing ideals such as heroism, because of their impact on women's discourses of feminism and pacifism. Feminism and pacifism in Britain and Macaulay have also been discussed in the scholarly debate, which this thesis will contribute to by comparing and interlinking their discourses. However, at the time of publication of *Non-Combatants and Others*, the novel was not exclusively read as anti-war or pacifist (Buck 102). Some earlier scholars, such as Debra Rae Cohen, have even stated that *Non-Combatants* cannot be compared to *Testament* in the sense of also being a pacifist book (Cohen 44). This thesis will argue against that and show that they can be compared, also on a pacifist level. This comparison will reveal similar pacifist conversion stories in the books, showing a strong connection between Britain's and Macaulay's writing.

This introduction can conclude that previous research has been done on many aspects of female WWI writing, also concerning Macaulay and Britain in the context of feminism and pacifism. Nevertheless, research still needs to be added to the debate comparing and interlinking both authors and their respective *Non-Combatants* and *Testament*. Bringing these two together sheds a new light on women's feminist/pacifist writing of WWI. This thesis aims to build on previous research and mostly the books and their historical contexts to show similar discourses

of feminism and pacifism, expressed through different techniques and in differing genres, which can be related to the difference in time.

This thesis is structured as first placing the works in their context by giving an overview of the historical background of the First World War and other discourses of feminism and pacifism during the war, after which I will discuss the discourses of feminism and pacifism and how they are connected in Macaulay's *Non-Combatants* and Brittain's *Testament*, starting off with a biographical introduction to the authors in each section. This biographical information is relevant in that it shows the authors' ideas of feminism and pacifism and how these developed throughout their lives, which influenced their discourses. After discussing the books separately, I will compare their discourses of feminism and pacifism and how these are developed. Next, I will investigate various factors influencing the discourses of feminism and pacifism, such as (a) the difference in genre, comparing Macaulay's novel to Brittain's memoir, (b) the time of writing and publication, Macaulay publishing her work in 1916 and Brittain in 1933, and (c) the evolution of the authors' ideas about the war.

Forming a conclusion about these various factors being connected to the discourses of feminism and pacifism in Macaulay's and Brittain's WWI books will give insight into how these two feminist pacifist women express their ideals in their works. I will also investigate to what extent these women writers were connected and formed a community, sharing the same ideals and expressing these in their writing. In the next chapter, however, I will first give the overview of the historical context of the First World War and its discourses of feminism and pacifism, to further embed this thesis in its framework.

2. Historical Context of the First World War

This chapter gives insight into the historical and cultural context of WWI to show the influence of women's war experiences on their writing and discourses of feminism and pacifism. The First World War changed life in general, not only for the men fighting but also for the women they left behind. Social history research has shown that the Great War was far from being an entirely male experience, as the war reorganised life at the home front, for instance regarding family, jobs, and prosperity (Canning 42). Women had significant wartime roles, as they worked in hospitals, munitions factories, and rearranged domestic life at the home front, for instance in education, welfare, and in managing the individual homes in wartime (Canning 42). The First World War brought about a change in women's roles and their position in society, since never before they had been able to be as involved as they were during the war. This new kind of involvement, sometimes close to the fighting, enabled women to cast off claims that diminished them as citizens and they created a heroism for themselves which brought them closer to equality with their male contemporaries (Smith 7).

As the wartime situation created new experiences for women, these led to a surge of women's war writing. They wrote, for instance, about their new travel and work opportunities, from which women's historical writing benefitted and which influenced the literary development (Smith 19). Women had to take on former men's roles in society, which can also be seen in their writing, as women's wartime diaries often reflect a combination of traditional female roles and the need to take on male roles as men were absent (Smith 19). Not only did women actively help out during the war by taking over men's jobs at the home front, they also served in hospitals as professional or volunteer nurses, in Britain and abroad, which created some of the most interesting accounts on the war (Smith 29). An example of such an account is *Testament of Youth* by Vera Brittain, who worked as a VAD, a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse.

In the debate on gender dynamics, some academics are of the opinion that a change occurred in the First World War as women gained more power. Sandra Gilbert, for instance, argues that the war “completed the Industrial Revolution’s construction of anonymous dehumanised man” (“Soldier’s Heart” 423), which she sees in many modernist ‘anti-heroes,’ products of a world in which war had enabled women to gain more power and take charge of their and others’ lives. A symbol of this new kind of control can be seen in the figure of the nurse (Smith 91). However, the shift in power dynamics is often seen as temporary, given that after the war, life returned mostly to the way it was. The men who came back from the front took up their previous jobs again and women were left with their traditional functions as the pre-war gender roles were restored (Canning 46). Nevertheless, a change was done which helped suffragettes make progress, obtaining the vote in Britain in 1918 for women older than thirty with certain property qualifications, and achieving the same voting rights as men in 1928 (“Living Heritage”).

Continuing, this thesis will now have a look at feminism and pacifism during WWI, and the discourses they inspired. To begin with, many women opposed the war morally, some for instance out of feminist considerations, as they did not have a say in politics. Given that such politics had led to the war, some women saw it as men’s responsibility, women being politically excluded (Smith 9). This shows that feminism and pacifism had a connection during the war, which can also be seen in suffragettes supporting the cause of pacifism. Many organised women’s groups saw the war as oppressive upon women and linked their cause of suffrage ideologically and psychologically with the need to work for peace. They saw peace as equal to freedom from oppression and suffrage as a necessity for peace (Costin 305). Active suffragettes therefore engaged themselves for the cause of peace and became leading figures in the movement to stop the war, creating organisations such as the Woman’s Peace Party. In 1915, the Women’s International Peace Conference took place, “an International Congress of women

pacifists from both neutral and belligerent nations to be held at The Hague, April 28-May 1, 1915. The ambitious plan was launched by a small number of Dutch, Belgian, British, and German women, all of whom were suffrage leaders in their own countries” (Costin 108). The conference produced ‘Congress Resolutions,’ which included, “a demand for equal representation of women in peace negotiations [...], equal political rights and the enfranchisement of women” (Costin 311). The 1915 International Peace Conference proved to be an important event for pacifists as well as for feminists, seeing that the congress redefined social roles and structures and demanded political equality for women in matters of war, peace, and international foreign policy (Costin 314).

However, like the movement of the suffragettes, pacifism was not widely supported. On the contrary, the cause was very unpopular and as there were even penalties for pacifist attitudes, there was a price to pay for women who openly opposed war and were involved in international politics. An example of this is Jane Addams, a leader of the suffragette and peace movements, whose peace work deprived her of her national prestige and caused her to be accused of treason (Costin 313). This also meant that not all feminists supported pacifism. In contrast, many women saw the war as an opportunity to stand by their country, supporting patriotism and nationalism, sometimes in the hope that their support would result in improvement for the feminist cause. Therefore, many joined the propagandistic effort. At the time, Ellen Key, a Swedish feminist and pacifist, wrote about patriotism that it had the same power as religion in times of religious revival (Costin 304). By working former men’s jobs or wanting to fight alongside the men, suffragettes hoped to obtain the vote, along with an equal position in society. England’s reserve corps of women, which was prepared for instant participation in the war, was made up largely of the same women who had been involved in the suffrage effort and its hunger strikes (Costin 304). Some feminists saw a connection to suffrage in their participation in the war effort, as they might obtain the right to vote more quickly by

contributing to winning the war. This is why even some pacifists joined the war effort in some measure (Costin 305).

Nevertheless, women were traditionally associated with peace on a passively inherent and biological level, and saw their role as mothers, creating and nurturing human life, as motivation to oppose war (Costin 305). The reason for women supposedly being inherently linked with peace is that they can be seen as ‘life-givers’ as opposed to men seen as ‘life-takers.’ Motherhood is therefore universally seen as aligning women with pacifism, as mothers are particularly involved with making and preserving human life, in contrast to men, fighting in the war and destroying life. This social construction was discussed in certain writing of the time, for instance in the feminist internationalist journal *Jus Suffragii* and in fictional works by Rose Macaulay and Vera Brittain, where they argue for a revolutionary way to resolve international conflict, namely settling disputes through compromise and mediation instead of by war (Ouditt 131-32).

The concept of women as life-givers linked pacifism with feminism in discourses of the First World War, as can be seen for instance in Mabel Stobart’s work, a feminist who wanted to help defend her country in order to deserve a place for women in government and who founded the Women’s Wounded and Sick Convoy Corps (1912) and the Women’s National Service League (1914). She writes that women as life-givers cannot approve of people willingly destroying it, which exemplifies an attitude recurrent in pacifist/feminist rhetoric, seeing women’s inherent pacifism as inseparable from women’s political rights and the suffrage movement (Smith 63). Nevertheless, the concept of linking motherhood with pacifism was not supported by every pacifist, given that the government had also used motherhood before as a means of propaganda, presenting woman as a mother in her traditional, passive role (Ouditt 4). Especially feminists stood negatively towards that biologically inherent role assigned to women: “In the natural and social sciences feminists critiqued biological essentialism as an

explanation for sexual inequality, emphasizing instead the power of languages and discourses to define hierarchies of sex and gender and to anchor them in social practices and institutions” (Canning 7). This shows that feminism was expressed primarily in writing, including literary discourses of the time.

Although the figure of the mother had served as a form of the government’s propaganda, the concept of motherhood was often still used as a strong feminist/pacifist rhetoric during the First World War, sometimes along with the use of bodily images. An example of this is the writing of Olive Schreiner, a prominent South-African feminist and pacifist, who was of the opinion that women suffered more than men in the war and who writes about the battlefield as being covered not only with male, but also with uninjured female bodies (Grayzel 128). This kind of war analysis based on bodily images, such as the figure of the maternal body, proved a strong rhetoric in feminist writing both in favour of and against the war. However, this can more clearly be seen in feminist anti-militarist writing which presents women’s production of male bodies as the principal munition for the war (Grayzel 128). Frances Hallows, a British writer, argued in 1915 that only women truly valued life because it was their maternal suffering that brought human beings into existence, expressing again the link between motherhood, life, and pacifism. She saw militarism as a masculine invention using male bodies for hostile means, while the tragedy of war was only perceived by people who understood the suffering of millions of mothers secretly mourning their sons (Grayzel 128). Hallows thus contradicts the propagandistic image of the mother who expresses patriotic self-sacrifice concerning the loss of her sons at the front, and turns it into an anti-war image.

This introduction to WWI’s historical and cultural context can conclude that the focus in previous studies on women’s war literature has often been on the rhetoric of motherhood related to life as prevalent in discourses of pacifism and patriotism. It has also shown that many different discourses of feminism and pacifism were present during the war, sometimes linking

feminism and pacifism and supporting both causes, other times focusing on one while neglecting the other. There were many various viewpoints and approaches to the movements. This means that there was no universality or consistency in discourses of feminism and pacifism. Some female writers' ideas also went through an evolution as they, for instance, first worked and wrote for the British Propaganda Department, such as Macaulay, encouraging the men to go fight. In a later stage of the war, many of these female writers developed negative feelings towards the war and some even became pacifist activists, such as Brittain. This thesis will later further investigate such evolutions in ideology through Macaulay and Brittain. First, it will discuss Macaulay's discourses of feminism and pacifism, focusing on her novel *Non-Combatants and Others*.

3. Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in Rose Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others*

To enable me to discuss discourses of feminism and pacifism in Macaulay's novel, I will first give a biographical introduction to obtain insight into what her feminist/pacifist course and the evolution of her ideas looked like. This will give a better understanding of the context in which her war writing, focusing here on *Non-Combatants and Others*, originated and what inspired her feminist/pacifist discourses.

3.1 Biographical Introduction to Macaulay and her Feminism and Pacifism

Biographical Overview of Macaulay's Life

Rose Macaulay (1881-1958) was born in Rugby, Warwickshire. One of seven children, she spent some years of her childhood in a village in Italy (Stade 308). She studied at Somerville College, Oxford University, from which she graduated in 1903. Macaulay was already a published author of poetry and prose before the outbreak of the First World War; she published her first novel *Abbots Verney* in 1906. During WWI, she first worked for the British Propaganda Department, after which she volunteered as a nurse. From 1916, she worked as a Civil Servant in the War Office, dealing with conscientious objectors. The knowledge she gained there proved useful for her pacifist novel *Non-Combatants and Others* (Stade 309). She worked in the War Office until she was relocated to the Ministry of Information in 1918.

The last book Macaulay wrote is her best-known work, namely *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956), for which she received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. The book is about a group of Anglo-Catholics travelling through Turkey and their attempted conversion of Turks, “[drawing] on Macaulay's own spiritual return to Christianity” (Stade 309). Throughout her life, Macaulay also wrote works of non-fiction such as biographies, essays, and letters. She regularly wrote book reviews, for instance, for the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide* (Clay 1).

Macaulay was well-known for her journalism and was one of the female journalists attempting to change the stereotypical view of women's journalism at the time: "Faced with this marketplace, in which 'women's journalism' could signify vanity, consumerism, and gossip, writers like Macaulay, [Rebecca] West, and [Winifred] Holtby set out to attack these tendencies and to practice a politically engaged journalism of their own, one invested in social reform and aimed, in part, at reforming journalism itself to this end" (Scott 191-92). In the 1958 New Year Honours, Macaulay was awarded the title of Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her writing. Seven months after this, she had a heart attack and passed away (Stade 309).

Macaulay's Experience of WWI

The First World War caused Macaulay, like many others, to suffer great losses. One of her brothers got wounded in battle and her other brother was killed, as well as dear friends of hers. It is clear that Macaulay struggled deeply with these deaths, as she became depressed for several months after her brother's death. Not surprisingly, the dedication of *Non-Combatants and Others* reads 'To my brother and other combatants.' The war also caused her to suffer the loss of her dear friend Rupert Brooke, well-known for his war poetry, whose death in 1915 made her anti-war feelings stronger (Boxwell 89). The struggle of coping with her losses led Macaulay to gradually turn to Christianity, mostly drawn to its ideas of sacrifice and afterlife (Tylee 115). The war influenced Macaulay's life to a great extent, given that it changed her religious beliefs from being an agnostic to becoming a devoted Christian. A reference to her conversion to Christianity can be seen in *Non-Combatants* as its protagonist Alix also turns to Christianity.

Despite the fact that Macaulay was not able to stomach nurse work well, unlike her sisters, she volunteered for a short while in a local hospital, near where she lived in

Cambridgeshire, likely as a means to keep busy and distract herself from the war (Tylee 116). Alix, the protagonist of *Non-Combatants*, which she was writing at the time, is like Macaulay in that she is extremely sensitive to the sight of wounds as well. In 1916, the year in which she completed *Non-Combatants*, Macaulay stopped volunteering as a nurse. Looking at similarities between Macaulay's experiences and her wartime writing, it is easy to argue that the war influenced her writing, as she seemingly applied her personal experiences to *Non-Combatants* (Smith 145). The protagonist's brother, for instance, also dies in the war, and Macaulay's close friend Rupert Brooke is sometimes seen as the basis for her character Basil Doye, with whom Alix was in love and who gets wounded in the war, disabling him from painting, as he was an artist like Alix.

Feminism in Macaulay's Life

Macaulay's feminism was not only expressed in her books but also in her journalism, for instance in her articles for *Time and Tide*. Macaulay, like Brittain, was a contributor to the weekly feminist newspaper founded in 1920, and it is likely that they, along with many other feminist writers, crossed paths at a reception for this paper in 1932, to which they both accepted invitations. The reception marked "the emergence of a public association of women writers at an historic moment of professional opportunity for a new generation of middle-class women" (Clay 1). The newspaper published articles, reviews, letters, short-fiction, and poems and can be seen as an important source of feminist works to which many prominent feminists contributed, such as Mary Hamilton, Emmeline Pankhurst, Olive Schreiner, Rebecca West, Virginia Woolf, and Winifred Holtby.

Macaulay's feminism can not only be seen in her books and contribution to this 1920s-30s feminist newspaper, but also in her early war poetry, given that in her 1915 poem "Many Sisters to Many Brothers" she seems to be expressing jealousy in not being able to fight in the

war like the men of her generation. Female writers at the time often saw the front as a place of mobility, contrary to their state of immobility at the home front. In the 1915 poem, Macaulay expresses her envy of the soldiers' freedom away from the passive home front (Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart" 438):

All we dreamt, I and you, you can really go and do,
 And I can't, the way things are.
 In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting
 A hopeless sock that never gets done. (qtd. in Reilly xxxv)

Macaulay was not one of the women who experienced a new kind of mobility and power, like nurses abroad, but nevertheless she found some distraction and purpose by helping out as a voluntary nurse in a local hospital. Moreover, she transgressed traditional female boundaries in her feminist and pacifist writing and in working for the War Office.

Pacifism in Macaulay's Life

Macaulay often used discourses of pacifism tied in with the figure of the mother and with mother-daughter relationships in her novels. *Non-Combatants and Others* was the first of her novels to use the mother-daughter relationship to express the compromise between the paradoxical human conflict of a desire for peace versus an urge for armed fighting (Boxwell 89). In Macaulay's books, strong mother figures often actively oppose war, as in her novels about the Spanish Civil War and World War II (*And No Man's Wit* and *The World My Wilderness*, respectively). Such an independent self-made mother figure associated with pacifist activism can also be seen in *Non-Combatants'* character Daphne Sandomir: "*Non-Combatants* [...] raises crucial questions of women's complicity in war-making and answers them by portraying a mother figure who is a feminist-pacifist activist, a striking prefiguration of the author's own highly visible involvement in pacifist organizations as one of England's

most celebrated women novelists” (Boxwell 89). In the interwar period, Macaulay was involved in pacifist organisations as she, for instance, became a sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union. Her pacifism, however, was mostly expressed in her writing, more specifically in her novels and in pacifist essays she wrote. This shows that Macaulay’s involvement in pacifist activism clearly influenced her writing.

3.2 Discourses of Feminism

Although *Non-Combatants and Others* contains more discourses of pacifism than feminism and often discourses of feminism are related to pacifism, some discourses of feminism can be found separately as well. In *Non-Combatants*, feminism is mentioned degradingly most of the time, for instance by people referring to suffragettes in a derogatory manner. This happens often in *Violette*, a suburban villa inhabited solely by women, namely the widow Mrs. Frampton and her daughters Evie and Kate, with whom Alix stays for several months. The women in *Violette* are particularly concerned with menial, homely issues instead of worldly issues such as the war or feminism: “‘That fatty in a sailor blouse,’ Evie, who observed clothes, commented. ‘I should think they’d be glad of a change *from* her. She’s a suffragette, and talks the weirdest stuff; she’s as good as a play to listen to [...]’ ‘What’s the name of that new floor-polish, to tell Aunt Nellie?’ said Mrs. Frampton, pausing in her letter” (Macaulay 31). In this fragment the prominent presence of menial, domestic subjects in *Violette* is clear. They are here contrasted with the serious matter of feminism and suffragettes, as Evie disapprovingly mentions Miss Simon, a suffragette.

The suffragette Miss Simon occurs later on in the book, where Macaulay gives her a voice which is rendered by the other characters in a negative manner:

The fat dark girl, Miss Simon, came in on the mention of women. It was her subject. ‘Women’s work in war time is every bit as important as men’s, that’s what I say; only

they don't get the glory.' Mrs. Vinney giggled and looked at the others. 'Now Rachel's off again. She's a caution when she gets on the woman question. [...] 'She thinks she ought to have the vote,' Sid Vinney explained to Alix in a whisper. Alix, who had hitherto moved in circles where every one thought, as a matter of course, that they ought to have the vote, disappointed him by her lack of spontaneous mirth. Miss Simon was inquiring, undeterred by these comments, 'Who keeps the country at home going while the men are at the war? Who brings up the families? Who nurses the soldiers? What do women get out of a war, ever?' 'The salvation of their country, Miss Simon,' said Mrs. Frampton, 'won for them by brave men.' 'After all,' said Sid, 'the women can't *fight*, you know.' (Macaulay 47)

By asking what "women get out of a war ever," Miss Simon seems to be linking feminism with pacifism, reminiscent of the then prevalent rhetoric that women stand for life, while men stand for destruction. She also points out that women's wartime work is very valuable, which is negated by the other characters, for instance by Sid Vinney reminding her that women are not allowed to fight in the war. By saying this he reflects the idea of the time that only the soldiers' function in the war mattered and that women did not play an important part in wartime society. The reader can also see that Alix thinks it is a logical ideal that women should have the vote, as she fundamentally believes in feminist ideas.

Miss Simon goes on to talk about women's work before the war, now taking a more general feminist approach:

'And fighting isn't everything,' Miss Simon went on, 'and war time isn't everything. There's women's work in peace time. What about Octavia Wills that did so much for housing? Wasn't *she* helping her country? And, for war work, what price Florence Nightingale? What would the country have done without *her*, and what did she get out of all she did?' Mrs. Frampton, who had not read the life of that strong-minded person,

but cherished a mid-Victorian vision of a lady with a lamp, sounder in the heart than in the head, said, ‘She kept her place as a woman, Miss Simon.’ (Macaulay 47)

This fragment is particularly interesting in the comparison between Macaulay and Brittain, since Brittain too refers to Nightingale in the context of war and feminism, which will be shown in the chapter on *Testament*. In *Non-Combatants*, it is clear that most of the characters, including women as the book consists mostly of female characters, take a negative stance on feminism and reinforce woman’s subordinate position by reminding one another of their submissive place, as Mrs. Frampton for instance implies to Miss Simon that she should keep “her place as a woman.” Macaulay uses the voice of a minor character, Miss Simon, to express ideas of feminism, radical for the other characters and likely for a large part of the original readers. The feminist character is instantly being mocked and mostly disagreed with by the others, except for Alix who remains quiet: “‘You won’t *see*,’ sobbed Miss Simon [...]. ‘You none of you *see*. Except her’ – she indicated Alix – ‘and she won’t talk; she only smiles to herself at all of us. You tell silly tales, and you say silly things, and you think you’ve scored – but you haven’t. It isn’t *argument*, that you like men more than women or women more than men’” (Macaulay 49). Here Miss Simon voices that Alix understands and shares her feminist values, but rather observes the other characters than joining the discussion.

Furthermore, Macaulay not only shows that not every woman was inclined to support the feminist cause and that many had a negative stance towards feminism. By portraying different viewpoints and mind-sets of the time, she also points out the ignorance of certain characters and their stereotypical views of gender boundaries. Evie, for instance, sees men and women as very different and thinks they should behave accordingly:

‘But after all, there *is* a difference between men and girls, in the things they should do; *I* think there’s a difference, don’t you?’ ‘Oh, thank goodness, yes,’ said Basil, fervently, not having always thought so. ‘And I don’t know, but I sometimes think if girls can’t

fight for their country, they shouldn't smoke.' 'Oh, I see. A reward for valour, you think it should be. That would be rather hard, since the red-tape rules of our army don't allow them to fight. If they might, I've no doubt plenty would.' Evie laughed at him. 'A girl would hate it. She'd be hopeless.' 'Plenty of men hate it and are hopeless, if you come to that.' 'Oh, it's not the same,' asserted Evie. 'A girl couldn't.' [...] 'Anyhow,' Evie explained for him, 'of course you're glad to be doing your bit.' He laughed at that. 'You've been reading magazine stories. That's what the gallant young fellows say, isn't it?' (Macaulay 104)

It is clear that Evie has firm ideas of stereotypical gender roles and a heroic image of the active male/passive female dichotomy, which Basil implies she developed from reading "magazine stories." Basil is here referring to patriotic and propagandistic stories or articles published in newspapers and magazines. We can read what Basil says in a tone of irony, not seeing the war as heroic as Evie, since he himself recently got home from the front and was wounded in battle. In reading propagandistic stories and having a heroic view of the war, we can see Evie as Alix's opposite, as well as in Evie saying girls would hate fighting in the war, let alone be able to. Alix, on the other hand, wants to fight and is envious of men because she is not allowed to. Alix also smokes, defying Evie's gender boundary that girls should not smoke.

Non-Combatants also refers to the fact that many women had a new role in society due to the war, as some now worked men's jobs. This discourse of feminism can be seen when a soldier on leave talks about his female family members to Alix:

They haven't much time to spare for me, though, they're so marvellously busy. Mother always was, of course; but Margot and Dorothy are at it all day too now. I wonder what they'll do with it when the war's over, all this energy. Mother says the war has been good for them; made them more industrious, I suppose. It's a funny thought, that the

war can have been *good* for any one; I can't quite swallow it. I don't think a thing bad in itself can be good for people, do you? (Macaulay 78)

The idea that the war has had some good effects, such as women's rise in society as they were able to contribute more and work men's jobs, can be linked to the war's positive influence on the feminist cause. This rise, however, is often not seen as permanent since after the war women were mostly reduced to their previous place in society as roles were reversed again. Nevertheless, progress for the women's cause was still made and British women over thirty with certain property qualifications obtained the vote in 1918. In the final lines of the fragment, a negative viewpoint on the war can be seen, given that the soldier calls it "a bad thing in itself" and finds it hard to believe that it could lead to anything good.

In Alix's desire to fight alongside men, another discourse of feminism can be seen, expressing the feminist goal of women being able to do the same jobs men did. Alix, however, is not only excluded from fighting because she is a woman, but also because she is disabled, as she has a deformity of the leg (because she had a diseased hipbone when she was born) and walks with a stick: "Alix, looking down, met the hypnotic stare of the Great Man pictured on the walls, and turned away, checking a startled giggle. Anyhow she was lame, and not the sex which goes either, worse luck" (Macaulay 32). The picture of the "Great Man" Alix sees is the propagandistic poster of Lord Kitchener telling men to enlist and join the fighting. The last sentence of the citation seems reminiscent of Macaulay's 1915 poem "Many Sisters to Many Brothers," where she expresses regret at not being able to fight alongside men, particularly through the use of the term luck: "Oh it's you that have the luck" (qtd. in Reilly xxxv). Alix's disability seems to express her inability to fight because she is a woman, emphasizing her incapability to join the war effort. This is comparable to the psychic wound veterans often have in World War I literature, a feeling of powerlessness embodied by sexual impotence (Tylee 114). Another way in which Alix can be linked to the mentally and physically wounded soldiers

is that she has hypersensitive nerves and easily becomes nauseated, connecting her along with her crippled leg to the wounded and shell-shocked soldiers. Alix being physically unable to participate in the fight could imply that she is destined to become a pacifist, since the facts that she is a woman and crippled make it impossible for her to join the war effort and also make her hate the war, as she is excluded from it and envious of those who can fight.

Alix's nerves and nausea also cause her to be unable to do nurse work, meaning she cannot perform a typical woman's role in the war either (Tylee 114-15). She thus fails sexually in two ways, in that she is not a man and is neither able to nurse like other women (Tylee 114-15). This can be seen as a discourse of feminism in that the book shows certain expected gender roles, which Alix does not meet up to fully as a woman and which she wants to transgress doing a man's job. An instance in which Alix refers to her desire of joining the men at the front can be read in the following citation: "I believe," said Alix, "it's jealousy that's demoralising me most. Jealousy of the people who can be *in* the beastly thing.... Oh, I do so want to go and fight [...] I want to go and help to end it.... Oh, it's so rotten not being able to; simply rotten.... Why *shouldn't* girls?" (Macaulay 121). Here a feminist discourse can be seen in that Alix questions the inequality of the sexes and the inability of women to join men in the fight.

It can be concluded that *Non-Combatants and Others* includes discourses of feminism accompanied by derogatory comments or in opposition with stereotypical gender boundaries, but also discourses looking at the positive effects of the war on women's roles in society and at the protagonist's wish to fight alongside men, as many feminists desired. Feminism can also be seen in Alix not meeting up to gender expectations, unable to nurse and wanting to transgress her traditional female role.

3.3 Discourses of Pacifism

In *Non-Combatants and Others*, the protagonist Alix encounters various characters with different mind-sets and a variety of opinions on the war. She changes her own ideas throughout the book, shaping them as she tries on different ways of coping with the war and her inability to fight in it. Pacifism is expressed mostly through Alix's mother, Daphne Sandomir, a pacifist activist trying to encourage her daughter to join her cause, which Alix does in the end. In the beginning of the novel, however, Alix wants nothing to do with the war and she seems to be set on banning the war from her mind: "Alix giggled again, and looked up at the white clouds racing across the summer sky, where was no war nor rumours of war" (Macaulay 33). She tries to distract herself from the war by, for instance, moving to Violette, where most people are ignorant when it comes to the war and are focused on domestic, menial issues. Other characters trying to forget the war like Alix are Oliver Banister and Tommy Ashe, who are both not allowed to fight:

[Oliver Banister] had tried to get passed for the army, but, as he was rejected, he settled down tranquilly and without the bitterness that eats the souls of so many of the medically and sexually unfit. He recognised the compensations of his lot. Tommy Ashe, on the other hand, was bitter and angry like Alix; like her he would have hated the war anyhow, even if he had been fighting, being a sensitive and intelligent youth, but as it was he loathed it so much that he would never mention it unless he had to, and then only with a sneer. (Macaulay 34)

Like Alix, Tommy is angry that he is not allowed to fight. The reader finds out that Alix's hatred for the war stems largely from her inability to fight in it, which later fuels her motivation to join the pacifist cause. We can thus see a connection between Alix's physical inability to fight and her pacifism, which started with her resisting war on a bodily level, being a woman and crippled, leading us to see Alix as a character destined to become a pacifist.

Over the course of the novel, Alix creates an interest in the Church by meeting the pacifist priest Mr. West:

‘Funny things he stands for,’ Alix commented, still thinking of Mr. West. ‘The Church.... I suppose it really *is* out to stop war.’ [...] ‘Funny,’ Alix mused still. The thought glanced through her, ‘Clergymen can’t fight either, they’re like me. Perhaps religion helps them to forget; takes their minds off. Like painting. Like Richmond Park and Tommy Ashe. Like wiggle-woggling. I wonder.’ (Macaulay 43)

In this passage it can be seen that Alix starts wondering if a turn towards religion could be another way for her to cope with the war. She identifies with the clergymen since they are, like her, unable to fight. Later on in the novel, however, she joins the Church not to take her mind off the war, but to fight it, along with her mother’s pacifist organisation. In the following citation Alix is clearly turning towards pacifism, after ruling out other ways of dealing with the war:

‘I’ve been wondering lately,’ went on Alix, ‘if there isn’t a third way in war time. Not throwing oneself into it and doing jobs for it, in the way that suits lots of people; I simply can’t do that. And not going on as usual and pretending it’s not there, because that doesn’t work. Something *against* war, I want to be doing, I think. Something to fight it, and prevent it coming again.... I suppose mother thinks she’s doing that.’ [...] ‘And I suppose Mr. West thinks he’s doing it, doesn’t he – fighting war, I mean, with his Church and things.’ (Macaulay 122)

It is clear that Alix does not want to join the war effort by doing propagandistic or patriotic work, nor does she any longer want to forget about the war, since she is not able to do so. By the end of the book, Alix has made her final decision of fighting the war by joining both her mother’s pacifist society and the Church:

‘As I can’t be fighting in the war, I’ve got to be fighting against it. Otherwise it’s like a ghastly nightmare, swallowing one up. This society of mother’s mayn’t be doing much,

but it's *trying* to fight war; it's working against it in the best ways it can think of. So I shall join it.... Christianity, so far as I can understand it, is working against war too; must be, obviously. So I shall join the Church.... That's all.' (Macaulay 157)

Alix does not seem wholly convinced of either system and its chances at successfully ending the war, but she does seem to have found the best way for her to deal with the war and how she wants to shape herself in the wartime context: as a pacifist.

The characters often refer to pacifism with the metaphor of fighting. Alix, for instance, ironically claims she wants to join pacifism to *fight* the war. In doing this, Macaulay refers to the way pacifist and feminist activists expressed themselves at the time, using militarist terms to appear more powerful and resolute (Boxwell 94), and rather active than passive or avoiding. Alix joining the Church and her mother's society in her turn to pacifism does not lead to tension in the novel, although that could be expected, given that the Church was usually associated with the patriarchy and wartime propaganda. The novel seems to evade the fact that the Church was involved with the government's propaganda, focusing instead on a more romantic and mystical kind of religion (Tylee 116-17). Despite Daphne being strongly feminist and also part of women's societies, her pacifist society does not mention feminism, nor socialism, giving Macaulay's fictional pacifist organisation a strong sense of being imaginative (Tylee 116-17). Considering this, Alix's pacifism in joining the Church and her mother's society cannot be linked to feminism.

When looking at *Non-Combatants'* characters and their stances on the war, many varying views and different interests can be seen, which cause strong contrasts between certain characters. This opposition between some of the characters can be seen in the following passage. At Violette, Mrs. Frampton goes over the paper, focusing on homely advice and ignoring the war, while Alix reads letters from her activist pacifist mother:

‘Home Hints: Don’t throw away a favourite hat because you think its day is over. Wash it in a solution of water and gum and [...] The hat will then be a very nice new shape... Here’s a recipe for apple shortcake [...] Have you heard news from your mother, Alix dear?’ [...] ‘Mother writes from Athens. She’s been interviewing Tino (don’t know how she managed it); trying to get him to sit on a council for Continuous Mediation without Armistice. [...]’ As none of the family knew what Continuous Mediation without Armistice meant, the only comment forthcoming was, from Mrs. Frampton, ‘Your mother is a very wonderful person. I only hope she isn’t getting over-tired, going about as much as she does....’ (Macaulay 28-29)

The contrast between the characters is clear as Mrs. Frampton and her daughters are focused on domestic matters and do not understand the serious wartime issues with which Alix’s mother is occupied. Pacifist discourses can be seen in the satirizing of non-pacifist characters such as the women at Violette, which is done, for instance, by placing them in such oppositions. Other examples of mocking non-pacifist characters are Daphne calling Mrs. Frampton “too stupid to be tolerable” (Macaulay 128) and saying about the women in Violette: “Do they know *anything* about anything that matters? No, quite obviously not” (Macaulay 135). In Violette, and throughout *Non-Combatants*, patriotic discourses can frequently be found: “[A]lthough Alix’s more educated relations look down on the women of Violette [...], the Framptons’ regurgitation of patriotic war discourse differs only in form from the exhortations of Alix’s cousins at Wood End. At Violette, the military is domesticized; at Wood End, the domestic is militarized” (Cohen 39). Alix’s search for her wartime role first leads her past Wood End and Violette, where she learns the difficulty of escaping militarised and patriotic discourses (Cohen 40), until she finally turns to pacifism.

While the women in Violette are not occupied with the war mostly out of ignorance and other, more domestic, interests, Alix’s brother Nicholas, a journalist, has chosen not to occupy

himself with the war as he is disinterested because of intellectual considerations: “[He] thought war too ridiculous a business for him to take part or lot in” (Macaulay 35). He has the following stance on war and pacifism: “He despised war, and looked with contempt on peace societies (this was perhaps because, so far as he worshipped anything, he worshipped efficiency, and found both peace societies and war singularly lacking in this quality)” (Macaulay 37). This is an example of Nicholas being a contradictory character who rarely agrees with anything. The other characters, particularly the women in *Violette*, think rather strangely of him, since he disagrees with most people and is very cynical, as Alix points out to him here: ““Evie says you and the Vinneys wouldn’t get on. I don’t think Evie thinks you’re fit for respectable society at all. So you’d better not come.’ ‘Shouldn’t dream of it,’ Nicholas grunted” (Macaulay 43). His stance on war differs from the other characters’ in that he is focused on the intellectual and is mostly interested in the war’s impact on literature, which he thinks is negative since it has produced, according to Nicholas, “mostly – oh, good Lord! The flood of cheap heroics and commonplace patriotic claptrap – it’s swept slobbering all over us; there seems no stemming it. Literary revival be hanged” (Macaulay 39). He is referring to propagandistic and patriotic writing, which he very much dislikes and does not see as authentic or intellectual literature.

Macaulay does not only show viewpoints of non-combatants on the war, she also presents the opinion of Basil, a wounded soldier on leave: “And no reason to think it would ever end, except by both sides just getting too tired of it to go on.... Idiotic business, chucking bombs over into trenches full of chaps you had no grudge against and who wished you no ill ... and they chucking bombs at you, much more idiotic still. The whole thing hopelessly silly...” (Macaulay 55). Basil is clearly not in favour of the war, and seems rather pacifist than militarist, although he does not openly advocate pacifism and goes back to fight as soon as his wound has healed. There is another soldier on leave, John, who also subtly expresses a pacifist stance, when he refers to the German soldiers as fighting like the British and others, giving the idea of

equality between British soldiers and the enemy's: "His father asked what he thought of the German soldiers as clean fighters. John said they seemed much like anybody else, as far as he'd noticed. Mademoiselle Verstigel, understanding this, shook her head in protest" (Macaulay 12). Even though John does not express the idea of British and German equality very strongly, the thought of it is still disapproved of by the other characters.

A character who, unlike Basil and John, does openly advocate pacifism is the priest Mr. West, who understands Alix' feeling of helplessness, but also shows Alix that those excluded from fighting can use their place at the home front for the pacifist cause. He expresses this in the following passage:

'War's beastly and abominable to the fighters: but not to be fighting is much more embittering and demoralising, I believe. Probably largely because one has more time to think. To have one's friends in danger, and not to be in danger oneself – it fills one with futile rage. Combatants are to be pitied; but non-combatants are of all men and women the most miserable. Older men, crocks, parsons, women – God help them.' [...] 'But really, of course, they've a unique opportunity. They can't be fighting war abroad; but they can be fighting it at home. That's what it's up to us all to do now, I'm firmly convinced, by whatever means we each have at our command. [...] The fighting men out there can't; they're tied. Some of them never can again.... It's up to us.' (Macaulay 124)

By giving Mr. West a pacifist role, Macaulay not only includes religion in the discourses of pacifism, but also traverses the stereotypical gender boundary of pacifism being especially associated with women (Boxwell 95-96).

The only character in *Non-Combatants* whose life is occupied mainly with pacifist activism from the beginning onwards is Alix's mother Daphne Sandomir, who is mostly

regarded sceptically by the other characters. They judge her for pursuing her feminist and pacifist activism instead of taking on a more expected female wartime role:

Margot, who was sympathetic, was ashamed for Alix, because of what her mother, Daphne Sandomir, was doing. For this always unusual lady, instead of being engaged in working for the Red Cross, Belgian refugees, or soldiers' and sailors' families, was attending a peace conference in New York. [...] She was called by some a Pacifist, by more a Pacifist, by others a Pro-German, by most a member of the Union of Democratic Control, which she was not. (Macaulay 12)

Not only characters who have merely heard about her are not taking her seriously, Daphne's family members do this as well, including Alix at first, thinking that her mother is wasting her time with her pacifist endeavours. Another example of this is Daphne's sister Mrs. Orme saying about her pacifist activism: "I think she is mistaken in her present enterprise, and would be much better at home" (Macaulay 21). In saying this, Mrs. Orme voices the idea that Daphne should take on the traditional female role of taking care of the home. Using the character of Daphne, Macaulay introduces a female character not taking up stereotypical women's roles: "An independent and political woman, [Daphne] provides a distinct break with the domestic heroines of the past. Daphne is given centre stage to present the arguments for socialism and the peace movement, picking up the pacifist trends articulated in other women's war novels" (Smith 147).

An example of Daphne's pacifist activism can be found in a passage which stresses the continuity of the war, containing accounts of Daphne's continuous pacifist-oriented activities:

June went by, and the war went on [...] Mrs. Sandomir wrote to Alix from the United States that more than ever now, since their darling Paul was added to the toll of wasted lives, war must not occur again. July went by, and the war went on [...] [Daphne] wrote that American women were splendid to work with, and that it was supremely important

that the States should remain neutral [...] October began, and the war went on.
(Macaulay 61-62)

This could either be showing that pacifist activists' efforts were not being very effective, as other characters are often pointing out when referring to Daphne's activism (Boxwell 93), or that despite the war lasting, pacifists kept on persevering in their fight. The passage also emphasizes the duration of the war, since at the time of Macaulay writing the book, the war was still on-going. Another example of Daphne's contributions to the pacifist cause is that she is writing a chapter, "which she was contributing to a volume by seven authors, shortly to appear, to be entitled alliteratively *Is Permanent Peace Possible?* and to come to the conclusion that it was" (Macaulay 125).

As we have seen in the chapter on the historical context of WWI literature, discourses of pacifism were often tied in with the concept of motherhood. Macaulay's *Non-Combatants* is one of the works reversing the government's propagandistic image of the self-sacrificing mother and turning the figure of the mother into an anti-war image: "If the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee urged the women of Britain to 'Say Go!' Macaulay's work of fiction is remarkable for its message that women 'Say No!'" (Boxwell 89). This can be seen in Daphne, the mother figure who entirely disregards the roles assigned to women as 'life-makers' and men as 'life-takers' used in other anti-war discourses:

[Daphne] could talk of the part to be played by women in the construction of permanent peace without calling them the guardians of the race or the custodians of life. She didn't draw distinctions, beyond the necessary ones, between women and men; she took women as human beings, not as life-producing organisms; she took men as human beings, not as destroying machines. (Macaulay 145)

It is clear that Daphne does not base her pacifism on the life-makers versus life-takers dichotomy, which gives her pacifism a more feminist sense, since she does not divide men and

women in that traditional manner. Comparing Daphne to the other mother figures in the book, one sees completely different characters. Mrs. Orme, Daphne's sister, can be seen as "a Bureau of Propaganda poster of Involved Motherhood come to life" (Boxwell 91), reflecting the government's propagandistic mother figure encouraging her sons to enlist. Another mother figure in the book is Mrs. Frampton, who lives in Violette with her daughters, and who can be seen as largely disinterested in the war, on which she has a patriotic stance (Boxwell 91). It is interesting to note that these mother figures are not pacifist, and that the only mother who can be associated with pacifism is Daphne, while she seems, for a large part of the book, absent in her children's lives because of her activist travels. By creating such a mother figure, Macaulay goes against the stereotypical view of motherhood and its propagandistic use in the Great War. She does not idealize Daphne as a mother, but shows the reader that she pursues her pacifist goals, aside from being a mother (Boxwell 92-93).

Macaulay has created with Daphne a strong mother figure who shows Alix that it is possible to fight (Boxwell 97), which Alix decides to do as she takes up pacifism. Alix joining the pacifist cause at the end of the book serves as the outcome of her search for her role in wartime society, making pacifism the answer. This shows that despite other characters' pro-war attitudes and negative comments on pacifism, *Non-Combatants and Others* can be seen as an ultimately pacifist work, which is also visible in the title as it diminishes soldiers to 'Others' and subverts gender roles by reversing the active male/passive female dichotomy (Boxwell 96). In conclusion, the novel's discourses of pacifism can be seen in Alix's turn to pacifism, in other characters' differing stances on the war, in Mr. West's religious pacifism, in non-pacifist characters that are satirized, and mostly in Daphne, the pacifist activist mother figure.

3.4 How Feminism and Pacifism Are Connected

Firstly, a connection of feminism and pacifism can be seen in the fact that Alix joins the pacifist cause to fight against the war since she cannot fight in it being a woman. In this way, Macaulay combines feminist and pacifist goals: Alix is not able to fight as a woman and this is used to fuel her pacifist resistance to the war and its inequality. Secondly, feminism and pacifism are mostly coming together in Alix's activist mother, as Daphne often combines her pacifist activism with feminism: "Daphne Sandomir, when in England, held study circles of working women to instruct them in the principles which make for permanent peace, and hoped with the same fervour that they would read the books and pamphlets she gave them" (Macaulay 18). Daphne teaching working women about pacifism in study circles can be seen as a feminist activity. If we compare Daphne to her sister Mrs. Orme, she appears as very different since Mrs. Orme has taken up the expected female role of supporting the war from the home front:

There were in England no ladies more active through that desperate time than Daphne Sandomir and her sister Eleanor Orme; but their activities were for the most part different. Mrs. Orme was secretary of a Red Cross hospital [...], was the soul of Women's Work Committees [...] and wrote sensible letters to the *Times*, which usually got printed. Mrs. Sandomir [...] tried, but failed, like so many others, to attend the Women's International Congress at the Hague, travelled round the world examining its disposition towards peace, helped to form the S.P.P.P. (Society for Promoting Permanent Peace), wrote sensible letters to the *Times*, which sometimes got printed and sometimes not. (Macaulay 125-26)

The reference to the women's conference at the Hague shows that Daphne combines both feminist and pacifist causes, even though she is mostly focused on ending the war throughout the book, since that is the most pressing matter at the time. The passage also shows that Mrs.

Orme's work for the war effort is supported by the *Times*, while Daphne's pacifist and feminist work does not get the same recognition.

Furthermore, Daphne encourages her daughter Alix to be more active and to support her pacifist and feminist causes, as she tells her that, “[w]e’ve got to be strong women, for our own sakes and the world’s – especially we who have the brains to be some use if we try. The poor old world needs help so very badly just now, with all the fools there are who hinder and block the way. You and I have both got to help, Alix.... There *is* so much to get done” (Macaulay 130). Daphne is focused mostly on pacifism, which makes Alix think about joining her in the fight: “And I believe she’s so keen and busy that she doesn’t have time to think about the war, except about how to stop it.... Perhaps that’s the way – to be thinking only how to stop it and prevent another.... *Is that the way?*” (Macaulay 130). In the following passage, Daphne further tries to motivate Alix to join her in her activism, expressing a strong feminist and pacifist ideology:

She saw in Alix the raw material of a member of the S.P.P.P. She said, ‘You mustn’t be selfish, darling. You are a little selfish [...]. You try to hide from things [...]. You must leave that to the Violettes. They can ignore. You can’t.... ignoring: that’s always been the curse of this world. [...] But we who are left and who are free have got to do their work as well as our own. And we’ve got to begin at once. There’s no time to be lost. [...] You’d better come to a meeting of the S.P.P.P.’ (Macaulay 138-39)

Daphne refers to the women at Violette as hiding from things and ignoring, since they do not support or even try to understand the feminist and pacifist causes. Alix then goes to a meeting of the Society for Promoting Permanent Peace and forms her own opinions on pacifism and on male/female divisions:

Lack of clear thinking [...] It makes people talk sentimental rubbish. It makes them lump other people together in masses and groups, setting one group against another,

when really people are individual temperaments and brains and souls, and unclassifiable. It makes them say [...] [t]hat women are the guardians of life, and therefore mind war more than men do. [...] That the reason why war is objectionable is that the human body is sacred and should be inviolate. What did that mean, precisely, Alix wondered? That women are the chief sufferers from war. A debatable point, anyhow; and what did it matter, and why divide humanity into sexes, further than nature has already done so? (Macaulay 140)

Alix sees everyone as equal beings, which shows her feminist stance. Like Daphne, she does not agree with the female life-makers/male life-takers dichotomy, and thinks that there should not be a divide based on gender. She also believes that everyone is pacifist in a way, that no one wants the war to go on, but that a lot of people at the meeting see themselves as a special and exclusive group, which she believes should be more open and inclusive so they could work together with others to stop the war:

Many of them (not nearly all, but many) seemed to imply, 'We, a select few of us called Pacificists, hate war. The rest of you rather like it. We will not allow you to have it. We will stop it.' As if some of a race stricken with an agonising plague had risen up and said to the rest, 'You, most of you, are content to be ill and in anguish and perishing. But We do not like it. We insist on stopping it and preventing its recurrence.' An admirable resolution, but ill-worded. [...] [I]t was madness, to talk as if people differed in aim and desire, not merely in method. For there was one desire every one had in these days, beneath, through and above their thousand others [...] they wanted peace [...] The one desire linked, in all the warring nations, [...] atheists and priests, [...] the W.S.P.U. and the Anti-Suffrage Society [...] Alix saw humanity as a great mass-meeting, men and women, [...] hand in hand, lifting together one confused voice, crying for peace, peace, where there was no peace. (Macaulay 141-43)

Alix can see everyone agreeing on wanting peace and working together to achieve it, even feminists working together with people against women's suffrage. Alix has her own pacifist ideas and did not label herself as pacifist before since she sees everyone as ultimately pacifist. At the end of the novel, however, she becomes a pacifist in a more active manner by joining her mother's activist society.

To conclude, feminism and pacifism in *Non-Combatants and Others* are mostly connected in Daphne's and Alix's discourses, as they can be seen as advocates for both causes. Especially Daphne uses a strong feminist and pacifist rhetoric and is an activist for both movements, although mostly for pacifism at the time. For Alix, the concepts of feminism and pacifism are common sense, even though she has come across many people who would not think so, and by the end of the book she decides to take on a more activist role in starting to advocate pacifism like her mother.

4. Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*

As in the chapter on Macaulay, this part on Brittain's *Testament of Youth* will first give a biographical introduction to Brittain and her feminist/pacifist ideas, to embed the memoir and its discourses of feminism and pacifism in their historical context. After this, discourses of feminism and pacifism in the book will both be discussed, as well as how they are connected. Since the discussion concerns a memoir in which sometimes Brittain's younger self differs from her interwar self writing the memoir and reflecting back on her experiences, I will refer to the character in the book, who is still developing her ideas, as Vera, while when discussing the author and her writing, I will use the name Brittain.

4.1 Biographical Introduction to Brittain and her Feminism and Pacifism

Biographical Overview of Brittain's Life

Vera Brittain (1893-1970) grew up in the provincial English town of Buxton. Despite her parents' initial objections, she went to Oxford's Somerville College. She interrupted her studies to volunteer as a nurse during the First World War. After the war, she returned to Oxford, after which she settled in London in 1922 to focus on her career as a writer. Her first novel, *The Dark Tide*, was published in 1923. Brittain obtained national recognition after the publication of her bestseller *Testament of Youth* in 1933, her memoir of the years 1900-1925 (Bennett 18).

After the war, Brittain started being interested in the League of Nations Union, for which she became a frequent speaker from 1922 onwards. The Union was not only working for peace, but also supported the improvement of women's causes and recognized women's rights (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 2). Brittain joined pacifists and socialists in the Labour Party in 1924, for which she worked in parliamentary campaigns and occasionally gave speeches. She also attended annual League Assemblies in Geneva, often as a correspondent for

the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide*. It is clear that Brittain brought feminism and pacifism together in her activism, seeing in them the same cause of ending the patriarchy's oppression. This can be seen in *Testament of Youth*, in which she advocates both causes. The book is "equally a plea for peace and a statement of basic feminist principles" (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 2). A similar combination of advocating feminism and pacifism can be seen in her novel *Honourable Estate* (1936). Brittain can be called a leading figure of the interwar feminist and pacifist movements in England, which is reflected in her works (Bennett 18). Because of the threat of the Second World War, Brittain shifted her focus more towards pacifism in the late 1930s. The League of Nations Union had by then proved ineffective and she moved away from party politics to join absolute pacifists (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 2). More specifically, by the late 1930s she had joined the Anglican Pacifists and the Peace Pledge Union, for which she actively worked in campaigns. During WWII, she toured the United States when it was still neutral, for the cause of pacifism.

Brittain's Experience of WWI

During the First World War, Brittain served as a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse in military hospitals in London, Malta, and France. Throughout the war, she wrote about her experiences in a diary, which she later used in her memoir, along with letters and recollections (Bostridge xiv). Her fiancé, brother, and two best friends were killed in the war, after which her grief pushed her entirely towards pacifism (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 1). Brittain's writing was influenced and even inspired by the war and the losses she suffered because of it, given that, for instance, after the death of her fiancé she felt eager to write a book about him (Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart" 446). Because of the war, Brittain traded her Christianity for agnosticism since the war and its horrors made her doubt her faith, but later on she gradually regained her faith as she turned to a Christian pacifism, Christianity supporting the pacifist

cause. Brittain extensively discusses her experience of the First World War in *Testament of Youth*.

Feminism in Brittain's Life

Brittain was acknowledged as a feminist journalist, as she, for instance, wrote articles for *Time and Tide* and published two feminist books, namely *Women's Work in Modern England* (1928) and *Halcyon, or the Future of Monogamy* (1929) (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 2). Brittain used her writing to advocate change concerning women's rights and the roles they had in society, in that women should have equal opportunities, for instance in education, employment, pay, social services, etc. She especially advocated change in women's roles in marriage and the household: she wanted to get rid of the traditional function of women having to do domestic duties instead of being free to have an occupation of their own outside of the home (Mellown, "One Woman's Way to Peace" 2). At the League's fourth Assembly in Geneva in 1923, Brittain was the official representative of the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide*, and in 1953 she spoke to the Women's International League.

Brittain felt some excitement for feminist improvement during the war as she, like other nurses, discovered a new independence serving abroad, away from domestic duties (Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart" 440). She also experienced a certain sense of sisterhood with other nurses and VADs through the newly found form of emancipation (Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart" 442). Brittain had such a bond with Winifred Holtby, also a feminist pacifist writer, with whom she lived together for a while after the war and travelled for pacifist activist purposes. Holtby wrote in *The Crowded Street* (1924), "how her alienated heroine, Muriel Hammond, finally achieved a purposeful life through the friendship of Delia Vaughan, a feminist activist (modeled in part on Vera Brittain, as Muriel is on Holtby herself)" (Gilbert, "Soldier's Heart" 442).

Pacifism in Brittain's Life

Brittain's pacifism originated in the war due to the horrors she witnessed as a VAD nurse and because of the losses she suffered as the men in her life died fighting. She started supporting the League of Nations Union and became an internationalist shortly after the war, believing in a policy of cooperation between nations. During the time in which she lectured on internationalism and toured around England to give speeches for the Union, she started writing articles in which she connected her involvement in the women's movement and her pacifism (Bennett 20). Examples of this are her articles "Women Not Playing Their Part" (1933) and "Can the Women of the World Stop War?" (1934), in which she encourages women to support the pacifist cause. Brittain connected women to pacifism in a biological manner, by placing them as creators of life in opposition to life's destroyers: "Brittain argued, for example, that women '[a]s givers of life... should be utterly hostile to anything which threatens their interests or the interests of their children.' [...] Brittain saw a close pragmatic and rational, but also an emotional and biological, relationship between feminism and pacifism" (Bennett 20). Brittain's pacifism ultimately had the same goal as her feminism, given that she saw as pacifism's aim a restructured society in which everyone is equal, living in harmony (Bennett 22). In her 1941 article "Women and Peace," she wrote: "[T]he struggle against war, which is the final and most vicious expression of force, is fundamentally inseparable from feminism, socialism, slave emancipation and the liberation of subject races" (qtd. in Bennett 22).

Brittain's feminist and pacifist aspirations increased as fascism spread, since she saw the fascist threat to both the feminist and pacifist causes (Bennett 20-21). She expressed her international concerns not only in published articles, but also in public lectures. She attended some of the League's annual Assemblies in Geneva and also travelled through Central Europe to see the effects of the war there for herself. By 1936, she completely opposed war and she separated herself from League internationalists and left-wing politics, as they occasionally still

justified war. She then aligned herself with absolute pacifists, outside of political and intellectual life, and in 1937 became sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union. After this, her pacifism became more Christian-oriented, and pacifism became the most prominent theme in her writing (Mellown, “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism” 223). During the Second World War, Brittain published two short pacifist books, *Humiliation with Honour* and *Seeds of Chaos*, the latter of which caused controversy in the United States, where President Roosevelt even issued a statement condemning the work, as it denounces the Allies’ bombing of German cities (Brittain, *One Voice* 184).

4.2 Discourses of Feminism

The memoir can partly be seen as a feminist work, as it contains many discourses of feminism. Brittain openly advocates certain feminist ideas, which form an important part of her life and the book. In a first discourse of feminism in the memoir, Brittain talks about where her feminism originated, when she is defending her journalistic feminist writings:

Only the other day a fellow-journalist, half rueful and half amused, told me that I had made a better thing out of sex equality than she had ever thought possible for such a portentous topic until I began to scatter articles on equal pay and married women’s careers through the pages of the daily and weekly Press. If that is so, I can only reply that I have written nothing on the various aspects of feminism which has not been based upon genuine conviction, and that the foundations of that conviction were first laid, strangely enough, at a school which was apparently regarded by many of the parents who patronised it as a means of equipping girls to be men’s decorative and contented inferiors. (Brittain, *Testament* 38)

More specifically, Brittain goes on by explaining how her feminism originated through her schoolteacher Miss Heath Jones:

Miss Heath Jones, who from my knowledge of her temperament I now suspect to have been secretly in sympathy with the militant suffrage raids and demonstrations which began after the foundation of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1905, was an ardent though always discreet feminist. She often [...] lent me books on the woman's movement, and even took me with one or two of the other senior girls in 1911 to what must have been a very mild and constitutional suffrage meeting in Tadworth village. This practical introduction to feminism was to be for ever afterwards associated in my mind with [...] that hectic summer. (Brittain, *Testament* 38-39)

Aside from the origins of her feminism, Brittain also discusses feminists who have further inspired her feminism, such as the South-African author Olive Schreiner, who was the reason for Vera fully seeing herself as a feminist:

To Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labour* – that 'Bible of the Woman's Movement' which sounded to the world of 1911 as insistent and inspiring as a trumpet-call summoning the faithful to a vital crusade – was due my final acceptance of feminism [...] I first visualised in rapt childish ecstasy a world in which women would no longer be the second-rate, unimportant creatures that they were now considered, but the equal and respected companions of men. (Brittain, *Testament* 41)

Vera and her fiancé Roland also discuss Olive Schreiner's work, and Roland is an openly male feminist: "Roland told me how he had himself been a feminist ever since he discovered that his mother's work as well as his father's had paid for his education and their household expenses" (Brittain, *Testament* 84). Feminist discourses in the book are thus not solely women's.

Roland's home experience differs from Vera's in that she was raised in a household where men, in particular her brother Edward, were privileged over women, meaning that she was faced with sexism growing up:

I should have been far more patient and docile than I ever showed any symptom of becoming if I had not resented [Edward's] privileged position as a boy. [...] [I]n our family, to adapt a famous present-day phrase, what mattered was not the quality of the work, but the sex of the worker. The constant and to me enraging evidences of this difference of attitude towards Edward and myself violently reinforced the feminist tendencies which I had first acquired at school, and which were being indirectly but surely developed by the clamorous drama of the suffragette movement far away in London. (Brittain, *Testament* 58)

This shows that Brittain talks about sexist experiences she went through as well, which only strengthened her own feminism. Another instance of Vera contrasting her feminism with others' sexism, is when she is confronted with sexist tendencies at Oxford: "[T]here are dusty old dons and proctors who exact the same from women as from men and yet treat us sometimes as if we were strangers in a strange land. [...] One realises at such times the value of men who have sufficient imagination and far-sightedness to be feminists" (Brittain, *Testament* 149). In that last sentence she is particularly referring to Roland, her fiancé, one of the few openly feminist men in the memoir. Although Brittain shows her strong feminist voice in the book, striving to be treated as an equal to her brother and other men, previous studies have pointed out that Brittain's discourses of feminism appear to be limited to women of her own class: "*Testament of Youth* is, in part, an account of the struggle of one upper-middle-class woman against the restrictions imposed by late Victorian and Edwardian society upon women of *her* class" (Bennett 18). Brittain does not seem to mention women's struggle in the lower classes.

Another discourse of feminism, which can also be attributed to Brittain's class, is seen in Vera's experience as a VAD nurse. In *Testament of Youth*, like in other nurse memoirs, the nurse can be seen as a powerful figure, gaining power over the wounded soldier as he is

immobilized and dependent on women for his survival. As the nurse comes into a more independent role, this newly gained control of women can be read as a discourse of feminism: “‘Every task,’ writes Vera Brittain of her days as a VAD, ‘had for us... a sacred glamour.’ [...] Thus, even while memoirists like Brittain express ‘gratitude’ for the ‘sacred glamour’ of nursing, they seem to be pledging allegiance to a *secret* glamour – the glamour of an expertise which they will win from their patients” (Gilbert, “Soldier’s Heart” 435). Vera’s nursing thus ties in with her feminism in that it enables her to gain knowledge and experience.

Nursing also gives Vera a new sense of independence as she experiences life outside of the parental home and even the country: “After twenty years of sheltered gentility I certainly did feel that whatever the disadvantages of my present occupation, I was at least seeing life” (Brittain, *Testament* 213). When her parents send her a letter asking her to stop nursing and to move back to Buxton, she replies she will keep doing her nursing work, which she took up for the following reasons: “[B]ecause I wanted to prove I could more or less keep myself by working, and partly because, not being a man and able to go to the front, I wanted to do the next best thing. I do not agree that my place is at home doing nothing or practically nothing” (Brittain, *Testament* 213-14). Not being a man and thus unable to fight, Vera wants to prove she is useful for the war effort nonetheless: nursing gives her a role to play in the war. Her new sense of power can also be seen in the following passage, where she is nursing in Malta and comparing herself to Florence Nightingale, here referred to as the ‘Lady of the Lamp,’ who represents to Vera a strong female in control: “Do you remember how afraid I used to be of thunder when I was little? Now I feel quite a ‘Lady of the Lamp’ marching along with the thunder crashing and the lightning – such lightning as you never see in England – flashing around us, to see if other people are afraid” (Brittain, *Testament* 331). This shows that Vera gained a new sense of strength as she became a more independent woman due to her nursing work.

However, during the war – despite gaining more independence, transgressing her traditional domestic role, and obtaining a new sense of power herself – Vera loses focus on the general feminist movement:

Remembering the eager feminism of my pre-war girlhood, and the effervescent fierceness with which I was to wage post-war literary battles in the cause of women, it seems incredible to me now that I should have gone back to hospital completely unaware that, only a few days before my leave began, the Representation of the People Bill, which gave votes to women over thirty, had been passed by the House of Lords. (Brittain, *Testament* 404)

Once back at Oxford after the war, Vera is able to keep track of the feminist movement again and Brittain writes of its accomplishments in her memoir, for instance of the passing of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Bill, which included that, “[a] person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation” (Brittain, *Testament* 504). This Bill, however, did not function well, which Brittain blames on a post-war reaction of fear of women who came into power during the war: “This feeble functioning of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act was typical of all post-war reaction, in which war neurosis had been transformed into fear – fear especially of incalculable results following from unforeseen causes; fear of the loss of power by those in possession of it; fear, therefore, of women” (Brittain, *Testament* 582).

Aside from the feminist movement in general, Brittain also talks about her own interwar feminist activities, for instance writing certain articles against criticisms directed at feminists, for example against the *Times* criticizing female Oxford students (Brittain, *Testament* 505). Other examples of her numerous feminist activities are that she went to see the Degree-giving in 1920, in which women were included for the first time (Brittain, *Testament* 507), and her

feminist journalism, for instance for *Time and Tide* – the prominent feminist newspaper of the 1920s-30s of which Rose Macaulay was a contributor as well. Vera also attended a few bazaar committees of the University Women's Club and ran a small book stall at one of these bazaars together with Macaulay, who was a great inspiration to Vera, who felt star-struck by the thought of meeting Macaulay (Brittain, *Testament* 544). Furthermore, Brittain talks about certain feminist organisations she was a part of, namely the Society for Constructive Birth Control, of which she joined some meetings, and the Six Point Group, for which she and Winifred Holtby – who later became the youngest director of *Time and Tide*'s Board – worked and occasionally spoke (Brittain, *Testament* 582-84). On one of the Six Point Group campaign meetings, Vera first saw fellow feminist author Rebecca West, with whom she later became friends and who seemed to her, “the embodiment of the modern woman's movement, so old in its aspirations but so young in achievement [...] a personal symbol of the feminist cause which had thrilled [her] ever since [her] naïve adolescence, the twentieth-century successor of Mary Wollstonecraft and Olive Schreiner” (Brittain, *Testament* 588).

Vera applies her feminist ideals to her own lifestyle, as she strives to live as independently as possible by moving away from her parental home and supporting herself: “[My parents] understood now that freedom, however uncomfortable, and self-support, however hard to achieve, were the only conditions in which a feminist of the War generation – and, indeed, a post-Victorian woman of any generation – could do her work and maintain self-respect” (Brittain, *Testament* 536). Vera is also concerned about combining married life with a profession as a woman, and whether it is even a possibility, which she is determined to investigate: “It was a problem that I now very often discussed, and endeavoured [...] to solve in articles and on the public platforms of feminist organisations. Could marriage and motherhood be combined with real success in an art or profession? If it couldn't, which was to suffer – the profession or the human race?” (Brittain, *Testament* 610). Vera applies this to her

own life, when she and George Catlin, who would later become her husband, discuss the issue of marriage in their letters: “[B]y the time that I was answering his third letter, we had already plunged into a prolonged argument upon the social conditions and consequences of marriage for the independent post-war woman” (Brittain, *Testament* 609-10). Vera is determined to prove she can be a married woman while remaining independent:

I felt that I must not shrink from that fight, nor abandon in cowardice the attempt to prove, as no theories could ever satisfactorily prove without examples, that marriage and motherhood need never tame the mind, nor swamp and undermine ability and training, nor trammel and domesticize political perception and social judgment. [...] If marriage made the fight harder, so much the better; [...] I would face it, and show that, however stubborn any domestic problem, a lasting solution could be found if only men and women would seek it together. (Brittain, *Testament* 654-55)

This shows that *Testament of Youth* includes discourses of feminism from Brittain’s personal life. Moreover, most of the discourses of feminism found in the book represent Brittain’s own feminist reflections – from the origins and inspirations of her feminism to gaining more independence as a nurse and maintaining that independence in her interwar life, including in marriage. The discourses also reflect her feminist activism, as she writes about her feminist journalistic work, for instance.

4.3 Discourses of Pacifism

In the beginning of the memoir, Vera seems to take a rather indifferent stance on the war, because of her personal endeavours of partaking in the Oxford entrance exam and preparing herself for the scholarship examination:

I had made for myself a way of escape from my hated provincial prison – and now the hardly-won road to freedom was to be closed for me by a Serbian bomb hurled from the

other end of Europe at an Austrian archduke. It is not, perhaps, so very surprising that the War at first seemed to me an infuriating personal interruption rather than a world-wide catastrophe [...] the events reported in the newspapers seemed too incredible to be taken quite seriously. [...] I suppose it is because we all [knew] so little of the real meaning of war that we [were] so indifferent. (Brittain, *Testament* 93-94)

However, even this stage of disinterestedness contained discourses of pacifism, as Vera had already written the following pacifist passage in her diary before Britain officially declared war to Germany: “‘It is impossible,’ I concluded, ‘to find any satisfaction in the thought of 25.000 slaughtered Germans, left to mutilation and decay; the destruction of men as though beasts, whether they be English, French, German or anything else, seems a crime to the whole march of civilisation’” (Brittain, *Testament* 97). Shortly hereafter, Vera felt the need to find distraction from the war. She joined societies at Oxford and tried to focus on her schoolwork to help her forget the war, which she was able to do for a while:

So I went up to Oxford, and tried to forget the War. At first, though Edward should have gone up the day that I did and Roland the day after, I succeeded pretty well. [...] It was all so thrilling that for the time being the neglected War [...] seemed quite out of the picture. [...] I wondered why I had ever been so much concerned about the troubles of Europe. After all, I told myself, they could never really touch me very closely, whereas the activities of college did and must. [...] I often thought of [Edward] in camp as the November rain deluged the city and churned the Oxfordshire roads into mud, and once again the War crept forward a little from its retreat in the back of my mind. (Brittain, *Testament* 105-11)

As is the case for Macaulay’s protagonist Alix, the war refuses to keep being ignored and the women’s ways to cope, along with their ideals, evolve throughout the books.

During the first stages of the war, already pacifist-oriented thoughts can be seen in Vera's letters, when she talks about the Church and Oxford, here represented as patriotic and propagandistic:

[D]ons and clerics were still doing their best to justify the War and turn it into England's Holy Crusade. [...] [B]efore long you may be in the trenches fighting men you do not really hate. [...] In the churches in Oxford, where so many of the congregation are soldiers, we are always having it impressed upon us that 'the call of our country is the call of God.' Is it? [...] [I]t seems that everything ought to be creative, not destructive, and that we should encourage things to live and not die. (Brittain, *Testament* 126-27)

Vera thinks about taking up nursing, not as patriotic support of the war but as a distraction for herself personally, to keep her mind off the men she knows at the front:

So closely, at this stage, was active war-work of every type associated in the public mind with the patriotic impulse which sent men into the Army that I never dreamed, amid all my analytical speculations, of inquiring whether 'joining up' would not be, for me, a mere emotional antidote involving no real sacrifice. At the time my preoccupation with possible methods of following the persistently beating drum merely provided a blessed temporary relief from philosophical floundering. (Brittain, *Testament* 140)

Nevertheless, Vera did perform some patriotic charity work in Buxton, namely fundraising for the war effort:

That morning I left the reassuring study of *The Times* to take part in one of the first national 'flag-days' organised during the War. As I wandered with my basket of primroses up and down the Buxton streets [...] I had little patience to spare for my mother's middle-aged acquaintances, who patronised me as they bought my primroses, and congratulated me on putting aside my 'studies' to 'do my bit in this terrible War.' (Brittain, *Testament* 141-42)

As can be seen in the passage, however, Vera did not very much enjoy this patriotic activity in her hometown. Shortly after this, she makes her final decision to take up nursing, “indescribably uplifted by [her] new determination to play some active part in the glorious Allied fight against militarism” (Brittain, *Testament* 147). This shows that through her nursing, Vera did take part in the war effort enthusiastically. Even though she viewed the war as a fight against militarism (namely that of Germany), she was still far from being the leading pacifist activist she later became.

A slightly ironic stance on patriotism seems to be visible in the way Brittain jokingly makes the following remark on her name: “[My name] [the Sister-in-Charge] invariably got wrong, although it seemed to me to be simple enough to remember – particularly in wartime, when we were all so patriotic” (Brittain, *Testament* 170). Another time patriotism is mentioned in a seemingly ironic manner is when Brittain says about her patriotic uncle, who was desperate to enlist but could not, that his letters were, “typical of the more heroic civilian to whom, at that time, patriotism was the genuine and indeed the sole inspiration of a hard and disappointing life” (Brittain, *Testament* 307). About her own patriotism getting harder to sustain as the war continues, Vera writes the following:

The longer the War goes on, the more one’s concern in the whole immense business seems to centre itself upon the few beings still left that one cares about, and the less upon the general issue of the struggle. ‘One’s personal interest wears one’s patriotism rather threadbare by this time [...] After all, it is a garment one has had to wear for a very long time [...] All I ask is that I may fulfil my own small weary part in this War in such a way as to be worthy of Them, who die and suffer pain.’ (Brittain, *Testament* 338-40)

This fading patriotism of Vera is later on in the war lost completely, as this thesis will show further on.

When Vera can no longer escape the war and thoughts of her fiancé at the front, she finds comfort in churches:

New College Chapel and the Cathedral services, with the haunting beauty of their organ melodies, really provided better consolation than tennis-matches; they kept one's mind face to face with the poignant facts, instead of creating a diversion inevitably followed by the sharp shock of recollection. [...] Like a lost soul I haunted New College and Christ Church, cherishing my sorrow. (Brittain, *Testament* 153)

Despite finding consolation in churches and music played therein, Vera seems to be going through a change of religion due to the war. She loses her faith in prayer, which becomes clear when comparing her wartime attitude to her faith before the war: "That night I prayed earnestly to God to make the dear King better and let him live. The fact that he actually did recover established in me a touching faith in the efficacy of prayer, which superstitiously survived until the Great War proved to me, once for all, that there was nothing in it" (Brittain, *Testament* 23).

This change of religious beliefs can also be seen in Brittain's 1914 poem "August, 1914":

God said: 'Men have forgotten Me;
 The souls that sleep shall wake again,
 And blinded eyes be taught to see.'
 So, since redemption comes through pain,
 He smote the earth with chastening rod,
 And brought destruction's lurid reign;
 But where His desolation trod,
 The people in their agony
 Despairing cried: 'There is no God!' (qtd. in Brittain, *Testament* 94)

This poem shows the effects of the war on Vera in that she begins to doubt the existence of God, and starts turning towards agnosticism.

Not only her stance on religion changes during the war, Vera, along with the soldiers she knows, also changes her mind about certain ideals, such as heroism. This change can, for instance, be seen in a letter of Roland to Vera and her reaction to it:

‘Let him who thinks War is a glorious, golden thing, who loves to roll forth stirring words of exhortation, invoking Honour and Praise and Valour and Love of Country [...] let him but look at a little pile of sodden grey rags that cover half a skull and a shin-bone [...] and let him realise how grand and glorious a thing it is to have distilled all Youth and Joy and Life into a foetid heap of hideous putrescence! Who is there who has known and seen who can say that Victory is worth the death of even one of these?’ Had there really been a time, I wondered, when I believed that it was? ‘When I think of these things,’ I told him in reply, ‘I feel that that awful Abstraction, the Unknown God, must be some dread and wrathful deity before whom I can only kneel and plead for mercy.’
(Brittain, *Testament* 198)

That final sentence shows again that her changing views on the war have an impact on her stance on religion and God. Her opinion also changes on women having to encourage men to join the fighting, which she at first supported her brother in doing:

‘Public opinion has made it,’ I remarked to Roland, ‘a high and lofty virtue for us women to countenance the departure of such as these and you to regions where they will probably be slaughtered in a brutally degrading fashion in which we would never allow animals to be slaughtered.... To the saner mind it seems more like a reason for shutting up half the nation in a criminal lunatic asylum!’ (Brittain, *Testament* 203)

During the war, her stance on war clearly becomes very negative, in which we can see the beginning of her pacifism. After Roland’s death, when Vera sees his uniform, her turn from being patriotic to anti-war seems to be finalized: “Those gruesome rags made me realise, as I had never realised before, all that France really meant. Eighteen months afterwards the smell

of Étaples Village, though fainter and more diffused, brought back to me the memory of those poor remnants of patriotism [...] overwhelmed by the horror of war without its glory” (Brittain, *Testament* 251). Her brother’s death, after her fiancé’s and friends’ deaths, is the final push for Vera to drop any ideals she still had left from the beginning of the war, along with losing her faith, or at least her belief in the afterlife:

[T]he early ideals of the War were all shattered, trampled into the mud which covered the bodies of those with whom I had shared them. What was the use of hypocritically seeking out exalted consolations for death, when I knew so well that there were none? [...] I knew now that death was the end and that I was quite alone. There was no hereafter, no Easter morning, no meeting again. [...] God, King and Country. That voracious trio had already deprived me of all that I valued most in life [...] [declining an invitation of a cleric] gave me a childish, triumphant feeling that I had scored off the Church. (Brittain, *Testament* 446-50)

Vera’s change of ideals during the war is clear as she loses her early ideals such as heroism, changes her view of religion, and trades her patriotism for an anti-war stance.

After the war, Vera goes back to Oxford and takes up History instead of English, where she starts learning about pacifism: “I had heard, as yet, very little of the bitter tale of pacifism during the War [...] but I had already started on the road which was ultimately to lead me to association with the group that accepted internationalism as a creed” (Brittain, *Testament* 473). This road to pacifism which Vera follows is thoroughly described in the last quarter of *Testament*, especially in Chapter XI, “Piping for Peace,” starting on page 535. Brittain describes how she joined the League of Nations Union, her work for it, her journalism, and her lectures on internationalist ideas, on which she writes: “[T]he teaching of which, I still felt, alone justified my survival of the War [...] glad I am lecturing on them now, though in ever such a

small way, glad to do anything, however small, to make people care for the peace of the world. It may be Utopian, but it's constructive" (Brittain, *Testament* 537-39).

Vera also offers herself as a speaker to the League of Nations Union, which she describes as, "that international experiment in the maintenance of peace and security which [she] felt, in common with many other students of modern history, to be the one element of hope and progress contained in the peace treaties" (Brittain, *Testament* 538). Her work for the Union meant that, "for the greater part of the next three years [since February 1922] and sometimes as often as four times a week, [she] made speeches or led discussions on the League in almost every London suburb and in numerous small towns and villages all over the South of England and the Midlands" (Brittain, *Testament* 553). Vera also travels through Central Europe for the pacifist cause, to see for herself what the war caused there and to listen to those people, being true to her internationalism (Brittain, *Testament* 568). Brittain also talks about how she turned from the League of Nations Union to the Labour Party, because of what she had witnessed during her travels and at annual League assemblies in Geneva, where politicians did not fully support internationalism and occasionally still approved of war: "So it was that I became a socialist, in the belief that membership of the Labour Party would help me to work for a new order based upon the discipline of man's strongest instinct – his instinct for possession" (Brittain, *Testament* 646-48).

It is clear that the most direct discourses of pacifism are situated in the final quarter of the book, where Brittain mostly describes her interwar pacifist journey and her pacifist activist work. Other discourses of pacifism in *Testament of Youth* can be seen in the evolution she goes through: how she was first rather indifferent towards the war, tried to forget it, and then joined the war effort, after which she traded her patriotism for an anti-war stance; and how her view on religion and ideals such as heroism changed in favour of her anti-war feelings and the pacifist cause.

4.4 How Feminism and Pacifism Are Connected

In *Testament of Youth*, Brittain writes about joining certain societies at Oxford, including both movements for women and for peace: “I joined the Oxford Society for Woman Suffrage; I joined the Bach Choir; I joined the War and Peace Society” (Brittain, *Testament* 109). Aside from showing Vera’s involvement in the feminist and pacifist movements, this also reflects the intellectual climate at the time. Later on in the book, Brittain often writes about both movements together. More specifically, feminism and pacifism are clearly connected when Brittain talks about her interwar activism. An example of this can be seen in Vera writing her first commissioned article for the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide* on the third annual League Assembly in Geneva in 1922, called “Women at Geneva” (Brittain, *Testament* 557). Another example is Vera going to the fourth League Assembly in Geneva in 1923 as the official representative of *Time and Tide*, for which she has to write a series of articles on the assembly (Brittain, *Testament* 558). Brittain connecting feminism and pacifism by combining her work for both can be seen as following from a feminist tradition: “In thus connecting women with work for peace Brittain was, of course, drawing on a long tradition among feminists. [...] From Olive Schreiner to writers such as Winifred Holtby, feminists had proclaimed the need for peace and the part women can play in preventing international aggression” (Mellown, “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism” 224). We can see Brittain as part of this tradition, in which she probably self-consciously framed herself, which we can see for instance in her articles “Women Not Playing Their Part” (1933) and “Can the Women of the World Stop War?” (1934), encouraging women to support the pacifist cause.

Discourses of feminism and pacifism are also connected in the negative impact of the war on both causes. An example of this can be seen when Roland enrolls to fight in the war: he is not only being militaristic instead of pacifist, he also goes against his feminism. This is clear

in a letter of Roland to Vera and her ensuing reaction, which shows that she was aware that the war was obstructing both pacifism and feminism:

‘You will call me a militarist. You may be right.’ [...] I felt it altogether contrary to his professed feminism – but then, so was the War; its effect on the women’s cause was quite dismaying. ‘Women get all the dreariness of war, and none of its exhilaration,’ I wrote in reply. ‘This, which you say is the only thing that counts at present, is the one field in which women have made no progress – perhaps never will [...]’ Obviously I was suffering, like so many women in 1914, from an inferiority complex. (Brittain, *Testament* 104)

In this passage Vera seems envious of men, being excluded from the fighting as a woman. The war is here represented as having negative effects not only on pacifism, but also on feminism, as women were not able to take part in it, let alone make progress in it.

This chapter can conclude that feminism and pacifism were connected in Brittain’s life, as she advocated both causes and often even combined both in her activist work. This is reflected in *Testament of Youth*, as discourses of feminist and pacifist activism are often connected. Feminism and pacifism are also linked in that both suffer from the war. In the following chapter, the discourses of feminism and pacifism in Brittain’s memoir will be compared to Macaulay’s feminist and pacifist discourses in *Non-Combatants and Others*.

5. Comparison of Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism in *Non-Combatants and Others* and *Testament of Youth*

This chapter shows that even though *Non-Combatants and Others* and *Testament of Youth* seem to have very different discourses of feminism and pacifism due to the difference in characterisation, which can be linked to the difference of genre, they do ultimately express the same feminist and pacifist messages, which are similarly developed throughout the books. First, the differences in discourse in the books will be shown, after which the development of the feminist/pacifist discourses will be compared, which will lead to the same conclusion of the books, namely that they both ultimately tell similar pacifist conversion stories. This shows that these women writers of WWI literature share the feminist/pacifist messages they bring in their writing, even though they use different means to the same end, the reason of which will further on be investigated. Even though the discourses of feminism and pacifism have been connected in the final sections of the previous chapters, they will here mostly be discussed separately, since they are developed throughout the books in different manners, and the development of pacifism proves most interesting for our further discussion, hence the connection between the discourses is less relevant for the following sections.

5.1 Difference in Discourse

Throughout her novel, Macaulay uses fictional characters to portray the differing viewpoints of British people, especially women, at the home front during the First World War. Brittain, on the other hand, mostly shows her own perspective in her memoir, or that of her close friends and family through letters and recollections of conversations. However, Brittain talks about other people's stances as well, for instance the patriotic stance of a group of women in Buxton, the town where she grew up:

Just at this time a group of super-patriotic Buxton women, who were busily engaged in forming a women's volunteer corps, provided yet another source of disturbance and interruption. [...] They were, however, most assiduous in telling me that I ought to join this, or that, or the other, the idea of course being that college was a pleasant and idle occupation which led nowhere. Thoroughly exasperated, I avoided their society. (Brittain, *Testament* 139)

These propagandistic, traditionally-oriented women are only mentioned a few times throughout the book, which we can contrast with Macaulay's novel, where the focus is often on such domestic-oriented patriotic women, for example the ladies in *Violette*. Furthermore, in *Non-Combatants* women like Vera, feminist and pacifist, are a minority and are often referred to by the other characters in a condescending manner, as in the cases of the suffragette Miss Simon and Alix's mother Daphne.

In her novel, Macaulay makes certain metafictional comments, speaking directly to the reader. In one of these remarks, Macaulay seemingly assumes her audience to be pro-war, or at least she defends certain characters in case the audience is strongly patriotic. More specifically, the narrator deems it necessary to defend two young men who are not fighting in the war: "Presently Mr. Thomas Ashe joined them. (It may here be mentioned, lest readers should be unfairly prejudiced against Mr. Ashe and Mr. Banister, that one of them had a frozen lung and the other a distended aorta. They were quite good young men really, and would have preferred to go)" (Macaulay 33). This short clarification is placed between brackets and seems to be rather ironic, slightly mocking the potentially pro-war reader. Brittain's memoir can also be interpreted as addressing a reader, since she is telling her personal story to share her and her generation's war experience. The overall tone, however, suggests that Brittain assumed her audience to be feminist and pacifist-minded, or in any case openly advocated her causes. In Brittain's later works, she, like Macaulay in *Non-Combatants*, also uses fictional novels to

project characters voicing different opinions, including her own. Her characters in her novels are often mouthpieces for her personal theories and ideologies, for example in her 1948 novel *Born 1925*, in which she combines feminist and pacifist themes and she particularly discusses difficulties of combining married life and public service (Mellown, “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism” 226-27), with which she struggled in her personal life.

Interesting for the comparison of the two authors, and also a difference in discourse, is that we learn how Brittain views Macaulay, as she writes about Macaulay several times in *Testament*. More specifically, she writes enthusiastically about works of Macaulay she read, the first time she met Macaulay, etc. Macaulay, on the other hand, does not mention Brittain, since her book is made up of fictional characters. An example of Brittain mentioning Macaulay is her quoting Macaulay’s poem “Picnic, July 1917”:

Oh, guns of France,
 Be still, you crash in vain...
 Heavily up the south wind throb
 Dull dreams of pain...
 [...]
 Oh, we’ll lie quite still, nor listen nor look,
 While the earth’s bounds reel and shake,
 Lest, battered too long, our walls and we
 Should break... should break. (qtd. in Brittain, *Testament* 366)

On this poem, Brittain projects her own situation and the feeling that the war was inescapable even at the home front, which she shares with Macaulay’s protagonist Alix: “There was no way of escaping that echo; I belonged to an accursed generation which had to listen and look whether it wanted to do so or not, and it was useless, at this late hour, to try to resist my fate” (Brittain, *Testament* 366). Here Brittain is referring to the fact that she cannot ignore the war, and that it

is her duty to keep serving as a nurse for as long as the war lasts. Another instance when Brittain writes about Macaulay is when she talks about looking up to her as a writer: “[T]he rising star of Rose Macaulay [...] To Winifred [Holtby] and myself she was a portent, a symbol, an encouraging witness to the fact that a university education could produce writers of a non-academic yet first-rate calibre” (Brittain, *Testament* 510). Furthermore, when Brittain talks about the difficulties she had publishing her first book, *The Dark Tide*, Macaulay is portrayed as the person who prevented Brittain from giving up on trying to become a published author:

[Miss Macaulay] enabled me to make numerous improvements in such details of style and syntax as were capable of amendment, and I carried away a glowing memory of [...] incisive conversation upon which I relied exclusively for stimulus in the disheartening months that followed. [...] After each new rejection the untiring Miss Macaulay was ready with her inexhaustible supply of suggestions and encouragement [...] Her periodic letters were the lamps which lighted that unprofitable year of 1922 [...] But for Rose Macaulay I might well have given up. (Brittain, *Testament* 595-96)

It is clear that Macaulay was a great support to Brittain in getting her writing published and in making her continue to pursue her career as a writer, without which *Testament* might never have been created. We can infer from this that there was a network of likeminded women writers in Britain after the Great War, who admired and supported each other, yet who maintained their individuality as authors, since Brittain’s writing differs greatly from Macaulay’s even though she affected her writing.

Next, another difference between the books and their discourses is the time difference. Macaulay’s novel takes place during a part of the war (mostly in 1915), whereas Brittain’s memoir shows a part of her life before the war, the entirety of the war, and its aftermath, focusing on pacifism. The war had not ended yet in Macaulay’s novel, leaving the reader with a sense that the war might keep going on. The continuity of the war leads to concern among the

characters, to which some respond with irony as in the following dialogue: “‘Oh well,’ Mrs. Frampton spoke condolingly, ‘I’m sure we must all hope it won’t last much longer. How long will it be, Mr. Doye, can you tell us that?’ ‘Seven years,’ said Mr. Doye. ‘Till October 1922, you know. Yes, awful, isn’t it? I’m frightfully sorry I had to tell you. Good-bye, Mrs. Frampton’” (Macaulay 70). This sense of melancholy because of the lack of conception of how long the war would go on can also be seen in the final lines of the novel: “The year of grace 1915 slipped away into darkness, like a broken ship drifting on bitter tides on to a waste shore. The next year began” (Macaulay 165). The fact that the characters are still in the middle of war might also be the reason that there are less characters with an outspoken belief in pacifism. This can be compared to Brittain, who was also not as pacifist-oriented during the war as afterwards, when most of her pacifist discourses occurred, the comparison of which will further be investigated in the chapter focused on the influence of time and genre.

This section can conclude that *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* differ in discourse in that the former shows many characters’ patriotic and sexist stances, while the latter is mostly focused on the feminist and pacifist stances of the author. These differing stances seem to reflect the expected mind-sets of the readers. Due to the difference in genre, Brittain also talks about Macaulay in her memoir. Furthermore, the difference of time in which the books take place, related to their differing times of writing and publication, also seem to give the discourses a different sense overall: a lack of closure and feeling of melancholy in *Non-Combatants* and a more complete, rounded story treating the pre-war, war, and interwar periods in *Testament*. Since Macaulay often uses irony, however, the difference in discourse lies less in meaning than in mode of representation, through characterisation and narration, which we will further explore in the following section.

5.2 Comparison of Development of Feminist and Pacifist Discourses

This section will show how the feminist and pacifist discourses develop similarly in *Non-Combatants* and *Testament*, which in their turn reflect a similar evolution of Macaulay's and Brittain's feminism and pacifism.

Feminism in both *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* remains quite stable throughout the books, given that the protagonists seem fundamentally feminist from the beginning onwards and there is not much of a development in that regard. Although *Non-Combatants'* protagonist Alix is not outspoken about her feminism and other characters often voice a negative opinion on feminism and suffragettes, Alix seems to see feminism as a logical ideology which does not need to be explained or defended. Her mother Daphne, the most prominent feminist character of the novel, does have an outspoken opinion and undertakes feminist activism to help the cause. Daphne, with her activist feminism and pacifism, can be compared to Vera in *Testament*. In Brittain's memoir, feminism likewise does not require much development, as from the beginning on it is clear that the book expresses feminist ideas, starting when Brittain talks about what inspired her feminism. Her discourses of feminism also remain stable throughout the book, even though during the war feminism seems to be moved to the back of Vera's mind, as discourses on the war and pacifism take precedence. Pacifism also takes a more prominent position in *Non-Combatants*, as it is, at the time in the book, Daphne's priority to bring an end to the war. More emphasis is also placed on pacifism because a large part of the book concerns Alix's pacifist conversion.

The development of pacifism in the books is more noteworthy in this discussion, also because it is most prominent in both. Moreover, in both books the protagonists Alix and Vera seem to go through a process which ultimately leads them to decidedly take a pacifist stance. Neither of them can be seen as fully pro-war at one point in the books, but the characters were first attempting to forget the war and distract themselves from it, after which several coping

mechanisms to this purpose failed, which led them to the best way for them personally to respond to the war: to oppose it as pacifists. Earlier studies, however, have stated that *Non-Combatants* should not be seen as a pacifist novel and cannot be compared to *Testament* in that sense:

To conceive of the novel in terms of such narrative tension helps to counteract the impulse to read it (as does most recent criticism) *only* in terms of its ending, thus figuring it, through the lens of contemporary expectations, as a ‘pacifist novel.’ Indeed, to read *Non-Combatants and Others* as a pacifist conversion narrative on the order of Vera Brittain’s *Testament of Youth* [...] requires one to ignore not only the first two-thirds of the novel, but also the multitude of structural and textual messages with which Macaulay undermines what resolution the ending offers. (Cohen 44)

Cohen reads *Non-Combatants* as a narrative in which the oppressive and inescapable war makes any response to the war, including pacifism, a form of militarisation (Cohen 47), which also indicates the complexity of the novel, but interprets it as militaristic instead of pacifist. This thesis would like to argue against the opposition to a comparison of the books as two pacifist conversion narratives. First, this dissertation agrees with Cohen that the novel should not be read only in terms of its ending, since it considers the first parts of the book as well and discusses the work as a whole. However, according to this thesis, the recurring patriotic discourses and Alix’s struggle to find refuge from the war strengthen the conversion at the end, which the other parts of the book build up to, emphasizing that pacifism is the solution for Alix. Second, this thesis has shown that despite the different discourses of feminism and pacifism, which seemingly make the books out to be two completely different works, they are ultimately both advocating feminism and pacifism. This can also already be seen in the first two-thirds of *Non-Combatants*, as Macaulay paints her sexist, patriotic, and pro-war characters in a parodic manner: the narrator describes them in a slightly ironic way, subtly mocking them and their

opinions. This use of irony and the book's narration and characterisation can then be seen as "structural and textual messages" which undermine those discourses that reflect negatively on feminism and pacifism, ultimately foreshadowing and emphasizing the pacifist solution to Alix's storyline and the book.

A sense of uncertainty can nonetheless be found in *Non-Combatants*, but this shows that Macaulay also tried to reflect the complexity of the situation, uncertainties, and changing opinions of the time, using varying voices: "The presentation of various responses to the First World War in this novel illustrates that the distinction between war and peace or between the jingoist and the pacifist is far from simple" (Ha-Birdsong 108). Brittain's book goes further in its pacifism in its clear defence of it and because it shows Vera's interwar pacifist activism, while Macaulay's novel is more complex and leaves the reader at the point where Alix has decided to join pacifism, without actually showing what her pacifism and activist work for the cause would look like. This is also due to the fact that the war is still going on at the close of Macaulay's novel, while Brittain is able to include her interwar activism.

It is clear that both Alix and Vera go through an evolution of ideas in their journey to find their place and role as women in wartime society, unable to fight in the war, and ultimately joining the fight for the cause of pacifism. In the protagonists' views of feminism and pacifism, we can see a reflection of the authors' personal feminist and pacifist stances. This is logical in Brittain's case, as *Testament* is her memoir in which she expresses her personal journey and ideologies, including her steady feminist stance and her turn to pacifism, which becomes a prominent part of her life after WWI.

In Macaulay's case, we can also see a steady feminist stance and again more prominently a turn to pacifism. During the war years, she worked for the Bureau of Propaganda and the War Office – although not for patriotic or pro-war reasons, which can also be seen in the book she wrote at the time based on her work experience there, *What Not: A Prophetic*

Comedy (1919), mocking the Ministry of War (Ha-Birdsong 140-41) – and she became a pacifist activist only later on. We can see a reflection of herself in *Non-Combatants* as she, like Alix, was struggling to find a way to cope with the war and to find her position as a female author in mid-war society, with pacifism in mind as the resolution, already expressed in the 1916 novel. However, Macaulay is not always seen as a pacifist, nor are her books always considered pacifist works: “In her novels, Macaulay avoided directly voicing her opinion on peace. Moreover, she did not agree with the women pacifists of the early twentieth century who argued that men were warlike, while women were peace-oriented. Thus her writings led the readers of the time to question her pacifist views” (Ha-Birdsong 1-2). Despite some people questioning her pacifist stance, which still happens to some extent, Macaulay’s pacifism cannot only be seen in her novels, but also in her pacifist essays, such as “An Open Letter to a Non-Pacifist” (1937), which she wrote for the Peace Pledge Union (Ha-Birdsong 2). She can be seen as a pacifist activist as she, for instance, was a sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union, of which Brittain was also a sponsor (Ha-Birdsong 2). Although Macaulay was not involved in many political pacifist activities for long, her pacifism continued to be expressed in her books (Ha-Birdsong 3).

This chapter can conclude that Brittain’s and Macaulay’s changing ideas on the war and their ensuing pacifism are reflected in their respective *Testament* and *Non-Combatants*. We can see a similar evolution of ideas in, as one would expect, Vera, Brittain’s autobiographical representation in her memoir, and Alix, Macaulay’s protagonist. These characters, whether or not autobiographical, undergo a change from trying to forget the war and having difficulties in finding their place in wartime society as women, to finding their ultimate role as pacifists, as was also the case in Brittain’s and Macaulay’s personal lives. This shows how biography and fiction are entwined in both Brittain’s and Macaulay’s case; their books, regardless of genre, reflect their, ultimately, feminist and pacifist stance and their journey towards this stance. The

comparison of *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* has led to the conclusion that both share the same feminist and pacifist messages. This means that they are both advocating equality for women and a feminist mind-set, as well as pacifism as the ultimate response to war in wartime and interwar society. This is what both authors ultimately came to believe themselves. These similar changes of ideals and final mind-sets could be explained by the authors' similar backgrounds of English upper-middle class and Oxford Somerville College education, and also by the fact that they are both female feminist writers trying to find their place in wartime and interwar society. After the Great War, this leads them to discover that pacifism is for them the best way to respond to war, to prevent future wars.

The following chapter will further relate the difference in discourse to the difference in time and genre, as *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* depict the same wartime society and express similar ideals and conclusions, even though genre expectations and a superficial reading would say otherwise, due to the difference in characterisation and narration.

6. Difference in Discourse Related to Difference in Time and Genre: Macaulay's 1916 Novel Compared to Brittain's 1933 Memoir

This chapter will analyse potential reasons for why the discourses expressing the books' feminism and pacifism differ, while the ultimate feminist/pacifist message of the books is alike. First, the influence of the genres of the fictional novel and the autobiographical memoir on the discourses of feminism and pacifism will be shown, after which the difference in time of writing and publication of the books will be discussed and related to the difference in genre and discourse.

6.1 Influence of Genre on Discourses of Feminism and Pacifism

The difference of genre influences the books in that Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others* uses fictional characters to show many differing mind-sets and opinions, most of which are patriotic. Despite most characters taking a derogative stance on feminism and pacifism, these characters and their opinions are often presented in a slightly ironic manner, because of how the narrator describes them and how other characters, particularly Alix and her feminist/pacifist activist mother Daphne, react to them. It is up to the reader to pick up on this and see that despite the depiction of an anti-feminist and patriotic society, the novel is trying to advocate feminism and pacifism, which ultimately becomes clear when Alix fully turns to pacifism at the end of the book. *Testament of Youth*, on the other hand, does not use fictional characters to express a variety of opinions, but is focused on a representation of real people since it is an autobiographical memoir. By including her feminist reflections and her journey to pacifism, Brittain makes feminism and pacifism prominent themes of her book. She particularly does this by using herself as the memoir's protagonist, giving the book a feminist and pacifist activist focaliser. Sometimes other viewpoints, such as patriotic stances or sexist mind-sets, are shown as well, which are then contrasted with Brittain's stance. This shows that the book is clearly

influenced by the genre of autobiography, which enables Brittain to express her own feminist and pacifist ideas. Furthermore, *Testament of Youth* is not the only (auto)biographical piece Brittain has written; it actually forms the first part of a trilogy. The two other books are *Testament of Friendship* (1940), a biography of and tribute to her close friend Winifred Holtby, and *Testament of Experience* (1957), focused on her own life like *Testament of Youth*, concerning the years 1925-1950.

In *Testament of Youth*, Brittain shares her own take on genre, and especially on the dilemma of preferring fiction over historical writing or vice versa. At interwar Oxford, she herself is willing to use both, while her tutors seem to urge her into using one of the genres. In the following passage from a letter to Winifred Holtby, we can see Vera comparing fiction to historical writing and expressing her wish to combine both genres:

Why is it that all my university mentors want me to do research-work at the expense of fiction, and my literary mentors fiction at the expense of history? I wish I hadn't both tendencies; it makes things so complicated.... [My literary mentor] says I mustn't forget that fiction is always greater than scholarship because it is entirely creative, whereas scholarship is synthetic. On the other hand one has people like M. [our tutor] urging one on to the ideal of historical truth and the world's need of more and more enlightenment.

How is one to reconcile the two ideals? (Brittain, *Testament* 518-19)

The combination of both fictional and historical writing is interesting for *Testament*, Brittain's piece of historical writing with novelistic aspects, as the memoir comes across like it is a story being told. Brittain actually talks about the process of creating her memoir in her foreword to the book, and how she had initially planned for it to be a novel:

My original idea was that of a long novel, and I started to plan it. To my dismay it turned out a hopeless failure; I never got much further than the planning, for I found that the people and the events about which I was writing were still too near and too real to be

made the subjects of an imaginative, detached construction. [...] There was only one possible course left – to tell my own fairly typical story as truthfully as I could against the larger background [...] In no other fashion, it seemed, could I carry out my endeavour to put the life of an ordinary individual into its niche in contemporary history, and thus illustrate the influence of world-wide events and movements upon the personal destinies of men and women. (Brittain, *Testament* 11-12)

Brittain thus chose the genre of the memoir for *Testament* as she wanted to share her personal story as truthfully as possible and show how she and her ideologies had changed because of the war and its aftermath. The last sentence of the cited extract, however, seems to also be applicable to the genre of the novel, given that Macaulay, for instance, also shows the life of ordinary individuals against the background of contemporary history and the influence of that history – the influence of war and movements such as pacifism – on people's personal lives, albeit projected onto fictional characters. In this regard, genre does not make a difference of authenticity or impact, as the writing concerns the war and its consequences. These were very real and close to the readers whether portrayed in a memoir or a novel, especially at the time of *Non-Combatants'* publication when the war was still going on.

Perhaps a memoir at that time would have hit too close to home, which is why Macaulay wrote a novel in her dry and slightly ironic style, to lessen its impact and make her writing of that serious time less dramatic. This will further be discussed in the following section. Concerning the genre comparison, we can conclude that even though the different genres of fictional novels and autobiographical memoirs provoke differing expectations, in this case the different works were used to the same end, ultimately advocating feminism and pacifism, although the difference in genre has led to a difference in representing the discourses, through differing techniques, characterisation, and narration.

6.2 Difference in Genre and Discourse Related to Difference in Time

Given that Brittain published her memoir fifteen years after the war, in 1933, and Macaulay published her novel as early as 1916, the difference in time of writing and publication has influenced their discourses of feminism and pacifism. Written at a time when the initial patriotic enthusiasm for the war was weakening, *Non-Combatants* can be seen as a novel expressing a turning point, as Alix searches for an escape from the war being ever-present (Cohen 30). This could be reflected in Macaulay's use of the novel, as she used it to create some distance from the war, sketching an image of the home front in a fictional work, to make her depiction less direct and confronting. By taking a more creative approach and using fictional characters, she made a slightly ironic and humorous work, more distracting and diverting than confronting.

However, critics at the time have commented negatively on Macaulay's style: "[H]er dry style was not congenial to reviewers. It was even claimed that her careful elimination of sentimentality actually achieved the 'impossible' effect of *exaggerating* the 'misery and horror of these times' [...] It is just her emotional understatement which marks her writing as modern and leaves her novel [...] approachable by later readers" (Tylee 108). The fact that Macaulay wrote in a dry style and avoided many emotions and sentimentality in *Non-Combatants* could be seen as her attempt to make her novel less dramatic and confronting, to lessen the seriousness of the situation, given that it was written in the middle of the war when the subject was still very sensitive for people. In this way, we can see how the time influenced her writing. The lack of sentimentality can also be seen as gender-related, as women were then often associated with writing sentimental prose. In avoiding sentimentality, Macaulay could have been attempting to align herself with male war poets and modernist writers, who often took an ironic stance as has been assessed by Paul Fussell in *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

Furthermore, the influence of time can be seen in the discourses of both feminism and pacifism; in feminism in that it mostly stays in the background and is viewed in a negative

manner by most characters, which reflects how most people at the time actually looked down on feminism and suffragettes. Pacifism, in its turn, comes to be accepted gradually in the novel by Alix, but again not by most characters, which reflects contemporary views on pacifism during the war. Most people were still propagandists, even though the initial patriotic enthusiasm had been fading. *Non-Combatants* was finished in early 1916 and at the time, recruitment for the war-effort was needed more than ever and conscription was on its way to being inevitable (and became law in January 1916), creating “conscription anxiety” at the home front and raising the tension in the final search for volunteer soldiers (Cohen 34-36). This is reflected in the novel through its propagandistic pressure and sense of surveillance and control, as many characters often express their patriotic and propagandistic opinions.

This sense of propagandistic pressure can be seen in a passage quoted in the previous chapter, where Macaulay says readers might be “unfairly prejudiced” against Mr. Ashe and Mr. Banister who are not fighting in the war, and explains they are unable to do so because of their injuries (Macaulay 33). Another example of the sense of control can be found in *Violette*, where the women keep one another in check and try to regulate Alix’s behaviour into making Alix meet “the standards of womanhood demanded by Violette’s all-seeing Eye” (Cohen 40), which she fails to do. An instance of these standards is Evie saying that, “if girls can’t fight for their country, they shouldn’t smoke” (Macaulay 104). In *Violette*, an extreme form of traditional femininity is being upheld, to an extent that it is almost parodic (Cohen 38), in which the humorous aspect of the novel, used to divert the reader from the reality of the situation, can again be seen.

At the time Macaulay was writing her novel, there was a “difficulty of resolution in mid-war texts” (Cohen 84), because of the absence of wartime closure (Cohen 9), “the absence of the end to the larger story” (Cohen 84). We can therefore see Macaulay’s novel as a ‘composition-in-crisis’: “[T]he mechanisms deployed by the wartime writers change under the

cultural pressures of that period [...] ‘compositions-in-crisis,’ [are] texts composed in circumstances that distort the ordinary processes of narrative, when the end is uncertain and narrative closure itself a fiction within a fiction” (Cohen 10). Ending the book with Alix’s pacifist conversion, however, does give the book some sense of closure; more specifically, it leaves the reader at the end with “closure-by-conversion” (Cohen 44). This conversion has by earlier scholars – more particularly by Cohen – been seen as “less a triumphant renunciation of individualism for group commitment than an anticipation of the conscription that the New Year will bring” (Cohen 47). This emphasises the anxiety for conscription of the people at the home front and envisions pacifism as a form of militarised vision, arguing that during wartime there is only militarised vision:

By voluntarily embracing one version of militarized vision rather than another [...] Alix aligns herself with the men who joined up rather than face the stigma of being ‘fetched,’ consoling themselves with the spurious freedom of a choice of regiment. And her action parallels Macaulay’s own in imposing artificial closure on a narrative that’s dominated by the knowledge that nothing, in fact, has ended – that the war continues on beyond the novel’s close. (Cohen 47)

That final sentence argues that the novel does not fully offer closure, since the war is still ongoing, which this dissertation agrees with. It does not agree, however, with the claim that the novel represents pacifism as merely another militaristic vision like patriotism, since pacifism opposes militarism and offers Alix her final refuge from the war, which is indeed a form of artificial closure since it is a fictional novel, but nonetheless Alix’s final way of coping with the war and resisting it.

By the time Brittain’s memoir was published, years had passed since the war and people had mostly processed their war experience, meaning she was able to be more direct and give an open and actual account of her version of events. Not in order to divert from what happened,

but to keep the war close in people's minds, with the goal that people would not forget and that the soldiers who gave their lives would be remembered, which can also be seen in the book's dedication to her fiancé Roland and her brother Edward. Moreover, the pacifist cause also gave her a reason to publish her memoir at that time. She did not want people to forget the war's horrors and wanted to prevent them from going to war again, as the threat of the Second World War was already coming closer:

Brittain [...] tries to provide a reasoned exposition of why the war had occurred and how war in the future might be averted. The publication of *Testament of Youth* at the end of August 1933 exactly matched the mood of international foreboding. It was a year in which Hitler had become chancellor of Germany, the Japanese had renewed their attack on Manchuria, [etc.] (Bostridge xiii)

Therefore, Brittain wanted to give a representation of her war experience that was as real as possible. To share her stance on war, pacifism, and women's roles in society, Brittain needed a genre that would allow her to express her personal reflections, for which she used her memoir. This also includes passages from her wartime diary and from letters, but is narrated by the voice of her interwar self.

This chapter concludes that Brittain used her 1933 memoir to give a direct representation of the war-years, to keep the consequences in people's memories and to confront people in order to prevent a future war, since the threat of WWII was already beginning to be felt. Contrary to this, Macaulay wrote during the First World War and used the genre of the novel and fictional characters, combined with her dry style and irony, to divert from the reality of the situation, while still reflecting the condition of the home front and its propagandistic pressure and conscription anxiety. She offers a sense of closure through Alix's pacifist conversion, even though wartime society could not offer real closure. The difference in genre and discourse can thus be related to the difference in time, since it influenced the authors into choosing different

approaches for their WWI writing, while their works are both still similarly advocating feminism and pacifism.

7. Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated the discourses of feminism and pacifism in Rose Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others* and Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*. To situate these books in their WWI literature context and the scholarly debate, first an overview of WWI literature and previous research has been given. Research has already been done on women's war literature, for instance contrasting it with men's writing, comparing women's mid-war or post-war works from certain periods, comparing novels or memoirs on the level of feminism or pacifism, comparing other authors to Brittain or Macaulay, etc. However, no research had yet been done which compares and interlinks the discourses of feminism and pacifism in different works by crossing the boundaries of time and genre, more specifically by comparing Macaulay's 1916 novel and Brittain's 1933 memoir to see how the authors' feminist and pacifist discourses develop. This investigation is interesting because it shows that despite the difference in time and genre, women's writing of the First World War can be seen as interlinked, not only in the connection of its authors, prominent feminist pacifist women of the time, but also in having the themes of feminism and pacifism in common and similarly advocating these.

After gaining insight in the scholarly debate and the historical overview of WWI literature, this thesis discussed both *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* separately and gave a biographical introduction to each author, focusing on feminism and pacifism in their lives, which proved relevant for the analysis of their works and in the subsequent discussion. The chapter on discourses of feminism and pacifism in *Non-Combatants* has led to the conclusion that it contains many derogatory discourses on feminism, for instance on suffragettes, and on pacifism, by most of the characters. The two most prominent characters, however, do take a feminist and pacifist stance. Daphne is a feminist and pacifist activist and her daughter Alix, the novel's protagonist, is fundamentally feminist and turns to a Christian pacifism at the end of the novel. Alix seems to be destined to become a pacifist as she is disabled because of her

crippled leg and is thus not able to fight in the war, which she also cannot as a woman. Alix's turn to pacifism and her and Daphne's prominence in the novel, along with the use of irony discrediting the derogatory discourses on feminism and pacifism, show that the novel ultimately advocates feminism and pacifism. In *Non-Combatants*, Macaulay thus uses her characterisation and narration to express the different stances of the time while still advocating feminism and pacifism. This reflects her own struggle to find her position in wartime society as a female author until she ultimately turns to pacifism, like her character Alix.

The chapter on discourses of feminism and pacifism in *Testament* has led to a similar conclusion, even though the nature of Brittain's discourse is different. Feminism and pacifism are the prominent themes of the book and although other stances – sexist, patriotic, propagandistic, etc. – are sometimes shown, they are always contrasted with Brittain's own voice, she herself being the protagonist of the memoir. Brittain thus openly expresses her feminist and pacifist reflections in her memoir, which is very different from *Non-Combatants* and its recurring derogatory discourses on feminism and pacifism – aside from Alix's and Daphne's discourses, whose activism can easily be compared to Brittain's interwar activism. Brittain also shows how her ideals changed throughout the war and what her pacifist journey and interwar activism looked like. In Brittain's turn to pacifism, we can see the likeness not only between her and Vera, Brittain's autobiographical alter ego, but also between Brittain, Macaulay, and Macaulay's protagonist Alix. The two authors and their protagonists form four women who share a similar wartime feminism and turn to pacifism.

The books thus ultimately bring similar pacifist conversion stories. This is the conclusion we came to in the chapter on the comparison between the two books, where we took a closer look at the difference in discourse, namely the differing stances on feminism and pacifism in the books, expressed through different techniques – Macaulay's fictional characters taking a mostly negative stance, contrasted with irony and characterisation, versus Brittain's

own feminist and pacifist reflections. Next, this difference in discourse was related to the difference in time and genre, further comparing the 1916 novel to the 1933 memoir. This led to the conclusion that the difference in genre and discourse can be related to the difference in time, given that Macaulay was writing when the war was still going on and she wanted to be less direct and more diverting, creating fictional characters to show the situation of the people at the home front, using a dry style and subtle irony to depict them to make the work rather humorous than sentimental. Brittain, on the other hand, wanted to remind people of the war years and confront them directly, by giving a depiction of her war experience as realistically as possible, while openly advocating her feminism and pacifism. In doing this, she wanted to prevent people from forgetting the losses and horrors of the war and stop them from going to war again, since the threat of WWII was already being felt.

The research question “How do Rose Macaulay and Vera Brittain develop and connect their literary discourses of feminism and pacifism in their respective novel *Non-Combatants and Others* (1916) and memoir *Testament of Youth* (1933)? How are those discourses influenced by (a) the time of publication, (b) the genre of the works, and (c) the evolution of the authors’ ideas?” can thus be answered by saying that Macaulay developed her literary discourses of feminism and pacifism in a seemingly negative manner, with recurring derogatory stances, but ultimately advocating them as she rejects the adversity through the use of irony and as she foregrounds Daphne, strongly advocating feminism and pacifism, and Alix, fundamentally feminist and turning to pacifism. Feminism and pacifism are connected mostly in Alix’s and Daphne’s discourses, advocating both causes. The use of the fictional novel can be related to the time, as Macaulay wanted to be less direct and more diverting for her wartime audience. Brittain, on the other hand, voices her own feminist and pacifist reflections directly in her memoir, as the time enabled her to be more open and confronting. Her memoir, however, is rather a literary work than a political tract, as she tells her wartime story, using her

autobiographical alter ego Vera as the memoir's protagonist. Feminism and pacifism are connected mostly in Brittain herself, as she advocates both causes and often combines both in her activism. The evolution of the authors' ideas is reflected in their books, as the protagonists go through similar pacifist conversions as Macaulay and Brittain and are also fundamentally feminist. Mostly *Non-Combatants* and *Testament* were used for this thesis' research, by reading the books in their historical context. Secondary sources were also used, to situate the works and this investigation in their context and to back up claims or to argue against earlier statements.

To answer the hypothesis that was put forward in the introduction, this conclusion can agree with it in that a useful link can be made between the publication context and the choice of literary techniques and discourses of feminism and pacifism. People's ideals changed during and after the war, meaning Macaulay's 1916 novel and Brittain's 1933 memoir were written under different circumstances. Macaulay, therefore, used a fictional novel with many characters to express her ideas less directly, while Brittain's autobiographical memoir conveys her own voice. Writing at a time when people were more receptive toward feminist and pacifist discourses, and needed a reminder of the Great War to prevent another war, Brittain strongly advocates her causes. Despite some previous scholars saying Macaulay's *Non-Combatants* cannot be compared to Brittain's *Testament* in being a pacifist work, this thesis has shown that Macaulay's novel has a similar pacifist conversion story as *Testament*, and that it ultimately also advocates feminism and pacifism. This conclusion places Macaulay and Brittain together in a community of women writers advocating feminism and pacifism.

Moreover, by investigating Macaulay's and Brittain's ideas of feminism and pacifism and their development in respectively *Non-Combatants* and *Testament*, this thesis is able to conclude that there was a community of women writers that originated during the First World War, of which Macaulay and Brittain were prominent representatives. These women shared the same feminist and pacifist ideals, which they integrated in their writing to advocate these

causes, albeit in different manners, using differing genres and techniques. The women struggled in wartime society to find their place as feminist writers, going through an evolution from supporting the war effort and volunteering as nurses, like Brittain, or working for the Bureau of Propaganda, like Macaulay, to turning against the war and developing a pacifist stance. During the interwar period they fully turned to pacifism, as can be seen in their pacifist activism and writing, both in their own books and in their journalism. During this period, their pacifist activism took precedence over their feminism, although feminism remained present in their writing.

As this thesis has shown, these women writers were also connected through various projects and by participating in similar activities. Macaulay and Brittain, for instance, both wrote for the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide*, like many other female authors in the interwar period. The women writers belonging to the war generation also bonded strongly and were supportive of one another's work. Brittain for instance admired Macaulay's writing, which she highly praises in *Testament*, while Macaulay encouraged and advised Brittain in her writing and supported her through her struggle to get published. Through their shared experience of the Great War, these women writers built relationships of deep friendships and admiration for one another. Another example of a strong bond in this community of women writers can be seen between Brittain and fellow feminist/pacifist Winifred Holtby, as they supported one another in their writing, lived together for a while, and jointly travelled for pacifist purposes.

It could be interesting to further investigate this community of women writers developing during the Great War, for instance discussing other women war writers and their discourses of feminism and pacifism. Further research could call to mind questions such as which other women writers could be seen within the community, whether the women themselves were aware of the community originating, and to which extent the community expanded or whether other such communities existed to which it could be compared.

Additionally, it could be interesting to investigate how these women's literary writing and journalism go together, as many of them for instance wrote for the feminist newspaper *Time and Tide*.

Works Cited

- Bennett, Yvonne A. "Vera Brittain: Feminism, Pacifism and Problem of Class, 1900-1953." *Atlantis* 12.2 (1987): 18-23. Web. 12 Mar. 2017.
- Bostridge, Mark. Introduction. *Testament of Youth*. By Vera Brittain. 1933. Ed. Penguin Books. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. v-xix. Print.
- Boxwell, D. A. "The (M)Other Battle of World War One: The Maternal Politics of Pacifism in Rose Macaulay's *Non-Combatants and Others*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 12.1 (1993): 85-101. Web. 23 Oct. 2016.
- Brittain, Vera. *One Voice: Pacifist Writings from the Second World War*. London: Continuum Books, 2005. Web. 5 Jan. 2017.
- . *Testament of Experience*. London: Virago, 1979. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.
- . *Testament of Friendship*. London: Virago, 1980. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.
- . *Testament of Youth*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.
- Buck, Claire. "British Women's Writing of the Great War." *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War*. Ed. Vincent Sherry. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 85-112. Print.
- Canning, Kathleen. *Gender History in Practice*. New York: Cornell UP, 2006. Print.
- Clay, Catherine. *British Women Writers 1914-1945: Professional Work and Friendship*. Cornwall: Ashgate, 2006. Web. 11 Jan. 2017.
- Cohen, Debra R. *Remapping the Home Front: Locating Citizenship in British Women's Great War Fiction*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 2002. Print.
- Costin, Lela B. "Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 International Congress of Women." *Women's Studies International Forum* 5.3 (1982): 301-15. Web. 6 Nov. 2016.

- Das, Santanu. “‘The Impotence of Sympathy’: Service and Suffering in the Nurses’ Memoirs.” *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 175-203. Print.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Web. 15 May 2017.
- Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1988. Print.
- Gilbert, Sandra. “Soldier’s Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War.” *Signs* 8.3 (1983): 422-50. Web. 23 Oct. 2016.
- Gottlieb, Julie V. *‘Guilty Women’, Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Web. 7 Jan. 2017.
- Grayzel, Susan R. “The Baby in the Gas Mask: Motherhood, Wartime Technology, and the Gendered Division Between the Fronts During and After the First World War.” *Gender and the First World War*. Eds. Christa Hämmerle, et al. New York: Palgrave, 2014. 127-43. Print.
- Ha-Birdsong, Seonae. *“To Seize Fragments of Truth”: A Study of Rose Macaulay’s Pacifist Novels*. Diss. Oklahoma State University, 1995. Web. 13 Apr. 2017.
- “Living Heritage: Women Get the Vote.” *Parliament.uk*. Web. 13 Nov. 2016.
- Macaulay, Rose. *Non-Combatants and Others*. La Vergne: Createspace, 2016. Print.
- Mellown, Muriel. “One Woman’s Way to Peace: The Development of Vera Brittain’s Pacifism.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 8.2 (1985): 1-6. Web. 12 Mar. 2017.
- . “Reflections on Feminism and Pacifism in the Novels of Vera Brittain.” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 2.2 (1983): 215-28. Web. 7 Jan. 2017.
- Ouditt, Sharon. *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Web. 23 Oct. 2016.

- Reilly, Catherine, ed. *Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War*. London: Virago, 1981. Web. 15 Nov. 2016.
- Scott, Bonnie K. *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections*. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2007. Print.
- Smith, Angela K. *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. Print.
- Stade, George, and Karen Karbiener, eds. *Encyclopedia of British Writers, 1800 to the Present*. 2nd ed. New York: Facts on File, 2009. Web. 10 Jan. 2017.
- Tate, Trudi. "The First World War: British Writing." *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*. Ed. Kate McLoughlin. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 160-74. Print.
- Tylee, Claire M. *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writing, 1914-64*. London: Macmillan, 1990. Web. 28 Oct. 2016.